



PRESS RELEASE

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ADVANCING WORK SAFETY FOR PEST CONTROL WORKERS

[Developing more effective education and training]

The use of chemical biocides is often a necessity in the control of mosquitoes, cockroaches, flies, rodents, spiders, and other noxious pests. The proper application of these chemical biocides requires a high level of responsibility and professionalism because failure to apply the proper procedures and chemicals may endanger the lives of people and animals. Therefore, the safe use of potentially toxic pesticides requires careful training and the application of integrated management systems of harmful organisms. Especially people working as pest control professionals need to understand how to best protect not only themselves, but also the people, the animals and the environment in the areas they operate in. Only safe pest management practices, combined with advanced education on the risk assessment and the classification and labeling precautions can reduce health risks that could have severe consequences.

The new European Regulation on the distribution, sale and application of chemical biocides attempts to contribute to their sustainable use and also to the introduction of added safety measures especially for the professional users with a view to limit the risks and dangers for people and animals and also the environment. The effective and safe control of pests requires well-trained pest control professionals. However, there is a significant skill and competence gap in many European countries concerning the correct handling, application and disposal of pesticides, especially among low-skilled pest control workers.

PEST PRACTICE is a 24-month European project which came to life in late 2013, under the Lifelong Learning Programme, that addresses the training needs of pest control professionals and companies so as to enable proper handling and application of pesticides in homes, businesses or public settings.

The PEST PRACTICE project will develop training materials for pest control professionals and users that promote work safety and understanding of the risks associated with pest control operations. This will be achieved by building on former knowledge on health and work safety issues in small businesses, as made available by the European project LABITAS. Moreover, PEST PRACTICE will focus into heightening awareness among pest control business owners and their staff.

The kick-off meeting of PEST PRACTICE took place on January 16-17, 2014, in Athens, Greece. The project is being implemented by seven European organisations, from Greece, Cyprus, Germany and Italy, under the coordination of the Benaki Phytopathological Institute (BPI) in Athens, Greece.

More information:

Dr. Antonis Michaelakis a.michaelakis@bpi.gr
www.pestpractice.eu • [Facebook](#)