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FEICA response to the REACH revision public consultation

FEICA, the Association of the European Adhesive & Sealant Industry, is a multinational association representing the European adhesive and sealant industry. Today's membership stands at 16 National Association Members, 24 Direct Company Members and 19 Affiliate Company Members. The European market for adhesives and sealants is currently worth more than 17 billion euros. With the support of its national associations and several direct and affiliated members, FEICA coordinates, represents and advocates the common interests of our industry throughout Europe. In this regard, FEICA works with all relevant stakeholders to create a mutually beneficial economic and legislative environment.

Background

As part of the ambition to reach zero pollution for a toxic-free environment established by the European Green Deal, the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability announced the revision of Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH).

The European Commission has launched a public consultation allowing stakeholders to provide feedback on the proposed revisions. FEICA has submitted its responses to the questionnaire included in the public consultation and would like to share some additional thoughts.

FEICA comments

Information requirements for polymers

- ✓ FEICA engaged in this important discussion with our experts in the CARACAL Subgroup on Polymers
- ✓ FEICA members use chemical substances to formulate adhesives and sealants at the end of supply chains. Those formulators, which are currently downstream users (DUs) under REACH legislation, may become potential polymer registrants in the future if the new polymers would be subject to the obligation of registration.

- ✓ Adhesives and sealants manufacturers often customise polymers, which results in new polymer species. Customising polymers may result in a huge number of new polymers to be potentially registered while the total production volume of each individual polymer may be comparatively low.
- ✓ Costly and complex registration requirements would be a disproportionate economic, technical, and organisational burden, especially for small and medium-sized companies
- ✓ FEICA proposes to have a viable solution, with pragmatic grouping criteria to balance the economic impact on the industry
- ✓ Exemptions should be granted to polymeric precursors handled by properly trained workers
- ✓ FEICA proposes to keep the Polyester Exemption, as established in other jurisdictions, considering that polyesters hydrolyse back to the initial building blocks from an approved list of monomers (already registered under REACH)

For further information, please visit [FEICA polymers page](#).

Information on the environmental footprint

- ✓ FEICA would support a centralised database where information on the environmental footprint could be collected
- ✓ REACH is, on the contrary, not the most appropriate framework to collect environmental footprint data
- ✓ The environmental footprint of an individual substance is dependent on various factors such as manufacturing or transport processes
- ✓ The same substance could present different values depending on the manufacturer, which would counter the REACH principle of 'one substance, one registration'

Information requirements on use and exposure

- ✓ If the granularity of data requested is not framed through a pragmatic approach, considering business models or specific sectors and the needs of the market, the result will be unworkable
- ✓ Effort and costs of reporting requirements for downstream users and the resulting benefits should be examined in detail in the course of the impact assessment
- ✓ The cost and effort of notification of information by downstream users is highly dependent on whether the relevant information is communicated in the supply chain in a digital, standardised form
- ✓ Digital supply chain communication is a prerequisite for keeping the effort within acceptable limits
- ✓ Downstream users reporting requirements should be limited to consultations in the course of preparing relevant regulatory risk management measures such as, e.g. restriction proposals

Introduction of a Mixture Assessment Factor

- ✓ FEICA acknowledges that the Commission aims to add a Mixture Assessment Factor (MAF) to Annex 1 of REACH as a way to address combined exposures to unintentional mixtures of unknown compositions
- ✓ FEICA considers that applying a blanket Mixture Assessment Factor to all chemicals and all uses will not improve the protection of the environment and human health
- ✓ Instead, different MAFs should be applied to substances with different types of effects/hazards and different types of uses
- ✓ Should different MAFs be added to Annex 1 of REACH, they should be applied to substances that, based on their characteristics, can end up in an unintended mixture and, if so, contribute to the mixture toxicity
- ✓ The focus of MAFs should be on bioaccumulative and persistent substances that are used in high tonnages and wide dispersions
- ✓ An MAF should not be applied to Derived No-Effect Level/Predicted No-Effect Concentration (DNEL/PNEC) values because it would therefore also apply to risk assessment for intentional mixtures and would not consider different exposure scenarios. Where relevant, an MAF would better fit a specific Risk Characterisation Ratio (RCR).

Generic risk management approach

- ✓ FEICA considers the extension of the generic approach to risk management to professional uses inappropriate and disproportionate
- ✓ Use of chemical products by professional workers differs considerably from that by consumers and should therefore not be subjected to the same restrictions or prohibitions
- ✓ In fact, professional users have more characteristics in common with industrial users than with consumers
- ✓ Professional workers perform tasks that are important for society and the circular economy, and they need chemical products to perform those tasks
- ✓ Targeted and specific restrictions could be established under Article 68(1), or all the instruments of European and national Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) legislation could be applied to professional workers. As the recently introduced restriction on diisocyanates and many other regulatory measures have shown, the existing instruments of chemicals legislation are successfully applied in the area of professional uses.
- ✓ Occasional lack of compliance with existing OSH requirements should not be a reason to automatically compare professionals with consumers and to apply ever stricter measures on those who do comply
- ✓ Training requirements should be harmonised among Member States. Despite EU-level directives on Occupational Safety and Health, there are significant disparities between Member States on the requirement and level of training needed for relevant professions and trades.
- ✓ Targeted trainings should be developed and implemented for professional workers for whom occupational disease data shows an unacceptable health risk

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