



European
Commission



DURATEX EVENT: ECOLOGICAL WATER REPELLENCY

Update on policy and legislative developments concerning PFAS

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PFAS- a group of very persistent chemicals

- A group of chemicals (more than 4700):
 - Long-chain
 - Short chain
 - Resulting from precursor's degradation (i.e. from side-chain fluorinated polymers and fluorotelomers)
- Concerns:
 - highly persistent substances, mobile in the environmental compartments
 - contamination to groundwater and drinking water
 - certain PFAS accumulate in the bodies of living organisms and cause toxic effects such as toxic for reproduction and the development of fetuses, cancer or suspected endocrine disrupters.

PFAS- a group of very persistent chemicals

Council of the EU June 2019:

- asking the Commission for a **PFAS action plan** to eliminate all non-essential uses of PFAS:
 - to look at PFAS as a group;
 - use all available regulatory and non regulatory instruments

Council of the EU December 2019:

- NL announces the intention to prepare a **REACH restriction** on the whole PFAS group, except for essential uses.
- 8 MSs support

The European Green Deal



A zero pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment

- Creating a toxic-free environment requires more action to **prevent** pollution as well as measures to **clean and remedy** it.
- EU needs to **better monitor, report, prevent and remedy pollution** from air, water, soil, and consumer products
- COM will propose measures to address pollution from **new or particularly harmful sources** of pollution such as micro plastics and chemicals

COM will present a Chemicals strategy for sustainability:

- To help protect citizens and the environment and encourage innovation for safe and sustainable alternatives
- To combine better health and environmental protection and increased global competitiveness.
 - by simplifying and strengthening the legal framework
 - moving to 'one substance – one assessment'
 - to rapidly reflect scientific evidence on the risk posed by endocrine disruptors, hazardous chemicals in products including imports, combination effects of different chemicals and very persistent chemicals



Links to other priorities/initiatives

Green Deal: Circular Economy, Farm to Fork, Biodiversity Strategy, Sustainable Finance

Economy: Developing market for companies (SMEs), Plan to fight Cancer

Digital: EU's digital strategy, Data and AI to support societal solutions

Promoting EU way of life: Protect citizens/single market, tighter enforcement

World: Highest standards of env protection in trade, compliance/enforcement of trade agreements

Towards a Chemicals Strategy for sustainability - Timing

- May 2020: publication Strategy's Roadmap (4 weeks public consultation)
- October 2020: Adoption
- 2021-2024: Follow-up proposals and implementation

Sustainability and substitution of hazardous chemicals

- Shift to **'safe and sustainable by design'** substances, materials, products
- Promote **EU's strategic autonomy** for chemicals essential for society
- Stronger **environmental protection** from hazardous chemicals
- Address **persistent chemicals** eg PFAS (way forward to address the PFAS concern)

Commission studies on PFAS

- Use of all PFAS and non-fluorinated alternatives in **fire-fighting foams** (COM + ECHA)
- Use of all PFAS and non-fluorinated alternatives in **textiles, upholstery, leather, apparel and carpets** (COM)
- Stakeholders involved (workshops, consultations)
- information collected to provide input for the REACH restrictions, international activities under POPs
- Final reports in summer/autumn 2020

REACH restrictions on PFAS

- PFAS currently subject to several regulatory initiatives for different sectors, including textiles

REACH restriction process ongoing for:

- **PFHxS** (perfluorohexane-1-sulphonic acid, its salts and related subst.) (ECHA opinion)
- **PFHxA** (undecafluorohexanoic acid, its salts and related subst.) (public consultation, ECHA opinion-making)

REACH restrictions on PFAS

- Use of all PFAS and non-fluorinated alternatives in **fire-fighting foams** (COM to request ECHA)
- Member States initiative on a wide PFAS restriction proposal – NL, DE, supported by DK, SE and Norway targeting a wide range of PFAS uses, **including textiles**
 - a call for evidence to get more information on uses, tonnages, alternatives (May-July 2020)
- ECHA's PFAS webpage:

<https://echa.europa.eu/hot-topics/perfluoroalkyl-chemicals-pfas>



Thank you !

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