

Mr. Geert Dancet
Executive Director ECHA
European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)
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Finland

Mr. Daniel Calleja Crespo
Director General DG Environment

Mrs. Lowri Evans
Director General DG Grow
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200,
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Brussels, 2nd June 2016
Prot. N° 146/MU

Dear Mr. Dancet,

Dear Mr. Calleja Crespo,

Dear Mrs. Evans,

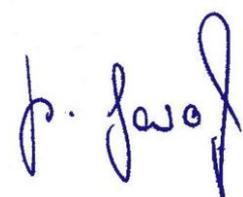
The recently published “Report on the Operation of REACH and CLP 2016” of ECHA addresses many aspects related to small and medium sized enterprises. In particular, the 2018 registration deadline is considered as a big challenge. I absolutely share this view and can only underline that a lot has to be done to prepare companies to understand their REACH-obligations. A major feedback from UEAPME’s membership in this respect is that many companies are simply still not aware that they should start getting ready and as a consequence they do not make use of the available support-offers. Getting such companies on board is in my view our biggest challenge.

Considering that it is already now hard to implement all aspects of the REACH-regulation, I am very surprised by ECHA’s opinion that “further consideration should also be given to including polymers within the scope of registration”. This statement is not underpinned by concrete arguments and appears to be a political opinion, what in my view is going beyond the mandate of an executive agency. On the other side we fully support the Commission’s approach to deeply analyse the area of polymers considering all objectives of the REACH-regulation and only then decide if polymers should be or should not be included into the scope of the registration. In general, I am of the opinion that right now we do not need any fundamental changes of rules. Rather we should concentrate on the implementation and - what is even more important and also mentioned more than once in the ECHA-report - on the enforcement of our existing rules.

I do not share ECHA's optimistic view regarding innovation. A number of 1.500 new substances in 8 years is an average of around 185 per year. The pre-REACH-notification of new substances existed for 25 years and had an average of around 215 new substances per year. As whole there are almost 5.300 new substances which are now listed in ECHA's database. In that respect we also need to remember that in the first years after 1981 of the NONS-notification-scheme the notification rate was relatively low and stabilized in the 1990th at an average of 300 new substances per year, what is almost double of what the average is now in the REACH-era. I believe that a lot more needs to be done so that innovation reaches a level that we already had before REACH. The main obstacle in this respect I see in the effect that companies are withdrawing necessary resources from innovation to pure compliance-work.

Finally, I would like to thank the Commission and ECHA for all the great and diverse activities that are being set to support SMEs. I hope that so and with our joint efforts the last registration-deadline will pass smoothly. But also that we will be able to further improve the knowledge of SMEs about other relevant regulatory-processes like for example the authorisation or the participation in public consultations and increase their involvement into those.

Kind regards,



Peter Faross
Secretary General