



“The voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Release

IMMEDIATE ISSUE:

MEPs compromises must not jeopardise workable REACH

- **Small firms will be the losers if opt-outs from data-sharing approved**

Brussels, 14 November 2005 UEAPME, the European small and medium business organisation, has called on MEPs to support proposals on simplified chemical registration in the plenary vote on the proposed chemical registration system (REACH) on Thursday. However, it claims that compromise proposals to allow opt-outs from data-sharing would ultimately hit small firms.

“The emerging compromise on simplifying the procedures for registering chemicals could bring a greater degree of proportionality to REACH, moving towards a balance between environmental protection and workability for small firms, which would have been punished by the original proposals. Failure to provide compulsory sharing of all data on chemical testing would play into the hands of big industry, however, as small businesses will still be faced with unnecessary and disproportionate costs,” said **UEAPME Secretary General Hans-Werner Müller**.

Under the risk-based approach, chemicals posing a threat to the environment will undergo the necessarily rigorous testing and registration procedures provided for by REACH. While firms producing harmless chemicals will not be penalised by having to comply with the same burdensome procedures.

UEAPME is seriously concerned that proposals to allow opt-outs from the One Substance One Registration scheme (OSOR) would create duplication and impose avoidable cost burdens on small firms, particularly formulators. If such opt-outs are introduced, these businesses would be denied available information on chemicals that have already been tested and have to bear all the testing costs themselves, ultimately forcing them out of the market.

“It is clear that whatever form this regulation takes, smaller businesses will face disproportionate cost and administrative burdens: all the impact assessments and legislative tests have shown this. Providing for the compulsory sharing of data on testing will share the burden and help avoid unnecessary duplication of testing, so we are strongly urging the European Parliament to include this key provision,” added Mr Müller.

“Another key instrument to reduce the excessive burden on small firms is the simplified registration procedure for SMEs, which was proposed by the Environment Committee. If the Parliament is serious about making REACH manageable for small businesses, it is crucial that these provisions are not overlooked as part of the compromise.”

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EDITORS' NOTE: UEAPME is the employer's organisation representing the interests of crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 78 member organisations, which represent crafts and SMEs across the whole of Europe, covering over 11 million enterprises with nearly 50 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner.

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