



**“The voice of SMEs in Europe”**

**Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**REACH: burden still too heavy for downstream users and SMEs,  
UEAPME tells MEPs**

**Brussels, 17 January 2004** Ahead of this week’s European Parliament hearing on the Chemicals regulation “REACH”, UEAPME, the European crafts and SMEs employers association, echoed its concerns regarding the cost and feasibility of the legislative project to MEPs. The association explains that the operational and financial burden implied by the proposal would drive many downstream users of chemicals, which are mainly SMEs, out of business.

“We fully support the objectives of REACH. But MEPs have to understand that if they want SMEs and downstream users of chemicals to comply with the regulation and still be operational and competitive, some significant changes have to be made in the proposal” said **Hans-Werner Müller**, UEAPME’s Secretary General today.

UEAPME members are particularly concerned with the issue of sharing existent data between registrants. According to the present proposal, companies owning tests’ data not involving vertebrates can choose whether or not to grant access to the results. Since the costs of such tests are extremely high, it is very dangerous to leave the settlement of a price for the data to a free negotiation as producers might authorise access to data in a selective way, very much to the disadvantage of SMEs that represent the weaker element in the market. Therefore, the association asks MEPs to amend the proposal so as to make the sharing of data compulsory for all data.

The other points of concern regard the articles on the identification of uses and the registration of substances included in articles. Regarding the identification of uses, UEAPME would like the possibility for the use to be expressed on the basis of the chemical properties of the substance or on exposure categories on its own or in a preparation and not on the basis of each application. Indeed, for an SME communicating on a specific use means revealing to its suppliers strategic technical information, thus weakening its competitiveness.

As for the registration of substances included in articles, UEAPME would like the field of application to be limited to the registration of substances whose release is an intended function. The release of a substance, which is not an intended function, should be excluded, as this would be inapplicable. Indeed, producers rarely have the competence and knowledge to answer whether the substance released may be hazardous.

\*\*\*\*\* End \*\*\*\*\*

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