



“The voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE ISSUE

Second reading vote should secure a fair REACH for SMEs

- **OSOR must not be weakened by too many opt-outs – final say to the Chemicals Agency**
- **Proportionate cost sharing system should be put in place**
- **Deadline for data liberalisation to be set at 10 instead of 15 years**

Brussels, 5 October 2006. Ahead of a crucial second reading vote at the European Parliament’s Environment Committee next week, UEAPME, the European SME employers’ organisation, presented MEPs with its views and priorities on the REACH regulation on chemical substances (1). According to UEAPME, the OSOR (One Substance One Registration) principle would be diluted if a large number of exceptions (“opt-outs”) is allowed – these should be kept to a minimum and authorised by a third party such as the newly created European Chemicals Agency. When registration is foreseen, a system of equitable and proportional cost sharing must be put in place. Furthermore, the deadline for the liberalisation of test data should be set at 10 years instead of 15.

“We hope that the Committee vote planned for next Tuesday will take into account the needs of thousands of small firms working with chemical substances”, said **Guido Lena**, UEAPME Director for Environmental Policy. “European SMEs are prevailing downstream users of chemical substances they buy from multinationals. Workable clauses on registration, including a fair and proportional cost sharing system, are of the utmost importance for their continued existence.”

Regarding OSOR, UEAPME supports the wording of the European Council’s Common Position, which reduces the possibility of opting out from the principle. An excessive number of opt-outs would limit both the availability and the affordability of test data, which SMEs need to be competitive and keep their sales share in European and international markets. The European Chemicals Agency, said UEAPME, should be in charge of assessing the appropriateness and authorising the suggested opt-outs. “An independent judgment on opt-outs would ultimately ensure a proper and workable application of the OSOR principle”, continued Mr Lena.

As far as the cost sharing principle is concerned, UEAPME pointed out that a proportionate and equitable procedure must be put in place to avoid small businesses with limited financial resources being priced out of the market. Such a system should be based on “fair compensation” and ensure proportionality according to the production or import volume of the substance subject to registration.

Finally, UEAPME voiced strong concerns on the possibility of the deadline for data liberalisation being extended from 10 to 15 years. “Such an extension must be avoided at all costs. It would represent an additional threat to the survival of SMEs and unnecessarily contribute to reinforcing the dominant position of multinationals in the market”, concluded Mr Lena.

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(1) http://www.ueapme.com/docs/pos_papers/2006/0608_pp_REACH_priorities.pdf

A detailed list of amendments supported by UEAPME is available at the following link:

http://www.ueapme.com/docs/pos_papers/2006/0608_pp_REACH_amendments.pdf

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

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