



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Office of the Executive Vice-President Mr Frans Timmermans

Deputy Head of Cabinet

 Ref. Ares(2020)7236609 - 01/12/2020

Brussels, 1 December 2020

Dear [REDACTED],

On behalf of Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans and Commissioners Thierry Breton, Kadri Simson and Virginijus Sinkevičius. I would like to thank you for your letter of 20 July 2020 addressed to them.

In the meantime, on 14 October 2020, we have launched the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability (COM(2020) 667 final). The aim of the strategy is to better protect human health and the environment as part of an ambitious approach, to tackle pollution from all sources and move towards a toxic-free environment.

Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) require special attention, considering the large number of cases of contamination of soil and water in the EU and globally. The Commission is proposing to phase out the use of PFAS in the EU, apart from those applications where it is proven to be essential for society and for which alternative substances do not exist yet.

The Commission has also published a separate staff working document on PFAS (SWD (2020) 249 final), where we discuss regulatory and non-regulatory approaches for the different PFAS groups and their uses, including fluoropolymers.

We acknowledge the important role that fluoropolymers have in the platinum group metals (PGM) catalysts of certain electrolyzers and fuel cells. To address this issue, the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability proposes financial support for research and innovation programmes to remediate and substitute the use of PFAS. Furthermore, we propose to identify uses critical for society and allow them only if suitable alternatives are not available.

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As a next step following our chemical strategy, we expect that a restriction on PFAS will be discussed by the European Chemicals Agency in 2021/2022. Following the opinion of the ECHA's committees, the Commission will develop the legislative proposals for restricting PFAS under the REACH legislation.

Throughout these steps, we will continue to consult with stakeholders and stakeholder groups to ensure that the different actions by the Commission are aligned with the broad overarching objectives set under the European Green Deal.

We are eager to continue our dialogue and work with you on the realisation of the European Green Deal, to ensure that our ambitious objectives in the Hydrogen Strategy are going to be achieved.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Nelen