

From: [REDACTED] (ENER) [REDACTED]
Sent: mardi 30 janvier 2024 17:51
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Subject: Flash from Seminar on Sustainable Alternatives to PFAS

**Flash from Seminar on Sustainable Alternatives to PFAS Tomorrow
organized by DG ENV – 30.01.2024**

In the absence of [REDACTED] I attended earlier today the seminar above. It was Introduced by [REDACTED] Ciohanu-Dordea, Director Circular Economy, DG ENV and Moderated by [REDACTED] DG ENV.

PRESENTATIONS: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Associate Professor Xenia Trier of Copenhagen University

gave a brief overview of PFAS and current concerns:

The Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) have 200 different uses and there are 10.000 substances. The risk assessment cannot keep up with the chemical diversity. They are persistent, with harmful and toxic emissions with unwanted effects to humans and the environment with emissions in every point of their lifecycle, as well as after their use. PFAS are uptaken from soil, water and air into food and feed, in the circular economy and waste. The annual cost of their unwanted effects is estimated to €52-84 billion. There are also unknown PFAS not included in the analysis. They are practically impossible to destroy and their effects are irreversible.

[REDACTED] Professor Ian Cousins of Stockholm University

Indicated that there are alternatives on the market to be used for the digital and green transition. A comprehensive data bank is being developed with all the alternatives to PFAS through the ZeroPM Horizon 2020 project ([https://zeropm.eu/alternative-asesment - database/](https://zeropm.eu/alternative-asesment-database/)). It is misleading that the PFAS are essential for the green transition. He referred to the Lithium and Ion batteries and to hydrolysers where the industry claims that there are no alternatives and that the PFAS are not that harmful, and this resistance from the industry is due to the fact that the change will cost them more. Nevertheless there are safe alternatives.

presentations by alternative providers

[REDACTED] IONOMR – Kanada.

IONOMR is a company which is developing alternatives to PSAS for different uses. Although the presentation was too technical and difficult to follow, with many chemical formulas and terms, the bottom line was that they have developed products for a wide range of technologies and uses, including membranes of electrolyzers, with positive substitution (with better performance).

Presentation by ENDURANCE SOLAR.

The backsheet of PV panels (the material for the back of the solar panel) contains 70% of PFAS. Endurance Solar is active for the past 10 years in developing a substitute material for the backsheet. The lower environmental impact of PFAS free products has no value for the PV market. The company withdrew from the Chinese market (could not compete) and are growing in the US market.

Presentation of Gerald de Leeuw of SOLARGS (NL bases company producing PV modules)

For solar, the case it is very simple. It can be done, EU manufacturers and some Chinses are already PFAS free. What is needed is Regulation and access to financing.

Presentation of Pierre Blanc of LECLANCHE (energy storage solutions).

LECLANCHE produces heavy duty installations of stationary storage products. The company was searching for new solutions, not targeting the elimination of PFAS but ended up removing the toxic elements and on the same time improved the performance without compromises, without changes to the product lines and with a 15-20% reduction of CAPEX.

Presentation of SYMPATEX, technical textiles (Apparel, footwear and Workwear) (Germany)

Nothing in the textile industry can not be substituted. For 10 years the company produces PAFAS free products. The presenter asked to put a ban to PFAS and leave the industry to sort it out. The constraints may challenge creativity but accelerate innovation. Specifications should also be reviewed, as there are cases of products unnecessarily over-specified with no alternatives available.

Industry Consensus:

All industry presenters unanimously advocated for a ban on PFAS, emphasizing the existence of viable alternatives and urging regulatory support. They highlighted the uneven playing field and expressed confidence that the industry could adapt to PFAS-free solutions with the right incentives, regulation, and access to financing.