



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL MARKET, INDUSTRY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
AND SMES  
Ecosystems I: Chemicals, Food, Retail

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR ENVIRONMENT  
Directorate B – Circular Economy

The Directors

Brussels  
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**Subject: Proposed ban on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) under REACH procedure**

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter dated 12 August 2023 to Commissioner Sinkevičius in which you express concerns about possible negative consequences of a PFAS restriction to high-tech industries in Europe, including the laser industry. Commissioner Sinkevičius has asked us to reply on his behalf.

Pollution from PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) is a serious human health and environmental concern, considering the large number of cases of soil and water contamination across Europe - including drinking water. At the same time, PFAS are needed in critical applications, for example in the digital and energy sectors (e.g. semiconductors, electrolyzers and membranes for green hydrogen production). Under the REACH Regulation, five national authorities (from the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway) have proposed a broad ban with some derogations on the use of PFAS. This proposal is currently undergoing an independent scientific assessment in the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) Committees.

At the same time, the Commission is fully aware that PFAS are used in semi-conductors, electrolyzers, fuel cells, batteries and many more components applied in numerous sectors, including the defence and medical sectors and in net-zero technologies. As already expressed by Commissioner Sinkevičius at a meeting in Lithuania on 21 August with your organisation, the Commission continues to work with all stakeholders to ensure that the future restrictions on PFAS go hand in hand with innovative solutions that can underpin the important green and digital transition of the European economy. Under the current

REACH regulation, derogations from restrictions can be granted based on the assessment of risk, including emissions, availability of alternatives and socio-economic impacts. Therefore, the Commission envisages that derogations will be introduced for critical uses where no alternatives are currently available.

The Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability has set the objective to phase out PFAS, except for those uses which are essential for society. The Commission will ensure, at the time of deciding on a restriction of PFAS under REACH, the necessary consistency with other key EU policy objectives, such as making the EU carbon-neutral by 2050 and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 55% in 2030.

Yours sincerely,

(e-signed)  
**Kristin Schreiber**  
DG Internal Market, Industry,  
Entrepreneurship and SMEs

(e-signed)  
**Aurel Ciobanu-Dordea**  
DG Environment