

Minutes of the meeting with Cefic, SMEunited and SMEs on the REACH Revision

21 March 2023, Brussels Renaissance Hotel (rue du Parnasse 19 – 1050 Brussels)

Participants:

Cefic (Transparency register n° 64879142323-9): [REDACTED]

SMEunited (Transparency register n° 55820581197-35): [REDACTED]

SMEs representatives: [REDACTED] (Hubergroup, Germany), [REDACTED] (Materiál Chemicals Cooperative, Hungary), [REDACTED] (PinoPine, Portugal), [REDACTED] (Dehon, France), [REDACTED] (Vernis, Spain), [REDACTED] (Neotex, Greece), [REDACTED] (ChemCom, Netherlands), [REDACTED] (Solvachem, Poland), [REDACTED] (Cromogenia Units, Spain), [REDACTED] (Proviron, Belgium), [REDACTED] (Bozzetto Group, Italy)

European Commission – DG GROW: [REDACTED]

European Commission – DG ENV: [REDACTED]

Cefic opened the meeting outlining the currently difficult business environment for SMEs due to the current **energy crisis and the green transition**.

Issues and opportunities faced by SMEs with current REACH requirements

[REDACTED]

REACH revision

The representatives from DG ENV and DG GROW outlined the **envisaged changes under the REACH revision**. DG ENV explained the main changes to **registration requirements**. These are notably new information requirements on endocrine disruptors and additional information requirements for low-tonnage substances, the obligation to register certain polymers and to produce Chemical Safety Reports (CSR) for the 1-10 tonnage band, as well as the introduction of a Mixture Assessment Factor (MAF) for tonnages above 1000 tonnes/year. Regarding **authorisation and restriction**, DG GROW explained that amendments will potentially include the extension of the Generic Risk management Approach (GRA) to new hazard classes and some professional uses, and the introduction of the Essential Use Concept to the decision procedure for derogations. DG GROW also presented possible measures to improve enforcement, especially concerning online sales and custom controls of imports.

The concerns expressed by the SMEs relate in particular to the **new registration requirement for polymers** and the requirement to prepare **Chemical Safety Reports for all hazards** in the 1-10 tonnage band. Concerning the push for **New Approach Methodologies**, Cefic noted that these methodologies require expertise that SMEs often do not have and suggested that support for SMEs on this aspect would be needed.

How to help SMEs

Proposals on how to improve the general business environment for SMEs comprise more EU efforts to ensure access to **cheaper energy, securing access to raw materials and EU funding**. Legal predictability **as well as aligning different pieces of legislation** were also suggested as key factors to support SMEs.

Some representatives also called for a **review of the EU definition of SMEs**, possibly introducing an intermediate level between SMEs and large companies, which was however not supported by SMEunited, and consider revising the EUR 50 million turnover threshold that dates back to 2003. To be noted that these suggestions do not fall specifically in the remit of the REACH Regulation.

Regarding **REACH registration requirements**, the following suggestions were made:

- allowing for a read-across for similar substances;
- considering the real tonnage instead of the tonnage band or size of the company to allocate the shares of registration costs;
- lower information requirements for higher tonnages.

Concerning possible support by **ECHA and administrative procedures**, SMEs representatives suggested that ECHA could organise annual trainings for companies on how to use **IT tools** (IUCLID, CHESAR). SMEunited noted that a translation of IT tools for registration would not be necessary. In view of the REACH revision, SMEs prefer a **clear and simple legislation** which would make comprehensive later guidance obsolete.

SMEs representatives also asked for a **staggered approach for the registration of polymers**.

The attending Commission representatives listened to the concerns of the SMEs and encouraged them to **provide input** on issues and proposals, in particular on substitution workshops and the registration of polymers via Cefic.