

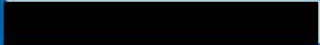


European
Commission



EU strategy for PFAS

Implementation for fire-fighting
foams


EUROPEAN COMMISSION, DG ENVIRONMENT

Policy background

Conclusions of June 2019:

The Council of the European Union:

UNDERLINES the increasing health and environmental concerns posed by highly persistent chemicals; NOTES in specific the growing evidence for adverse effects caused by exposure to highly fluorinated compounds (PFAS), the evidence for wide spread occurrence of PFAS in water, soil, articles and waste and the threat this may cause to our drinking water supplies; CALLS on the Commission to develop an action plan to eliminate all **non-essential uses** of PFAS.

Council of December 2019:

- NL announces the **intention to prepare a REACH restriction** on the **whole PFAS group**.
- 8 MSs support a **EU PFAS action plan**.

Policy background

Member States: asking the Commission for a PFAS action plan

- to look at PFAS as a group;
- use all available regulatory and non regulatory instruments

EP resolution on the Chemicals Strategy:

- action plan on PFAS to **ensure a speedy phase-out of all their non-essential uses**
- accelerate the development of safe and non-persistent alternatives to all uses of PFAS

The European Green Deal



Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) require special attention, considering the large number of cases of contamination of soil and water - including drinking water - in the EU and globally, the number of people affected with a full spectrum of illnesses and the related societal and economic costs. That is why the Commission proposes a comprehensive set of actions to **address the use of and contamination with PFAS**. Those aim to ensure, in particular, that the use of PFAS is phased out in the EU, unless it is proven essential for society.

The Commission will ban all PFAS in fire-fighting foams as well as in other uses, allowing their use only where they are essential for society

https://ec.europa.eu/environment/strategy/chemicals-strategy_en

PFAS SWD



REACH activities on PFAS

- PFOS, PFOA, C9-C14 PFCAs, PFHxS: all restricted or in the restriction process (including in fire-fighting foams)
- GenX, PFBS: identified as a Substances of Very High Concern because of
 - persistency, mobility, potential for long range transport, observed adverse effects, bioavailability for uptake via drinking water
 - very high potential for irreversible effects.
- Restriction dossier for PFHxA (DE) under discussion in the ECHA scientific committees (includes use in fire-fighting foams).
<https://echa.europa.eu/registry-of-restriction-intentions/-/dislist/details/0b0236e18323a25d>
- Commission request to ECHA for a restriction dossier on all PFAS in fire-fighting foams
<https://echa.europa.eu/registry-of-restriction-intentions/-/dislist/details/0b0236e1856e8ce6>

REACH activities on PFAS

- Preparatory work for a group restriction on all uses of PFAS (except essential uses): 4 MS + Norway
 - <https://www.rivm.nl/qas-pfas-restriction-proposal>
- Call for evidence launched
- ECHA webpage on PFAS
 - <https://echa.europa.eu/hot-topics/perfluoroalkyl-chemicals-pfas>
- Fire-fighting foams excluded from the scope (work being done by ECHA)

Key results of the study on AFFFs

- Alternatives can perform the same functions as the PFAS-based foams, except for large-scale tank fires (petrochemical industry)
 - ⇒ Further development of alternatives needed
- Fluorine-free foams have been successful for some atmospheric storage tank fires but additional tests are needed for larger tanks
- Availability of F-free foams: not considered a challenge

https://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/28801697/pfas_flourine-free_alternatives_fire_fighting_en.pdf/d5b24e2a-d027-0168-cdd8-f723c675fa98

Key results of the study on AFFFs

- Transition periods
 - Training and testing, municipal fire brigades, ready to use applications: highest priority for a quick transition
 - Chemicals / petrochemicals: Derogations or a longer transition period may be needed for specific applications (notably large tank fires)
 - Small incidents and all other sectors: 3-6 years are expected to minimise socio-economic implications
 - Potential obligation to apply emission reduction measures during transition periods

Transition periods justification will need to be supported by information (public consultations)

Restriction on all PFAS in fire-fighting foams

- Commission request to ECHA in October 2020
- Dossier to be published before the end of 2021
- Discussion in the ECHA Committees until the end of 2022
- Opinion sent to Commission, legislative drafting and vote in the Reach Committee by 2023

<https://echa.europa.eu/registry-of-restriction-intentions/-/dislist/details/0b0236e1856e8ce6>

PFHxA restriction

- DE dossier, under discussion in RAC and SEAC. Covers PFHxA + precursors
- Covers also use in fire-fighting foams
- ECHA's opinion expected by the end of the year
- COM to draft the restriction from 2022
- Could come into application before the full ban for all PFAS on the basis of the dossier requested to ECHA
- COM will ensure legal certainty when drafting the legislation

Thank you !

Disclaimer

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