



Frans Timmermans
Executive Vice-President of the European Commission

Virginijus Sinkevičius
Member of the European Commission

Brussels,

Dear [REDACTED]

We would like to thank you for your letter concerning the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability and for the strong appreciation that you express in this regard. We are indeed confident that the strategy defines an ambitious vision and concrete steps for achieving a toxic-free environment, and that as such it represents, as you also point out, a crucial stepping-stone for the economic and societal transformation outlined in the European Green Deal.

We agree with the key messages of your letter, in particular that we urgently need to address the concerns of consumers about hazardous chemicals present in the products they are exposed to daily. We believe that the actions announced in the strategy will provide both a strengthened regulatory framework and the necessary incentives for innovation to better protect and reassure consumers.

One of the first actions we will propose is to ensure that the most harmful chemicals are no longer used in consumer products and no longer affect vulnerable groups like children. The most harmful chemicals will only be allowed in products if their use is proven essential for the society.

In the meantime, as this ban can take place only once the relevant legislation has been revised, in 2021 we will present a roadmap to prioritise restrictions under REACH for those most harmful chemicals. We will do this as far as possible by groups of substances, rather than one by one as done today.

As protection needs to go hand in hand with innovation towards alternatives, the strategy aims to boost the development of new chemicals and materials that are safe and sustainable by design: from production to the end of life, including by greening the production of chemicals. The strategy clearly indicates that substances of concern – those substances having a chronic effect for health and the environment as well as those, which hamper recycling for safe and high quality secondary raw materials – shall be de-prioritised for innovation and minimised as much as possible.

/./.

[REDACTED]
Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs AISBL

As you also stress, further to strengthening EU legislation for chemicals, it will be equally important to consolidate the legal framework, in particular by speeding up implementation and by strengthening enforcement and compliance. For this, consumers and consumer organisations have a key role to play, and can greatly help to improve compliance with the EU rules on chemicals.

All new legislative initiatives announced in the strategy will be underpinned by the Commission's better regulation tools, as this will allow us to assess the best regulatory option on the basis of updated scientific evidence and stakeholders' inputs. The Action Plan announced with the strategy details the ambitious timing proposed for the follow-up initiatives and your input to those processes will be much appreciated.

To create a virtuous circle between protection and innovation and to succeed in the transition to a toxic-free environment, we need to work and monitor progress together. We will establish a high-level roundtable with representatives from industry, science and civil society to achieve the strategy's objectives in dialogue with the stakeholders concerned. The roundtable discussions are envisaged to focus in particular on how to make the chemicals legislation work more efficiently and effectively and how to boost the development and uptake of innovative, safe and sustainable chemicals across sectors.

We are confident that the strategy will be a decisive stepping-stone to move towards a healthier and more sustainable economy and society. We count on your support in the implementation of the ambition and objectives of the strategy in the coming years.

Yours sincerely,

Frans Timmermans

Virginijus Sinkevičius