



REACH 2nd reading

Key priorities for WWF and Boots

Will REACH be a wasted opportunity for making chemicals safer in the EU or will it be a further step towards the protection of human health and the environment from the most hazardous chemicals? This is the political choice European legislators have to make in the coming months. This paper is issued jointly on behalf of an environmental NGO and a UK retailer in the hope that it provides a balanced recommendation to ensure REACH provides the protection that society demands.

1. **PLAY IT SAFE: Replace hazardous chemicals with safer alternatives whenever they exist.**

The REACH system needs systematically to promote safer alternatives which are suitable to replace chemicals which cause cancer, affect DNA or the reproductive system, or those that build up in our bodies and the environment or interfere with the hormone system. The continued use (Authorisation) of the most hazardous chemicals should:

- Only be granted if no safer alternatives are available and the use is essential to society (*as proposed by the European Parliament*).
- Be time-limited for example to a maximum of five years in order to foster innovation and the development of safer alternatives (*as proposed by the European Parliament*).
- Take into account the analysis of alternatives and a concrete substitution plan to be submitted by the applicant as well as substitution information provided by third parties (*as proposed by the European Parliament*).

2. **PRECAUTIONARY ACTION: On endocrine disrupting chemicals (hormone disruptors)** In view of the magnitude of the potential risks associated with endocrine disruptors, in line with expert scientific advice, we believe that scientific uncertainty should not delay precautionary action on reducing exposures to and the risks from endocrine disruptors. Chemicals with endocrine disrupting properties should therefore be brought under authorisation if they are identified as giving rise to a similar level of concern as the other substances listed (*as proposed by the European Parliament*).

3. **INFORMATION improves trust: Provide sufficient safety information to identify dangerous chemicals and safer alternatives.** Transparent safety and use (exposure) information via the Registration process is essential to enable companies and the authorities to take informed decisions on the safe management of chemicals and identify safer alternatives. Under REACH, companies should:

- Provide information on long-term effects, including reproductive toxicity, at higher tonnage bands (>10tpa) (*as proposed by the Council*).
- Provide good quality use and exposure information (scenarios) (*as proposed by the Council*)

- Define risk management measures as required in the Chemical Safety Report from 1 tpa onwards (*as proposed by the European Parliament*), otherwise the safety information will not result in any practical improvements.

4. A LEGAL GUARANTEE: Ensure the chemical industry's responsibility for the safety of their products (Duty of Care).

Manufacturers, importers and users of chemicals must be responsible for the safety of their products (*as proposed by the European Parliament*). They should ensure that these products do not negatively affect human health or the environment. This should apply for all chemicals, regardless of production volume

5. TRANSPARENCY for consumer products: Establish a right to know for citizens.

Sufficient information to allow chemical users to make informed choices must be available. Information must be handed down the supply chain to enable retailers and consumers to find out about hazardous chemicals in products.

- Citizens must have, at a minimum, the right to information about any hazardous substance present in EU-made and imported products they buy (*as proposed by the European Parliament*).
- The list of non-confidential information in REACH needs to be extended to all information relevant for the environment and human health, in line with the *Aarhus Convention*.
- Industry should always be obliged to give transparent justifications when applying for information to be kept confidential.

As responsible members of society, we believe that a strong REACH is necessary to protect the environment and human health, now and for future generations. REACH must work in practice, for small as well as large businesses, ensuring that where information is available it is readily shared to the benefit of all. REACH must also be improved to ensure protection of health and environment. We are concerned that the current proposals do not sufficiently achieve these ends. We believe that the five key points to redress the balance are:

- 1. PLAY IT SAFE: Replace hazardous chemicals with safer alternatives whenever they exist.**
- 2. ENABLE PRECAUTIONARY ACTION ON ENDOCRINE DISRUPTING CHEMICALS in line with expert scientific advice.**
- 3. INFORMATION improves trust: Provide sufficient safety information to identify dangerous chemicals and safer alternatives.**
- 4. A LEGAL GUARANTEE: Ensure the chemical industry's responsibility for the safety of their products (Duty of Care).**
- 5. TRANSPARENCY for consumer products: Establish a right to know for citizens.**

For further information about this statement, please contact Stephen Johnson, Sustainable Development Manager, Boots UK, Tel: 0115 949 3911, Email: Stephen.Johnson@Boots.co.uk or Sophie Lindsay, Campaign Officer - Chemicals and Health WWF-UK, Tel: 01483 412505, Email: slindsay@wwf.org.uk

October 2006