
PRESS RELEASE

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REACH: European SME organisations send united message to MEPs ahead of important committee votes on REACH

- **Common sense ‘risk-based’ approach should be adopted**
- **Compulsory data-sharing for all data crucial for SMEs to cope with REACH**

Europe’s two main organisations representing SMEs, EUROCHAMBRES and UEAPME, have jointly called on MEPs to make the proposed REACH Regulation more workable for small businesses. The joint message comes ahead of important votes in the European Parliament next week.

“Small businesses will be hardest hit by the REACH proposals, a fact that has been confirmed by all the recent impact assessments and studies. To avoid stifling this vital growth sector of the EU economy, it is crucial that REACH is made less onerous for SMEs,” said **UEAPME Secretary General Hans-Werner Müller**.

“The costs of registration could be as much as 20% of turnover for small businesses. Small downstream users clearly do not have the resources to undertake all the testing required for substances under the current proposals. For these businesses, exposition categories and providing access to all data will be crucial to their ability to cope with the regulations,” stated **Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General of EUROCHAMBRES**.

UEAPME and EUROCHAMBRES are calling on MEPs to support the ‘risk-based’ approach to registration being proposed by the Internal Market Committee rapporteur Mr Nassauer, among others. Registering substances on the basis of their risk is a common sense approach and will reduce the imposition of unnecessary burdens on businesses dealing with harmless chemicals.

Both organisations stressed, however, that the registration of substances should be limited to substances whose release is an intended function of the article in question. This should go hand-in-hand with the ‘risk-based’ approach, so substances whose release is not an intended function should not be registered unless the substance is highly dangerous.

Furthermore, for downstream-user SMEs the introduction of limited, industry-wide exposition categories – instead of countless substance uses – is a precondition. It would bring a much lower burden for producers and users of chemicals in terms of assessment and reporting obligations.

REACH must also be amended to introduce compulsory data-sharing for all data, according to the two business organisations. The preclusive costs of substance registration for SMEs have been confirmed by the recent impact assessments. Compulsory data-sharing of all data will help overcome this.

In addition, a special, simplified procedure for SMEs wanting to register directly with the Chemicals Agency should be introduced. The proposed system involves high costs and over-complicated administration procedures, which small firms will find it difficult to comply with.

In general, the proposals need to be made less complex – a finding of various impact assessments. This should guide MEPs in their deliberations on REACH over the coming months.

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Editor's Note

EUROCHAMBRES is the Brussels-based Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The association represents national associations of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in 44 different countries - and a European network of 2,000 regional and local Chambers with over 18 million member enterprises, and 120 million employees across Europe.

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Editor's Note

UEAPME is the employer's organisation representing the interests of crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 78 member organisations, which represent crafts and SMEs across the whole of Europe, covering over 11 million enterprises with nearly 50 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner.