

PRESS RELEASE

REACH: Parliament's Environment Committee slaps SMEs in the face, Chambers say

The vote of the EP's Environment Committee yesterday represents a hard backlash for SMEs and for Europe's competitiveness, EUROCHAMBRES, the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said. If adopted, the new amendments will make the Directive bureaucratic and less efficient.

"Obligatory chemical safety reports for volumes up to 1 tonne will simply paralyse SMEs. Small enterprises are not able to cope with this kind of reporting requirement. Furthermore, having to renew an authorisation every five years does not add anything for human health or the environment. Instead it only creates red tape", said Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General of EUROCHAMBRES.

Studies have proved that it is mostly SMEs which will suffer from the increased costs resulting from the Directive – which can amount to 20% of the yearly turnover. That is why EUROCHAMBRES has always asked for a simplification of the system.

The Internal Market and the Industry Committee had worked out reasonable and practicable solutions – above all a risk based approach with exposure and use categories. The introduction of a system based on a risk and volume prioritisation was a step in the right direction. It would have requested less data for registration and evaluation for chemicals with low volumes. The introduction of use and exposure categories instead of testing all kind of uses would have reduced the amount of tests without creating any further risks.

The Environment Committee decided to go for a more complex and expensive procedure that cannot be justified by better results. It can once more turn REACH into an overwhelming burden for SMEs. Moreover, it makes no sense that the importation of some products into the EU will still be allowed even though their production in the EU will be forbidden.

"This vote contradicts any effects to reach the Lisbon goals. It undermines Europe's competitiveness and any attempt to create 'better regulation'. The business community hopes that the EP plenary will allow reason to prevail", said Arnaldo Abruzzini.

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