

**PRESS RELEASE**

## **REACH becomes more toxic for SMEs** **Plenary and Council must provide antidote!**

The vote on REACH of the European Parliament's Environment Committee today represents a hard backlash for SMEs and for Europe's competitiveness, EUROCHAMBRES, the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said. If the EP Plenary upholds this line, the Directive will become overly bureaucratic and much less efficient.

Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General of EUROCHAMBRES, said: *"The Plenary must use the chance to bring REACH back on track towards a workable and effective solution for European SMEs, the backbone of European economy. Parliament must progress with a realistic approach in favour of health and environment and not stick to demands that endanger jobs and our social fabric."*

It is SMEs that will particularly suffer from the increased costs resulting from the Directive. That is why EUROCHAMBRES has always asked for a simplification of the system and is very disappointed with the following decisions:

**Low volume substances:** MEPs enlarged the burden for SMEs by introducing chemical safety reports also for substances produced in low volumes (1-10 tonnes) where the risk to humans or the environment is insignificant.

**Obligation of substitution:** Strengthening the general requirement to look for a substitute, based on the inherent properties of a substance alone, without taking into consideration existing control measures, causes high and unnecessary expenses in terms of time and money. This should have been avoided today by the Committee.

**Duplication of regulations:** Some substances, such as medicine products, pesticides and biocides, are already subject to strict regulation. With today's decision not to exempt them from parts of the REACH regime, the Committee has increased red tape without adding benefits for the human health or the environment.

**Exposure categories:** Chambers have often pointed out the need to introduce simple exposure categories in the new chemicals policy (e.g. defining exposure scenarios such as oral, dermal exposure etc. instead of looking at every possible exposure scenario or conceivable use of a substance.). A clear definition of exposure categories would have reduced administrative burden for SMEs – the majority of downstream users – while at the same time providing transparency between supplier and client.

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EUROCHAMBRES has member organisations in 45 countries representing a network of 2,000 regional and local Chambers with over 18 million member companies.

**Authorisation:** Rather than having a fixed 5 year time frame for authorizations, which causes uncertainty for all enterprises in the supply chain, a case-by-case approach should have been adopted.

*“This vote – despite introducing a general clause that SMEs are to be supported – contradicts the attempts to create ‘better regulation’ and takes us further away from reaching the Lisbon goals. The business community hopes that the EP Plenary and the Council will allow reason to prevail”,* concluded Mr Abruzzini.

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