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# REACH: EU confirms chemical in outdoor clothing as substance with properties of very high concern

## Consumers must have access to information about REACH candidates

The REACH Candidate List now has 144 Substances of Very High Concern. Acting on an initiative by the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) Germany proposed the inclusion of seven chemicals as Substances of Very High Concern. One of them is perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), which is often found in all-weather clothing and has long been considered harmful to the environment. Says Jochen Flasbarth, President of the Environmental Protection Agency, "Substances of Very High Concern do not belong in the environment and should also be substituted in consumer goods. The inclusion of a chemical on the REACH Candidate List entitles consumers to special rights of information of which they should also make use." The easiest way to do so is by making an online query on [www.reach-info.de](http://www.reach-info.de). Almost 12,000 chemicals have now been registered in the EU. The bulk of the registrations originates from Germany.

The EU Member States have confirmed the joint proposal made by the competent authorities in Germany and Norway to include perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and its derivative APFO on the REACH Candidate List. PFOA is one of the most significant agents of the group of perfluorinated hydrocarbons (PFC). These are present in waterproofed fabrics such as outdoor jackets, carpeting or furniture coverings that are water-, dirt- or grease-repellent. The chemical can accumulate in food chains and has been traced regularly in human blood. It is so stable in the environment that it has been found everywhere in the world, including in the deep sea and the Arctic - and in the animals such as polar bears, seals and marine birds who live there. The nonylphenol ethoxylates used in resins and paints were also taken up on the Candidate List in following with a proposal made by UBA. These compounds produce the endocrine disruptive nonylphenol in waste water treatments plants and water bodies and have reprotoxic effects on fish. Upon a proposal from Sweden, the toxic heavy metal cadmium and cadmium oxide have been identified as Substances of Very High Concern. The plasticiser dipentyl phthalate is now also on the Candidate List. A decision is still pending on four other proposals by UBA. One of the objectives of the European REACH Regulation is to progressively substitute all substances of very high concern with suitable alternatives or technologies. The inclusion of such

chemicals on the REACH Candidate List after confirmation of its properties of very high concern is an important instrument in achieving this goal. Its inclusion on the List imposes certain obligations on manufacturers and suppliers.

Since PFOA has been added to the REACH Candidate List, merchants must disclose - on customer request - whether a product contains PFOA or any other Substance of Very High Concern in concentrations above 0.1%. A simple online query can be made through the UBA portal [www.reach-info.de](http://www.reach-info.de) to find out. In addition, the environmental authority in Norway and UBA are proposing that the production and application of PFOA be restricted throughout the EU. This ruling would also affect imported products.

A total of about 12,000 chemicals have now been registered in the EU. The new REACH registration deadline is 31 May 2018 and applies to chemicals that are produced or imported in volumes of one to 100 tonnes per year. In the second REACH registration period, which ended on 31 May 2013, concerned companies submitted 9,084 registration dossiers on 2,923 chemicals. Nearly one-third of all registrations recorded in the 27 EU Member States originate from Germany. The Federal Environment Agency will continue to propose inclusion of environmentally relevant chemicals on the REACH Candidate List and thereby speed up their substitution.

#### **Other links and downloads:**

The updated List of Substances of Very High Concern (REACH Candidate List) is on the web site of the European Chemicals Agency: <http://www.echa.europa.eu/candidate-list-table>

For more information about REACH, Substances of Very High Concern and your right to information, including a sample query, click here: <http://www.reach-info.de>

Dessau-Roßlau, 24 June 2013