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# REACH: First signs of successful action taken against endocrine disruptor

## Endocrine disruptor octylphenol is 'substance of very high concern'

**Octylphenol will become the first chemical to be taken up on the European 'Candidate List of Substances of Very High Concern for Authorisation' because of its endocrine disruptive effect. The Federal Environment Agency (UBA) had drafted the proposal for Germany, which the responsible Member State committee at the European Chemicals Agency has approved unanimously. Octylphenol is used in the manufacture of paints, adhesives and tyres. UBA President Jochen Flasbarth said, "For years we have conducted research on the hormonal effect of chemicals and given advice on assessment criteria. The decision taken by the European Union (EU) marks the start of regulation of chemicals based on their endocrine disruptive properties. This will send an important signal to environmental and consumer protection."**

Scientific studies have proven that octylphenol acts as an endocrine disruptor in fish. Even at low concentrations it impairs development and reproduction. Octylphenol, or 4-tert-Octylphenol, is used to manufacture paints, adhesives, and tyres. Effective immediately, octylphenol is classified as a "substance of very high concern for authorisation" which should be replaced, as stipulated by the EU REACH Directive. The EU states have thereby voted unanimously to approve UBA's proposal. Jochen Flasbarth said, "UBA has targeted other substances of very high concern. The affirmation of our proposal opens the path to regulating other endocrine disruptive chemicals." The decision will have an immediate impact on consumer protection. Flasbarth remarked, "At customers' request, merchants must provide information free of charge about whether a product contains this or any other substance of very high concern. By making such a request they are sending the message to suppliers that they do not want these chemicals in products." What effect will this have on other chemicals which are proven to impair human and animal reproduction and development owing to their endocrine disruptive properties? With sufficient proof, these chemicals can be classified by REACH as "substances of very high concern." Once the chemical is accorded this status, other regulatory measures may follow, e.g. an authorisation obligation. Alternately, a ban may be imposed on certain applications or on its import, even if it is only one component of a product. In the long term, substances of very high concern are set to be

banned completely and replaced. A first step in that direction is inclusion in the REACH Candidate List, as has just occurred in the case of octylphenol.

Germany's proposal represents an important contribution to achieving the goal set by EU Commissioners for the Environment, Janez Potočnik, and for Industry and Entrepreneurship, Antonio Tajani, to amplify the Candidate List to 136 substances of very high concern by the end of 2012. The member state committee resolution has put 73 chemicals on the Candidate List of Substances of Very High Concern for Authorisation, 19 of which were proposed by Germany.

Other links and downloads:

The current list of substances of very high concern (REACH Candidate List) is on the European Chemicals Agency website here:

[http://echa.europa.eu/chem\\_data/authorisation\\_process/candidate\\_list\\_table\\_en.asp](http://echa.europa.eu/chem_data/authorisation_process/candidate_list_table_en.asp)

For more information about substances of very high concern and your right to information, including a sample enquiry, see here: <http://www.reach-info.de>

Information about REACH:

<http://www.reach-clp-helpdesk.de/de/Startseite.html>

Dessau-Roßlau, 13 December 2011