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Enhanced protection against substances of very high concern

REACH demands compliance from companies and strengthens right to information

The European REACH Regulation obliges companies to register substances of very high concern with the European Chemicals Agency starting 1 June 2011. President Jochen Flasbarth of the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) is calling upon companies to carry out an exacting review of their product range. "Substances with these properties do not belong in the products we use in our daily lives. They must be substituted," said Flasbarth. He has reminded producers and trade to comply with their registration obligations.

Anyone seeking to avoid contact with substances of very high concern can make use of his right to information. REACH places the onus of providing information on traders upon a request from concerned citizens as to whether a certain product contains such substances. Businesses or producers must answer the enquiry within 45 days' time. The obligation to provide information does not require purchase of any given product.

UBA has made a sample enquiry available on the following website: www.reach-info.de. The website and the homepage of the European Chemicals Agency also provide information on substances of very high concern in products:

http://echa.europa.eu/reach/sia/notification_in_sia_en.asp.

Substances of very high concern (SVHC) denote chemicals that are subject to greater regulation by the European REACH chemicals regulation. They include carcinogenic, mutagenic or reprotoxic chemicals (CMR substances) and substances that are persistent in the environment, bioaccumulate and are toxic (PBT substances). Endocrine disruptors are also problematic chemicals.

ECHA has set up a so-called Candidate List of substances of very high concern:

http://echa.europa.eu/chem_data/authorisation_process/candidate_list_table_en.asp.

Registration obligation enters in effect on after 1 June 2011 requiring businesses to advise the European Chemicals Agency of products they produce or import that contain more than 0.1 percent of a substance of very high concern which is used in a total volume of more than one tonne per year.

Dessau-Roßlau, 30 May 2011