



On 10 March 2015 the Commission completed a [survey](#) on the impact of the REACH legislation on EU competitiveness which it launched in February. The Commission asked Europe’s industry a simple question: how much does REACH cost your business? Throughout 2015 the Commission will conduct other surveys, consultations and assessments like this one. The objective is clear: to make EU chemicals legislation an instrument of the industry’s competitiveness. Is your organisation making its voice heard in this process?

THIS INITIATIVE IS PART OF A BIGGER MOVE UNDER REFIT

‘REFIT’ is the Regulatory Fitness and Performance programme: it is meant to ensure that existing legislation is ‘fit for purpose’. Its objective is to identify inconsistencies, contradictions, gaps or overlaps, and to solve them.

The Commission has new leaders who have a new agenda focused on jobs and growth. To help bring this about, they are doing things very differently. This year they are performing a fitness check up on Europe’s chemicals legislation. In 2015 the Commission will look at the whole body of EU chemicals legislation, and not only REACH.

In 2013 it conducted a review of REACH which concluded that REACH needed to be better implemented and to be less of a burden on the industry, particularly on SMEs. ECHA has already been working on reducing fees and supporting SMEs more, by simplifying the authorisation process.

WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE CONCRETELY?

- A study on the fitness of the risk management of chemicals: this study will mainly look whether the CLP regulation is implemented properly, and how the various laws at EU and national levels interact with each other.
- A study on the cost of the chemicals legislation: the results of the survey that closed this week will of course be part of this study, which will look to estimate the European industry’s losses each year due to the regulatory burdens generated by the chemicals legislation.
- A study on the benefits of the chemicals legislation: of course the costs will need to be weighted against the

benefits this legislation brings, in terms of health, environmental protection and support to growth and competitiveness.

In parallel, the Commission is also conducting an evaluation of existing Health and Safety legislation. In particular, it will look at how health and safety can be better articulated within the chemicals legislation. The overlap between the two regimes is cumbersome and confusing for companies, and can require contradictory measures to be implemented at the workplace.

Based on all this, the Commission will have an overview of the concrete costs and benefits of EU chemicals legislation. The Commission plans to report in 2016 and recommend what needs to be done.

From there, it expects to be able to make policy proposals to adapt the legislation and make it more efficient, and more clear, in short, more fit for the 21st century.

INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION WILL BE KEY

The Commission needs to know what impact chemical law is having. And, it can only do that if companies take the time from their busy schedules to let the Commission know what is happening. Silence is not an option. This will be your chance to directly tell the Commission where there are areas for improvement: don’t miss it.

European legislation is littered with too many examples of laws drafted in a vacuum, starved of the feedback from hard working men and women who know best what day-to-day impact European laws have on their lives. If companies do not speak up, bad decisions may be made.



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