



European Environmental Bureau, European Public Health Alliance Environment Network, Eurocoop, Friends of the Earth Europe, Greenpeace, Women in Europe for a Common Future, WWF

PRESS RELEASE



REACH: Parliament's lead committee backs REACH principles but falls short of guaranteeing safety information



Brussels, 4 October 2005 -- Environmental, women's, health and consumer organisations welcomed the strengthening of controls on hazardous chemicals adopted within the report on REACH at the Parliament's environment and public health committee today, but criticised the weak requirements on the provision of safety data for a vast number of chemicals.



Friends of the Earth Europe

The groups were pleased to see members of the European Parliament's environment and public health committee support the mandatory substitution of hazardous chemicals with safer alternatives when these are available. This requirement is essential to end the build-up of harmful chemicals in our bodies and the environment.



For substitution to work, however, it is essential to obtain basic safety information about chemicals for which we lack data on the environmental and health impacts, which REACH is supposed to deliver. At present we lack this basic information on 90% of chemicals.



The groups therefore regret that the feeble compromise on lower volume chemicals (produced in volumes of 1-10 tonnes per year), adopted by the committee - under intense pressure from industry – leaves dangerous gaps in the provision of safety information..



A REACH adopted on this basis would not deliver the health and environment protection the public expects, as it would leave thousands of lower volume chemicals without basic toxicity data and so would hamper the identification of potentially harmful chemicals, such as hormone-disruptors.

In November, the European Parliament has the chance to reinforce REACH in its plenary session, to ensure that the legislation will help both identify and replace all hazardous chemicals. This is a unique opportunity to protect future generations and their environment and it should not be sacrificed for the short-sighted interests of the chemicals industry, argue the groups.

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