



Brussels, 17 July 2014

To: Geert Dancet, Executive Director, European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)

CC: Lindsay Jackson, Head of Communications, European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)

Dear Mr. Dancet,

We, the undersigned environmental and health organizations, are writing to express our appreciation of the video 'The Price You Pay'¹ launched by ECHA recently. The video greatly contributes to raising European citizens' awareness of substances of very high concern (SVHCs) present in consumer articles and enhances the consumers' right to know guaranteed by the REACH Regulation.

We believe this creative approach taken by ECHA with this video to connect with and serve European citizens – who are the primary target group of the European Chemicals Agency – can make a contribution to achieving REACH's goal of ensuring a high level of protection.

¹ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSWIAEDJfSg>

Moreover, it enables citizens to be more aware of the risks linked to hazardous chemicals to which they are exposed and provides for informed purchasing decisions towards safer consumer articles. Access to information on SVHCs in products therefore represents a powerful tool for promoting the substitution of harmful chemicals with safe alternatives.

We actually think the video could go further by making ECHA's 'chemicals in our life' page even more informative and helpful for consumers. We would like to suggest that ECHA develops its own model letter in order to encourage and help European citizens to exercise their right to know according to REACH article 33 and according to BPR² article 58. ECHA should also add specific links to other inquiry templates from e.g. UBA³, EEB⁴ or HEAL⁵ as well as making it available in different languages. Moreover, ECHA should go beyond this video by giving concrete examples of controversial chemicals (e.g. BPA, phthalates, triclosan, etc.), where they are found and how they could be avoided by people who may not want to expose themselves to them.

We are deeply concerned by some chemical manufacturers' criticism of this video, which we regard as an attempt to obstruct the legitimate consumers' right to know and their protection against exposure to hazardous chemicals. It is disappointing that these chemical industries seem to negate the wish of the consumers and their right to know, instead of focusing on introducing safer chemicals in the consumer items they place on the market, as part of their duty of care.

We thank you for your commitment and call on you to continue working for the wellbeing of European citizens in order to ensure that the protection of health and environment is achieved.

Yours sincerely,



Jeremy Wates
Secretary General of the European Environmental Bureau

On behalf of:

² Biocidal Product Regulation (BPR, Regulation (EU) 528/2012)

³ <http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/en/topics/chemicals/reach-what-is-it/reach-for-consumers>

⁴ <http://www.eeb.org/EEB/?LinkServID=8C1728AC-D675-5D81-2609DF2C639E33CF>

⁵ <http://www.env-health.org/resources/publications/article/harmful-chemicals-in-products-you>

BUND

The Cancer Prevention & Education Society (CPES)

ChemTrust

The Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

ClientEarth

The Danish Ecological Council

Ecologistas en acción

The European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

Fédération Inter-Environnement Wallonie (IEW)

General Confederation of the Portuguese Workers (CGTP-IN)

Greenpeace

Health Care Without Harm Europe (HCWH Europe)

Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)

Quercus – National Association for Nature Conservation

Pesticide Action Network-Europe (PAN-Europe)

Pesticide Action Network- Germany (PAN-Germany)

Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC)

Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF)

In view of the public interest in this matter, we intend to make this letter publicly available.