



**Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Social Affairs and
Public Health**

Frank Vandenbroucke

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(HEAL)

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Contact via

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Attachment(s)

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Date

Brussels, 8/10/2022

Dear Ms. Jensen, dear members of the SSMG,

I thank you for your letter on behalf of several public health groups regarding the delivery of some of the Green Deal initiatives. I am very committed to disease prevention and health protection, and seriously concerned by the heavy impact of synthetic chemicals on public health.

I share your concerns about the Commission's delay in achieving its objectives regarding the EU Green Deal and more particularly regarding the Chemical Strategy for Sustainability, of which the revisions of REACH and CLP are parts.

Belgium had already called on the European Commission at the beginning of October not to delay the REACH revision project. Indeed, my colleague Ms Khattabi co-signed a letter with other Ministers of Environment requesting the European Commission to keep the REACH revision on schedule. I regret that this call, which was similar to that of Members of the EU Parliament and members of civil and scientific society, was not really heard, as the publication of the legislative project amending REACH was postponed until the end of 2023.

I can confirm that Belgium will remind the Commission of its request during the general discussions in the Council on legislative programming and during the competent authorities of the REACH Regulation.

Despite this announced delay, I can assure you that the Belgian authorities will plead for the future adaptations of the REACH Regulation to remain within its primary objectives of protecting health and the environment and to be sufficiently ambitious with regard to the announced objectives of the Green Deal.

As far as the CLP Regulation is concerned, the Commission has already started discussions with Member States and stakeholders for the part that will be carried out in a delegated act. The legislative text that will follow the normal path (Council and Parliament) should be published by the end of 2022 according to our latest information. I am also aware of the importance of the on-going discussion on the Regulation for the Sustainable Use of Plants Protection Products for the sake of public health. However, Belgium has expressed some reserves regarding the setting of national reduction targets, especially due to the calculation method and sharing of efforts between users.

In relation with the existing tool that calculates pesticide reduction, Belgium has expressed a reserve about annex I. We stay committed to find an alternative calculation tool to better discriminate active substances from non-chemical method, promoted as safer alternatives.

Finally, for the proposal for a total ban on the use of all pesticides in areas used by the general public, particularly pregnant women and children, we support this idea as it is already the case in Belgium in public areas such as hospitals, children day care, ... But my country has expressed once again some reserve for this proposal due to the lack of a precise definition of the ban zones, as well as for the pesticide-free buffer-zone.

Please be ensured that I am closely collaborating with my colleagues from the Federal Government and from the Governments of the Regions and Communities in charge of Health and Environment to protect health and promote healthier environment.

Yours sincerely,



Frank VANDENBROUCKE

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