

To the
Permanent Representatives of EU Member States to
European Union
Heads of Missions of EEA Member States
Brussels

Subject: National REACH helpdesks; preparing for the third registration deadline

Dear Permanent Representatives and Heads of Mission,

The REACH Regulation that came into force in June 2007 and substantially modernised the European Union's regulatory regime on the safe use of chemical substances foresees a phase-in period for registering existing substances with ECHA. This period ends with a (third) REACH registration deadline of 31 May 2018.

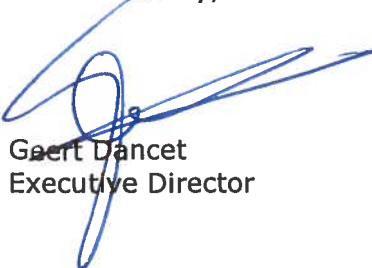
In contrast with the previous two deadlines of 2010 and 2013, which saw companies submit about 15,000 and 9,000 registration dossiers, respectively, for the 2018 deadline we are expecting about 59,000 registrations, potentially even more. The deadline will also see a significantly larger portion of small and medium sized (SME) and inexperienced companies within the ranks of registrants. Evidently, such companies will require particular support. Experience also shows that registrants tend to register only close to the deadline, resulting in a peak demand for support between now and the deadline.

All EU and EEA Member States provide support to registrants via their national REACH helpdesks and are obliged to do so under the provision of Article 124 of the REACH Regulation. Throughout the last decade, ECHA has managed the network of national helpdesks to enable them to exchange information, to harmonise their replies to companies and to share best practice.

At the latest meeting of the network's steering group in March of this year, the national helpdesks collectively asked ECHA's management to convey their need to rely on requisite human resources and skills for ensuring the success of the REACH phase-in to their Governments. For some, this represents an urgent need to augment their resource, for most an imperative to maintain current levels through the coming year. As head of the EU regulatory agency in charge of managing the implementation of REACH, and aware of the daunting task ahead of all stakeholders to ensure success in having all existing chemicals registered as a prerequisite for assessing and managing their risks to human health and the environment, I wholeheartedly join their plea.

I therefore would like to ask you to draw the attention of your authorities to the need for maintaining adequate resources at your national helpdesks, particularly into 2018.

Yours sincerely,



Gaert Dancet
Executive Director

CC: Ms Lowri Evans, Director-General (European Commission, DG GROW)
Mr Daniel Calleja Crespo, Director-General (European Commission, DG ENV)