



## **NGO REACH Priority List**

### **A Tool for Phasing out Chemicals of High Concern**

The European Union has approved a new EU policy on chemicals, REACH, which entered into force in June 2007. Over the next decade thousands of chemicals manufactured in or imported into the European Union will have to be registered. This means that companies will be obliged to provide specified health and safety information on those chemicals to the newly established European Chemicals Agency in Helsinki, Finland. The success of REACH will depend on a prompt, effective process for identifying the most hazardous chemicals on the European market and replacing them with safer alternatives, thereby spurring innovation, competitiveness and clean production.

The procedure for dealing with the most hazardous chemicals, and a cornerstone of REACH, is a process called Authorisation - a requirement for the producers or importers of the most hazardous substances to obtain a special permission before placing them on the market. At the heart of the Authorisation process is a "candidate list" of chemicals that meet the criteria of "substances of very high concern" defined in the legislation, such as those that may cause cancer or persist in our bodies and the environment for long periods of time. Connected to this list is a requirement for companies to provide information to consumers concerning the presence of these substances of very high concern in consumer products. In 2009, the European Chemicals Agency will make a first recommendation of priority substances which will subsequently require an authorisation for continued use.

In order to ensure an early start and proper execution of this vital process, ChemSec in collaboration with leading NGOs in the EU and beyond is developing the NGO REACH Priority List. The aim of this project is to ensure that Authorisation is an effective tool to fast-track the most urgent Substances of Very High Concern for substitution, and to facilitate toxic use reduction by businesses.

The NGO REACH Priority List will identify a set of chemicals through the combined efforts of public interest groups, scientists and technical experts. The list will be based on credible, publicly available substance information from existing data bases, scientific studies and new research. The goal is to inform European authorities and to provide some advance guidance to companies, consumers and other countries.

The Project is guided by an NGO advisory committee including the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), WWF European Policy Office, Greenpeace European Unit, Friends of the Earth Europe (FoEE), Instituto Sindical de Trabajo, Ambiente y

Salud (ISTAS), Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF), the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), the European Consumers' Organisation (BEUC) and the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL).

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