
ECHA

THE EUROPEAN
CHEMICALS AGENCY

HELSINKI, FINLAND



The European Chemicals Agency

LEGAL BASIS

The REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) Regulation (EC No. 1907/2006) was adopted in December 2006 and will enter into force on 1 June 2007. The Regulation establishes a new European Chemicals Agency in Helsinki, Finland. The Chemicals Agency will be set up on 1 June 2007 and will execute REACH operations as from 1 June 2008 which is the date for industry to fulfil its obligations under REACH.

The most important new obligation the Regulation introduces is that all chemical substances (≥ 1 tonne/year) falling under the REACH system need to be registered by manufacturers and importers to the Chemicals Agency, otherwise they cannot be manufactured and/or imported. This is simplified in the principle "**no data, no market**".

MISSION

The Agency will:

- Manage and coordinate the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction

processes under REACH to ensure consistency in chemicals management across the EU

- Provide the Member States and the Institutions of the Community with scientific and technical advice on chemicals covered by the Regulation
- Manage IT based guidance documents, tools and data bases

COMPOSITION

The Agency will comprise:

A **Management Board**, responsible for adopting the financial planning, work programme, annual reporting and control over the Executive Director

An **Executive Director**, the legal representative of the Agency, responsible for the day to day management and administration of the Agency, including responsibility over its finances

A **Secretariat** to support the Committees and Forum and undertake work on registration and evaluation processes as well as preparation of guidance, maintenance of databases and provision of information

A **Member State Committee** to resolve potential divergences of opinion on draft decisions proposed by the Agency or Member States and make proposals for identification of substances of very high concern

A **Risk Assessment Committee** to prepare opinions on evaluation, on applications for authorisation, on proposals for restrictions and on classification and labelling.

A **Committee for Socio-economic analysis** to prepare opinions on applications for authorisation, on proposals for restrictions and on questions relating to the socio-economic impact of proposed legislative action

A **Forum** on enforcement matters to coordinate a network of Member States' competent authorities responsible for enforcement

A **Board of Appeal** to decide on appeals against decisions taken by the Agency

AGENCY STAFF

The Agency will be headed by an Executive Director. The staff of the Agency is expected to grow from about 100 at the end of 2007 to over 400 persons by 2010. A recruitment procedure for Agency staff (Temporary Agents) has been launched in early 2007. Further calls for Temporary Agents will take place later in 2007 and 2008 e.g. for management positions.

During the early months, the newly recruited Agency staff will be supported by 40 seconded Commission officials who will establish the necessary procedures and provide essential training needed to enable the Agency to become operational.

PREPARING THE GROUND

The Agency will have its seat in the very centre of Helsinki. A building lease has already been signed between the building owner and the Finnish government and refurbishment works are ongoing.

When REACH enters in to force on 1 June 2007 ECHA will start to exist and an initial start-up team of Commission officials, headed by an interim Executive Director, will move to Helsinki. Even before that the data centre of the Agency and its ICT infrastructure will be installed to allow the helpdesk to start its operations without delay.

The Management Board will start convening in summer 2007 onwards taking essential decisions, including selecting the Executive Director.

The first wave of Temporary Agents will move to Helsinki over the summer and early autumn 2007 to prepare for the Agency working procedures.

First operational staff will finalise the guidance that the Agency will provide for industry, and set up the helpdesk of the Agency to cooperate with the network of the Member State helpdesks. It will be a challenging task to finalise and test the business processes of the Agency.

The interim Executive Director is expected to hand over the office to the first Executive Director in early 2008.

From January to March 2008, recruitment of further 120 new colleagues is planned.

GOING LIVE

In June 2008, twelve months after the ECHA started, it has to be able to operate REACH. The first challenge will be to manage the pre-registration of substances and intermediates. About 180.000 dossiers are expected to be submitted during the first 6 months of operation, relating to 30,000 substances and 20,000 intermediates.

In parallel, the Committees and the Forum start working, *inter alia* taking over unfinished work from the pre-REACH system. It is also possible that early registrations will be made, and industry can request for exemptions from registration requirements for the purposes of research and development.

REACH unit

European Commission
Directorate-General for
Enterprise and Industry

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/reach/prep_agency_en.htm