

AskREACH

Help consumers and businesses apply the “right to know” about extremely concerning substances present in consumer articles via innovative IT tools.



Inspiration

The European REACH regulation “Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and restriction of Chemicals” dedicated to the documenting, evaluation, authorization and restriction of chemical substances, imposes numerous obligations for businesses manufacturing, importing or using chemicals. Among these, Article 33 stipulates that suppliers of articles containing extremely concerning substances (SVHCs) in concentrations higher than 0.1% (m/m) must provide their clients with the necessary information to allow them to use the article they have purchased safely. Article 33 of the regulation also determines the right of the consumer to request and obtain this information from a supplier.

Yet, in actual fact, this requirement is not really applied. Even worse, some article suppliers are not even aware of this obligation. This lack of awareness has also been noted on the consumer side. Therefore, a real awareness-raising effort is necessary with these two key groups in the supply chain.

Innovation

With AskREACH, the project partners intend to alert consumers and suppliers to the substances of very high concern (SVHCs) that may be present in articles. They thus endeavour to improve the flow of information on SVHCs between suppliers and consumers, help suppliers respect their obligations within the framework of REACH and finally, support communication concerning the SVHCs contained in articles throughout the whole supply chain.

To help in this process, a database including information on SVHCs contained in the articles provided by article suppliers will be developed. This will be connected to a smartphone application that consumers will be able to use to obtain information on the SVHCs contained in the articles. Suppliers will also benefit from the adaptation of a tool from an existing materials database system in order to be able to collect and process data specific to the article in an optimal way.

In the framework of its activities focusing on supporting national and European policies, LIST mainly participates in the technical fulfilment of the database and is responsible for the awareness campaign for businesses. For this, it calls on its expertise in the area of the REACH regulation, acquired as part of the management of the [Helpdesk REACH&CLP Luxembourg](#), and on its technical expertise acquired as part of the implementation of the [WikiFood platform](#).

Impact

At the end of the project, a smartphone application providing access to information on the SVHCs, as well as its dedicated database will be made available. These tools will allow article suppliers to respect their legal obligations in a simple way and consumers will be able to obtain information on the substances contained in the consumer articles that they buy regularly. For this, suppliers will also be able to count on a suitable tool to gather and process data.

Thus, the communication of businesses on substances throughout the whole supply chain will be improved. Possibilities will be created to allow industry to reconsider its way of communicating with consumers concerning their obligations. These include downloading information on the SVHCs in just one step, supplying additional information directly to consumers, receiving statistics on consumer requests or promoting articles without SVHCs to consumers.

Partners

Umweltbundesamt (DE), Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland - BUND (DE), Wissenschaftsstadt Darmstadt (DE), Danish Environmental Protection Agency (DK), Swedish Chemicals Agency (SE), Baltic Environmental Forum - Latvia (LV), Verein für Konsumenteninformation - VKI (AT), Global 2000 (AT), Ecologistas en Acción (SP), Buy Responsibly Foundation (PL), Arnika (CZ), Baltic Environmental Forum Germany (DE), Green Action (HR), ZERO (PT), National Observatory of Athens (GR), European Environmental Bureau - EEB (BE), Danish Consumer Council (DK), Swedish Consumers' Association (SE)

Financial Support

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