

The EU Chemicals Strategy

Subject Overview

In the fall of 2020, the Commission released a sustainability-focused chemicals strategy (Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability). The goal of the chemical strategy is to enhance chemical safety and support the production, innovation, and investments in chemicals aligned with sustainable development. The core of the strategy consists of around 60 different legislative proposals related to REACH registrations, expanding the control of substances of concern, restrictions based on substance properties, and new chemical classifications. Some of the proposals have already been implemented as regulations, and the target timeline for the full implementation of the strategy is by the year 2024.

Objective of the Chemical Industry

The industry's concerns revolve around the predictability of regulations and adherence to the principles of better regulation. Pushing through dozens of legislative proposals within a tight schedule, as outlined in the strategy, requires substantial resources both from the Commission and national authorities. Especially, the assessment of the proposals' impacts may remain superficial, as well as ensuring the cost-effectiveness and scientific basis of the proposed actions and demonstrating their safety-enhancing effects.

It is also important to initiate actions that support innovation, maintain strategic value chains and production within the EU, provide funding for the promotion of safe and sustainable products, and invest in skills development. In the implementation of the numerous legislative proposals of the strategy, the focus should be on those that can genuinely enhance safety. Resources within companies, authorities, and EU institutions are limited. Therefore, the preparation and implementation of proposals should be prioritized and phased to adhere to the principles of better regulation. The strategy includes various framework terms, such as essential uses, safe and sustainable by design, and a general risk-based approach, which need to be defined before they are applied in regulations.

The actions of the chemical strategy should support the goals of the EU's Green Deal and attract investments for the green transition within the Union. The EU will continue to need safe chemicals, for example, for solutions related to the hydrogen economy, battery technologies, and the circular economy.

Additional Information:

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