

#ToxicFreeFuture

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ONLINE VERSION



# MY CHEMICALS COMPASS

NAVIGATING THROUGH FUTURE VOTES ON EU CHEMICALS POLICY

EMPOWERING MEPS TO  
SHAPE A SAFER FUTURE



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FUTURE

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CRIN  
CHILD  
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CHEMTrust  
Protecting humans and wildlife  
from harmful chemicals



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## CONTENT GUIDE

The following pages provide an accessible overview of the **main chemicals policy files that the European Parliament will be addressing during this mandate**. Each file represents a critical step towards a safer, toxic-free Europe.

**'One Substance, One Assessment' Package** - *Streamlining evaluations*

**REACH Revision** - *Strengthening chemical safety*

**PFAS Action Plan** - *Tackling Forever Chemicals*

**Exports Ban** - *Ensuring safer borders*

**ECHA Founding Regulation** - *Safeguarding chemicals control*

**Toxic-Free Products** - *Safer Everyday Items*

- Toy Safety Law - *Protecting our children*
- Food Contact Materials - *Safe from farm to fork*
- Detergents Regulation - *Cleaning up standards*
- Cosmetics Products Regulation - *Beauty without harm*

**AS AN MEP, YOU HAVE THE CHANCE TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF EU CHEMICALS POLICIES AND PROTECT OUR HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT.**

**DIVE IN, EXPLORE, AND GET READY TO MAKE AN IMPACT!**

# #ToxicFreeFuture

Imagine a **future** where our **children** breathe **clean air**, our **food is free from harmful substances**, and the products we use daily are **safe** for everyone. The European Union stands at a **pivotal moment to shape this future** - a future where **public health, social justice, and a sustainable economy** thrive together.

**But today, we face a critical challenge: hazardous chemicals are everywhere.**

In our water, food, air, everyday products, and even in our bodies. These chemicals are harming our health, causing illness, infertility, cognitive impairment, and even premature death. They pose an especially **severe threat** to women, children, and future generations. **Chemical pollution is much more than an environmental issue** - it is a profound violation of our fundamental human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

**As an MEP, you have a unique opportunity to change this.**

Your decisions can help steer the EU towards a **toxic-free, socially just green transition, and empower European industries to lead in creating non-toxic products and innovative practices.**

During your mandate, you will play a **key role** in **implementing** the EU's Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability. Here's **how you can make a difference:**

- **Strengthen Early Warnings and Action System:** Advocate for a robust 'One Substance, One Assessment' package to detect and address chemical risks early.
- **Defend an ambitious REACH update:** Push for stronger protections for people's health and the environment.
- **Support the PFAS Action Plan:** Call for a swift ban on all non-essential uses of these dangerous "forever" chemicals.
- **Stop hazardous exports:** Ensure that chemicals banned in the EU are not exported to other regions.
- **Empower the European Chemicals Agency:** Secure sufficient resources through an ambitious ECHA Founding Regulation.
- **Phase out harmful chemicals:** Drive sectoral legislation reforms for a swift phase-out of toxic chemicals in consumer goods, including for:
  - **The Toy Safety Law**
  - **The EU rules on Food Contact Materials**
  - **The Detergents Regulation**
  - **The Cosmetics Products Regulation**

In this pack, you will find **everything you need to champion these priorities:** comprehensive information on **chemical pollution** and actionable steps to build a toxic-free Europe.

## THE EU CHEMICALS LEGISLATION IN A NUTSHELL

In the EU, the main chemical regulations are the following:

- **REACH Regulation:** The Regulation on the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals (REACH) aims to ensure that chemicals used in the EU are safe for human health and the environment.
- **CLP Regulation:** The classification, labelling and packaging Regulation (CLP) ensures that hazards of chemicals are clearly communicated to consumers and workers.

There are also **sector-specific laws** that regulate chemicals in products and processes, such as **Toys, Cosmetics, Detergents**, etc.

Adopted in 2020, the **Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability (CSS)** is a key pillar of the European Green Deal's goal for a toxic-free environment and the zero-pollution ambition. This roadmap includes over 80 actions to make chemicals safer, sustainable by design, and to minimise their adverse effects on people and the planet.

### More information:

- ChemSec, *Understand something the others don't: This is EU chemicals legislation in a nutshell*
- CHEM Trust, *ABCs of REACH*
- European Environmental Bureau (EEB), *From Risk to Resilience: Navigating Towards a Toxic-Free Future*

## ICONS GUIDE



What is this all about? ? NGO requests to the European Parliament



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## 'ONE SUBSTANCE, ONE ASSESSMENT' PACKAGE - STREAMLINING EVALUATIONS

 The **One Substance, One Assessment (OSOA)** initiative aims to streamline the evaluation of harmful chemicals across various EU legislations. It introduces an Early Warnings and Action System (EWAS) to detect and act on emerging chemical risks promptly, preventing future scandals like those involving PFAS ("forever chemicals").

In December 2023, the European Commission adopted three key proposals under the OSOA legislative package:

1. **Data Regulation:** Establishes a Common Data Platform on Chemicals (CDPC) to centralise data from approximately 70 pieces of EU legislation on chemicals.
2. **Directive on Reattribution of tasks to ECHA:** Reassigns scientific and technical tasks to the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA).
3. **Regulation on cooperation among EU Agencies:** Enhances collaboration between EU agencies on chemical management.

The OSOA package is a key component of the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability and complements upcoming proposals for the ECHA Founding Regulation and the REACH revision (see points below).

 The Council agreed on its negotiation mandates in June 2024. In the Parliament, the Rapporteur for the OSOA package is Dimitrios Tsiodros (EPP). **Discussions in the ENVI Committee are expected to begin in autumn 2024.**

 To ensure an ambitious OSOA package, NGOs call on the European Parliament to:

For the Data Regulation (1):

- Ensure the CDPC facilitates improved use and re-use of data and identifies gaps in data on chemicals in products and alternatives to harmful substances;
- Guarantee that the EWAS holds authorities accountable to act when emerging risks are identified;
- Ensure chemical data from independent research is included in the CDPC and EWAS.


For the reattribution of tasks and coordination proposals (2 and 3):

- Avoid replicating poorly designed REACH mechanisms to ensure consistency;
- Reduce the regulatory burden on authorities, considering their limited resources.

 European Commission's *proposal for OSOA*; EEB's *position on OSOA*; Comments submitted to the public consultation of the OSOA proposals (*data regulation and re-attribution*)


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## REACH REVISION - STRENGTHENING CHEMICAL SAFETY


 **REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation, and Restriction of Chemicals)** is the core EU Regulation governing the marketing of chemicals. It sets out requirements for information on the uses, hazards and exposure of chemicals along the supply chain and establishes processes to phase-out chemicals that pose risks to people or the environment. However, it currently takes over 19 years to regulate a harmful chemical.




The **Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability (CSS)**, endorsed by all EU institutions, proposed strengthening and improving REACH. The European Commission, in collaboration with Member States and stakeholders, developed options for reform and prepared an impact assessment that received a positive opinion from the Regulatory Scrutiny Board in autumn 2022. Despite this, a reform proposal has not been published, largely due to pressure from certain industry sectors (notably from Germany) on the former Commission and Parliament.

 European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has promised to “simplify” REACH, and a revision proposal is expected by 2025. Once tabled, the Council and Parliament will negotiate this critical file, a process likely to take around two years.

 To accelerate the identification and phase-out of harmful chemicals, NGOs urge MEPs to ensure the REACH reform:


- **Introduces fast-track restrictions:** Apply rapid restrictions for the most harmful chemicals in all consumer and professional products;
- **Accelerates hazardous chemicals regulation:** Simplify and reduce the burden of REACH Restriction and Authorisation processes for authorities, lower the bar for justifying regulation, and introduce the “essential use” concept into decision-making;
- **Improves REACH Registration requirements:** Ensure better information on chemical uses, hazards and exposure, notably for polymers, endocrine disruptors and carcinogens;
- **Give REACH teeth and ensure industry liability:** strengthen REACH with robust, dissuasive sanctions, a market revocation mechanism, harmonised enforcement, and the Polluter Pays Principle;
- **Ensure Access to Justice:** Include provisions in the legal text for public access to justice.


 EEB and CHEM Trust’s report *Waiting for REACH: The negative impacts of delaying reform of EU chemical laws*; ClientEarth’s *six key demands for the reform of the EU’s chemical law*; EEB’s report *The Need for Speed*; EEB’s *key messages to the Commission for the REACH Revision*

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## PFAS ACTION PLAN - TACKLING FOREVER CHEMICALS

 **PFAS** (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances), known as “forever chemicals”, **pose a severe threat to our health, environment and economy** due to their persistent pollution of water, land, food and presence in everyday products. In response, the EU has committed to tackle the widespread PFAS contamination through a comprehensive PFAS Action Plan that aims to address this issue holistically – from production to remediation.

 Several legislative proposals addressing PFAS will be introduced during the next Parliament's term, including a Commission proposal for a universal PFAS restriction; a law setting PFAS limits in food; and a revision of the Sewage Sludge Directive to manage PFAS contamination.

 To ensure the successful implementation of the PFAS Action Plan, NGOs call on MEPs to:

- **Push for a Broad PFAS Restriction:** Advocate for a comprehensive restriction that aligns with the ambitions of the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability, banning PFAS in all non-essential uses, including pesticides;
- **Explore and exploit further measures:** Utilise every opportunity to address PFAS pollution through various legislative and policy angles, as laid out in the PFAS action plan.

 “Case Study: The Uncontrolled Spread of PFAS Pollution”, from page 66 in the EEB’s report *From Risk to Resilience: Navigating Towards a Toxic-Free Future*; Corporate Europe Observatory, *PFAS are forever? How the chemical industry is fighting back against regulation*; CHEM Trust, *Frequently Asked Questions: PFAS and the Green Transition*

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**JOIN US IN TAKING ACTION: IF YOU ARE READY TO LEAD ON THESE PRIORITIES, DEMONSTRATE YOUR COMMITMENT BY SIGNING THE ‘TOXIC-FREE PLEDGE’. TOGETHER, WE CAN CREATE A HEALTHIER, SAFER FUTURE FOR ALL.**


[HTTPS://EEB.ORG/TOXICFREEPLEDGE/](https://eeb.org/toxicfreepledge/)




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## EXPORTS BAN - ENSURING SAFER BORDERS

 The EU has prohibited the use of certain highly hazardous chemicals within its borders due to their significant risks to people and the environment. However, these chemicals are still being exported to other regions, including to the global south, leading to an estimated **385 million cases of acute pesticide poisoning every year**. The EU committed in the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability to stop export of chemicals banned in the EU due to their harmful effects.

 The Commission is expected to present a legislative proposal to stop these exports. This proposal is still pending and should be introduced as soon as possible.

 To support this critical initiative, NGOs urge MEPs to:


- **Press the Commission** to swiftly present the legislative proposal to stop exports of hazardous chemicals banned in the EU;
- **Ensure adoption:** Advocate for the prompt adoption of the proposal to prevent further harm to global health and the environment.

 Briefing from 11 NGOs on the export of banned and hazardous pesticides; Corporate Europe Observatory's report *Deadly exports - The chemical industry lobbies to keep exporting even the most dangerous EU-banned chemicals*

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## ECHA FOUNDING REGULATION - SAFEGUARDING CHEMICALS CONTROL

 **The ECHA Founding Regulation** is a key commitment of the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability, to ensure the agency is fully fit for purpose. Mirroring provisions introduced in the OSOA package as regards other EU agencies, it is expected to contain similar provisions for ECHA on methodologies and cooperation among EU agencies. In addition, the proposal will consider restructuring ECHA's scientific committees to better manage the increased workload from new tasks re-attributed under the OSOA package. It should also enhance flexibility in the use of available resources to ensure ECHA can effectively fulfil its expanded mandate.

 The Commission's Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship, and SMEs (DG GROW) is currently working on the proposal.

 To ensure ECHA is properly equipped to handle its growing responsibilities, NGOs call on MEPs to:

- **Demand a Clear Commitment:** Urge the Commissioner for Internal Market to provide a clear and time-bound commitment to present the proposal within weeks;
- **Ensure Adequate Resources:** Advocate for sufficient funding and structural support to enable ECHA to perform both existing and new tasks effectively.

 Comments submitted to the public consultation of the OSOA proposals (*re-attribution*)

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## TOXIC-FREE PRODUCTS - SAFER EVERYDAY ITEMS


### TOY SAFETY LAW - PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN

 The **Toy Safety Law** aims to ensure that the toys available on the market are safe for children, including protection from harmful chemicals. The European Commission found that the current law does not sufficiently protect children from the most harmful chemicals and proposed a revision to strengthen safety standards. While the European Parliament adopted an ambitious position, the Council's response has been less stringent.

 Trilogues are expected to begin in autumn 2024.

 To secure the highest level of protection for children, NGOs call on MEPs to:

- **Maintain a strong position:** Ensure that the European Parliament's ambitious stance on the revision is upheld during interinstitutional negotiations;
- **Maximise protection:** Advocate for the final version of the law to closely align with the Parliament's position, guaranteeing that children are shielded from harmful chemicals in toys.


 CHEM Trust's *webpage* on toys

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### FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS - SAFE FROM FARM TO FORK


 The **EU Regulation on Food Contact Materials (FCMs)** governs materials and articles that come into contact with food.

This legislation, which has not been updated since its adoption in 2004, has been found to have many inconsistencies and gaps, and the EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability and the 'Farm to Fork' strategies committed to revising the FCM legislation to improve food safety and public health by reducing the use of hazardous chemicals.

 The revision process has faced multiple delays. Although initially scheduled for adoption in late 2022, it has now been postponed, with substantial work expected to begin in earnest in 2025.

 To ensure a robust update to the FCM Regulation, NGOs urge MEPs to focus on the following key points:


- **Phase-out of the most harmful chemicals:** Implement measures to phase out the most harmful substances. This should apply to both new (virgin) and recycled (secondary) materials;
- **Establish harmonised EU rules:** Develop and enforce consistent EU-wide standards for all FCMs to ensure uniform safety and quality;
- **Enhance transparency and traceability:** Ensure that all chemicals in all FCMs are transparent and traceable throughout the entire value chain to improve safety and accountability.

 J. Muncke et al., *Impacts of food contact chemicals on human health: a consensus statement*; ZWE's *Declaration of Concern and Call to Action regarding Plastics, Packaging, and Human Health*; ZWE's *briefing on food packaging*; CHEM Trust, Zero Waste Europe, Health and Environment Alliance, *Food for Thought newsletter*


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# TOXIC-FREE PRODUCTS - SAFER EVERYDAY ITEMS

## DETERGENTS REGULATION - CLEANING UP STANDARDS

 **The Detergents Regulation** is crucial for controlling environmental pollution caused by detergents used both domestically and professionally. This regulation sets requirements on pollutants levels, with a focus on minimising water pollution.

The ongoing **revision of the Detergents Regulation** presents a critical opportunity to significantly reduce the use of harmful substances that impact both the environment and human health. By updating this legislation, the EU can set stricter limits on pollutants and drive the phase-out of harmful chemicals in detergents.

 The Council is finalising its position on the revision. Trilogue negotiations are expected to take place during the remainder of 2024 or early 2025.


 To maximise the environmental and health benefits of the revision, NGOs urge MEPs to:

- **Maintain high ambition in the trilogues:** Ensure that the revision of the Detergents Regulation sets robust standards for reducing harmful chemicals in detergents;
- **Advocate for Strong Measures:** Push for stringent requirements that will significantly lower the levels of pollutants and ensure the protection of water quality.

 ECOS' *position paper on the EU Detergents Regulation revision*; joint letter from 17 NGOs with recommendations for the revision

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## COSMETICS PRODUCTS REGULATION - BEAUTY WITHOUT HARM

 EU cosmetics rules suffer from major gaps and shortcomings. Cosmetic and personal care products are for example a major direct source of consumer exposure to ingredients of concern such as potential endocrine disruptors while illegal cosmetics are widely sold online.

 In 2020, the Commission committed to reform EU cosmetics rules, among others to prevent consumer exposure to endocrine disruptors. However, due to the political transition following the 2024 European elections, the reform is currently 'on hold' awaiting sign-off from the new Commission leadership.

 To improve protection of consumer health, NGOs call on MEPs to:

- **Press the Commission** to swiftly present a legislative proposal to reform EU cosmetics rules;
- **Ensure the revised EU cosmetics rules prevent consumers' exposure to endocrine disruptors** and other cosmetic ingredients of concern while also introducing new safeguards against dangerous cosmetic products sold online.

 BEUC, *Comments to the targeted revision of the Cosmetic Product Regulation*

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The new **Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR)**, a key component of the EU's progress on the circular economy, entered into force over the summer. Over the coming years, delegated acts will be developed to improve the sustainability of many different products, including performance requirements addressing the presence of substances of concerns and information requirements to disclose chemical contents. **MEPs must ensure that ESPR delegated acts for priority products** (paints, tyres, lubricants, and chemicals) **regulate chemicals of concern.**

## GLOSSARY ON TRANSVERSAL ISSUES

- **Human rights and environmental justice:** Exposure to hazardous chemicals infringes upon human rights, including the right to life, health, and a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. These rights, protected by international conventions and EU charters, mandate that the EU and its Member States protect citizens against harmful exposure. Children and women are particularly susceptible to exposure to hazardous chemicals, especially those living in the most polluted areas. The UN Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights has notably warned that children are now born pre-polluted, resulting in a "silent pandemic" of diseases, disabilities and premature deaths. He calls on States to prevent childhood exposure to pollution and toxic chemicals, and on businesses to identify, prevent and mitigate exposure of children to toxics and to ensure greater transparency.

- **Access to justice:** Under the Aarhus Convention, the European Union and its Member States must ensure access to justice in environmental matters. This is however not effectively implemented in the area of chemicals. The legal system should provide legal recourse for those exposed to harmful chemicals and holding companies accountable. Authorities should scrutinise evidence of chemical exposure and take necessary regulatory or enforcement actions.

- **Chemicals legislation and competitiveness:** Chemicals regulation enhances competitiveness by driving innovation, ensuring fair competition, and boosting consumer trust. Investors are already advising companies to move away from PFAS due to reputational, insurance and liability risks, and so strong legislation would create a level playing field towards a PFAS free economy. Chemicals legislation helps businesses develop safer, sustainable products, opening new markets and strengthening the global reputation of European goods.

- **Corporate lobbying:** Chemical companies and their lobbyists often influence policy decisions in favour of commercial interests, undermining public health and environmental protection.

- **Traceability:** Effective traceability involves knowing the chemicals present in products and their impacts. Accurate information is essential for assessing risks and advancing the Circular Single Market as put forth by the recent Letta report, as well as boosting EU resilience through enhanced reuse and recycling capacities. However, industry often withholds information on the uses of hazardous chemicals, hindering their regulation (e.g. PFAS case) and safety, since actors along the supply chains lack needed information to ensure the safety of their products and processes.

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## MORE INFORMATION RELATED TO CHEMICALS

- **Endocrine disrupting chemicals:** EDCs, to which we are all exposed in our daily lives, interfere with natural hormones and are associated with serious health issues, including cancer and fertility problems. Urgent action is needed from EU and national governments to strengthen laws and to minimise and ultimately end public exposure.

- **Plastics:** Plastics are a mixture of polymers and chemical additives: more than 16,000 chemicals are used in plastics, of which more than 4,200 are considered hazardous and close to 11,000 have not even been assessed for their safety. Many chemicals are emitted during the production of plastics, but additives also leach out of plastic products during use and disposal, exposing people and the environment to toxic chemicals, micro- and nanoplastics.

- **Chemicals production** is one of the most energy intensive sectors, but it is often overlooked for its carbon emissions. Petrochemicals production alone - which is mostly going to plastics production - was estimated to account for 15% and 14% respectively of the EU's gas and oil demand in 2020. Reducing the production of chemicals and plastics would help dramatically in achieving the EU's climate goals and reducing dependence on gas and oil imports.

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TOXIC-FREE PLEDGE

Transparency register numbers:

EEB: 06798511314-27 / Corporate Europe Observatory: 5353162366-85 / CRIN: 392002349435-58 / WECF: 168989714324-36 / ClientEarth: 96645517357-19 / ZWE: 47806848200-34

PAN Europe: 15913213485-46 / Générations Futures: 899639749451-03 / Ecologistas en Acción: 64628738622-42  
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