



Commission restricts use of a sub-group of PFAS chemicals to protect human health and the environment

Brussels, 19 September 2024

Today, the Commission has adopted new measures under the [REACH Regulation](#) – the EU chemicals legislation - to protect human health and the environment by **restricting the use of undecafluorohexanoic acid ('PFHxA') and PFHxA related substances**. These sub-groups of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances ('PFAS') are very persistent and mobile in water, and their use in certain products poses an unacceptable risk to human health and the environment.

The [PFHxA restriction](#) adopted today focuses on uses where the risk is not adequately controlled, alternatives are available, and socio-economic costs will be limited in comparison to the human health and environmental benefits.

The restriction will ban the sale and use of PFHxA in **consumer textiles**, such as rain jackets; **food packaging**, like pizza boxes; **consumer mixtures** such as waterproofing sprays; **cosmetics** like skin care products; and in some **firefighting foam applications** like for training and testing, without compromising safety. It does not affect other applications of PFHxA, for example in semiconductors, batteries or fuel cells for green hydrogen.

This restriction is an important step forward in reducing PFAS emissions, since PFHxA is often used as substitution for another already banned PFAS (perfluorooctanoic acid, or 'PFOA'). It is based on the scientific assessment of ECHA's Committees and has successfully passed the scrutiny of the European Parliament and the Council.

Next Steps

The PFHxA restriction will formally enter into force 20 days after publication in the Official Journal. It will take effect after transitional periods of between 18 months and 5 years, depending on the use, allowing time for replacement by safer alternatives.

Background

PFAS are called 'forever chemicals' because they do not break down in the natural environment. Used in many industrial processes and in many consumer products, PFAS require special attention, considering the large number of cases of contamination of soil and water, including drinking water.

In the past 20 years, the EU has taken increasing action to tackle PFAS pollution. As indicated in the [Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability](#), the Commission is committed to take a comprehensive set of actions to address the use and contamination with PFAS, under REACH, the EU's chemicals legislation, and under other environmental and human health specific legislations. When envisaging such actions, the Commission takes due account of the availability of alternatives for PFAS used in applications needed for the twin transition toward a green and digital economy, and of the EU's strategic autonomy and the competitiveness of European industry.

Today's restriction is another step taken by the Commission to address the risks posed by PFAS, under REACH. It is distinct from the [potential restriction on the entire PFAS group](#) ('universal PFAS restriction') which the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) is assessing following a 2023 proposal by five European governments.

For More Information

[ECHA web page on PFAS](#)

[PFHxA restriction](#)

IP/24/4763

Quotes:

"The restriction on this sub-group of PFAS is one more milestone that brings us closer to a toxic-free environment. The restriction will ban the use of this 'forever chemical' in for instance consumer textiles, pizza boxes and some cosmetics. Our EU rules allow us to restrict harmful substances when there are safe alternatives. To the benefit of all consumers and for a green transformation of our society."

Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President for a Europe Fit for the Digital Age - 19/09/2024

"We are removing harmful substances from products that citizens use every day, like textiles, cosmetics and food packaging. This restriction of PFAS is a decisive step in our strategy to boost sustainability, competitiveness and innovation in the chemicals sector. Substituting 'forever chemicals' helps to keep our environment healthy, preserve our resources, and drive innovation in cleaner alternatives. The direction is clear, and businesses will have sufficient transition periods to adapt."

Maroš Šefčovič, Executive Vice-President for European Green Deal, Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight - 19/09/2024

Press contacts:

[Johanna BERNSEL](#) (+32 2 298 66 99)

[Federica MICCOLI](#) (+32 2 295 83 00)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)