

Press Release



Animal protection and environmental groups call for a transparent new EU chemicals policy



Brussels (April 15, 2002)

European environmental and animal protection groups, representing some 20 million EU citizens, have joined forces to demand that the new EU chemicals policy, currently being drafted by the Commission, is made fully transparent and accountable.

The joint statement on transparency below emphasises the crucial importance of creating an open approach to the regulation and use of chemicals. In contrast, the chemical industry has been lobbying against the development of a more transparent system, and has even called for an increase in secrecy.



Friends of the Earth

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See next page for joint statement

Transparency demands for a new EU chemicals policy

Joint statement by environmental and animal protection groups

April 15, 2002

Supported by: the European Environmental Bureau, European Coalition to End Animal Experiments, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and WWF

The following joint statement deals with the issue of transparency within the new EU chemicals policy. It does not attempt to address broader issues connected with the scope and implementation of the chemicals policy, but focuses only on the benefits to be gained through the adoption of an open and accountable system.

We are calling for a fully transparent chemicals policy, which ensures that:

- duplicate animal testing^{*} does not take place;
- the public and downstream users are given a right to know what chemicals they are using or are exposed to; and
- all stakeholders can participate in the new chemicals legislation.

We demand that legislation stipulates that:

1. Industry is required to publicise and make available all existing animal test data in their possession or control. Penalties must be in place for companies failing to meet this requirement. All human exposure and health effects data must also be publicised and made available. We recognise that companies wishing to rely on data owned by other companies should compensate the latter (with a binding arbitration mechanism if the amount cannot be agreed).
2. Test plans must be submitted for a 120 day public comment period in which existing data can be brought forward by other stakeholders or submitted by industry, and after which, test plans can be modified.
3. The following data are publicly accessible for all registered substances:
 - results of hazard assessments with their quality statement (including peer review, good laboratory practice, all test data, relevant human exposure data, and the name of the responsible authority);
 - detailed information on intended uses and emission scenarios. Broad use classifications such as industrial, professional and consumer use are not sufficient;
 - a list of producers and importers;
 - substance volumes on the EU market, subdivided by categories of intended use, including an indication of the production volume not covered by the intended uses listed; and
 - the safety data sheet and any risk assessments.
4. Industry has a general duty to provide information, on request, on the presence or absence of specific hazardous or potentially hazardous substances in articles or preparations, including those subject to classification and labelling legislation and those for which there is published scientific research indicating a potential hazard.
5. All articles containing substances of very high concern must be labelled with a clear simple warning, which includes a contact address (e.g. a web site) to enable access to further information, such as that in points 3 and 4 above.

^{*} Duplicate animal testing is testing which takes place where a company does not have access to relevant animal data which has already been generated by another company.