

WebEx meeting - Commissioner Virginijus SINKEVIČIUS with CEFIC - 03/11/2020

Commissioner SINKEVICIUS met the representatives of the chemicals industry Members of CEFIC to hear their views on the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability (CSS) adopted on 14 October.

CEFIC stressed their support for the European Green Deal (EGD) and highlighted the following points:

- The innovation potential of the EU chemical industry and the need for the EU to be a place for new technologies. That the Chemicals Strategy will bring challenges to the industry, but also opportunities, for the entire value chain.
- The importance of the innovation agenda and industry's participation in its development. Stressed the role of chemicals recycling and pointed to a life cycle study they shared with the Commission.
- The importance of compliance and enforcement to ensure a level playing field and the need to organise a stronger cooperation between EC, MS, ECHA, and industry to improve enforcement.
- The importance of dialogue with the chemical industry and its participation in the high-level round table.
- Inquired about impact assessments and asked clarification on the concept of essential uses.
- Asked clarifications about data access possibilities for UK companies following Brexit and stressed the desirability to keep the UK close to CLP/GHS systems.
- The need to clarify what the strategy means for players outside the EU and how the Commission would ensure to avoid trade implications.
- Stressed the importance to ensure that the strategy does not lead downstream users to delocalise and work together with the chemicals industry instead.

Commissioner SINKEVICIUS welcomed the CEFIC contributions and made the following remarks:

- Highlighted the CSS is one of the key deliveries of the EGD and aims to achieve sustainability while supporting innovation. That the EU has an advanced chemicals policy however issues such as endocrine disruptors and substitution of substances of concern need to be urgently addressed.
- Underlined need for a joint effort to achieve the transition but also an opportunity for the chemicals sector. He recalled the strategy numerous of actions, incl. funding opportunities, but also simplification, e.g. one substance on assessment.
- Stressed enforcement as a key priority to help deliver a level playing field and the intention to strengthen the no data no market concept, to target market surveillance to important areas, such as online sales, as well as to establish an audit system. He however recalled the role of Member States for enforcement, in particular regarding border controls.
- Pointed to continuous availability of funding for innovation under Horizon Europe including for building better capacity on recycling and a secondary raw materials market. On chemical recycling, he stressed the need to look at environmental impact and energy consumption over the entire lifecycle.
- Acknowledged the importance to build on industry's knowledge base and the need for all actors' participation, incl. industry in the high-level roundtable.
- Recalled the extensive evaluations as basis for proposed actions and that for legislative initiatives Impact Assessments will be carried out following the Better Regulation principles, incl. public consultation.
- He clarified the concept regarding essential uses and emphasised it is already in use in REACH as well as defined in the Montreal protocol.
- On Brexit, he recalled that by leaving the internal market UK are regrettably no longer part of the REACH data community but emphasised the importance of GHS and its implementation, including for developing countries. Regarding trade, he emphasised that all existing measures are compatible with trade agreements, and that we will continue that path.