Meeting report Commissioner Sinkevicius with Chemours, 29 March 2023, from 15h00 to 15h30 in the Cabinet meeting room, Berlaymont.

Present: Commissioner Sinkevicius, Elena Montani (CAB ENV), [ENV and ] Advanced Performance Materials (APM), Chemours, EMEA Governmental Affairs, Chemours, EU Focus Group, EU Focus Group

Advanced Performance Materials division of Chemours. This includes fluoropolymers (a type of PFAS). This substance is important for use in clean energy technology (hydrogen), batteries and advanced electronics (semi-conductors). The purpose of the meeting was to present the concerns that Chemours has with the planned general PFAS restriction.

Chemours is relatively new – in business since 2015 as a spin-off of DuPont. Its approach to environmental sustainability has been very different to DuPont. Chemours aims for greenhouse gas reductions of 66% by 2030 and 99% emissions abatement of PFAS emissions by 2030 at all its plants worldwide. It is heavily investing to achieve these core objectives. It employs 900 people in Europe. Chemours has three sites in the EU: the Netherlands, France and Belgium. It recently invested 75 million dollars in Dordrecht to significantly reduce its PFAS emissions (to negligible amounts). Chemours is planning a 200-million-dollar investment in France on manufacturing on technology for energy conversion to hydrogen. But the uncertainty on the outcome of the restriction and even the timing is putting investments and developments on hold.

Chemours stresses that fluoropolymers are of low concern according to the OECD. The company has been making investments for over 5 years and how can they make fluoropolymers to continue to exist? Chemours has found a way of making them with negligible emissions from its Dordrecht site in the Netherlands. It managed to reduce emissions from 1000’s of kilos 10 years ago, to grams now (NB not clear whether this is per day/month/year). Could this be used as a standard for good practice? Chemours regrets that the REACH restriction dossier from the five national authorities does not take into consideration new technologies: the dossiers only includes the worst case scenario of high emissions. Fluoropolymers are a very specialised substance, expensive and complex and they are only used where they are needed. They resist to heat and chemicals, carry data signals in computers and cell phones, are light weight which is important for safety in pipes. They are used in lubricants and are extremely durable.

The Commissioner explains that PFAS are of great concern, and that we are increasingly knowing more about the contamination problems. Citizens and parliaments want the Commission to take action. Regarding the restriction, the 5 countries aim at striking a balance between protection and health and the environment and securing investments. The Commissioner encourages Chemours to submit their information to ECHA during the public consultation that is ongoing. He informs Chemours about the different steps in the procedure, and that derogations will be included, as justified by the evidence.

(end of meeting)