

Daily News 05 / 03 / 2018

Ten years of REACH: making chemicals safer for consumers, workers and the environment

Chemicals are present in every aspect of our lives, at work and also in consumer goods such as clothes, toys, furniture and electrical appliances. But certain substances may pose risks to human health and the environment. The [REACH review](#) published today shows that thanks to the Regulation on Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) EU companies and authorities are ensuring the safe use of chemicals and the phase-out of dangerous substances. For the last 10 years, the key EU law on chemicals has indeed significantly enhanced the protection of human health and the environment and promoted alternatives to animal testing. Internal Market and Industry Commissioner Elżbieta Bieńkowska said: *“REACH is the most advanced and comprehensive chemical legislation in the world. We need to build on this success and ensure that EU manufacturers do not face competitive disadvantages compared to non-EU manufacturers.”* Environment Commissioner Karmenu Vella said: *“A majority of Europeans are worried about being exposed to hazardous chemicals. Through REACH, the EU is successfully addressing their concerns, generating knowledge about chemicals and banning harmful ones on the EU market. REACH is already inspiring chemical legislation in other countries and further improvements will allow us to protect our citizens’ health and the environment even better.”* Building on this, the Commission today proposes actions to further facilitate its implementation by companies, including SMEs, and Member States. More information [here](#) and [here](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040)

Startup Europe Week begins: hundreds of events all over Europe to inform entrepreneurs of available support

Today began the third edition of the [Startup Europe Week](#), combining hundreds of events all over Europe and beyond. The Startup Europe Week is now organised in more than 50 countries, with additional global events taking place in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. The initiative aims to inform entrepreneurs of the support and resources available at city and regional level. Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip** said: *“Investments in digital companies and access to capital are always needed for helping startups to grow. But startups also need supportive policies. Linking and networking them will unlock more of their potential, and offer the scale necessary to compete with other ecosystems around the world.”* Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** added: *“This grassroots movement helps those interested in entrepreneurship to make the first steps to bring their dream projects to life. The initiative fosters creativity as well as more entrepreneurial spirit for continuing the success story of the European startup scene.”* In 2017, Startup Europe Week

reached with the help of more than 280 co-organisers in more than 40 countries over 100,000 entrepreneurs across Europe. More information about this year's Startup Europe Week is available [here](#), various events can be found [here](#). Read also a recent blog post about the initiative in Vice-President Ansip's [blog](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

One Oscar and 15 Césars for EU supported films

[Creative Europe MEDIA programme](#) supported films won over the weekend numerous awards. Last night in the 90th Academy Awards “Call me by your name” (directed by Luca Guadagnino) won the Oscar for Adapted Screenplay, which was written by James Ivory. On Friday night, five MEDIA-supported films celebrated its success in Césars Awards. “120 Battements par minute/BPM” (directed by Robin Campillo) won six awards: Best Film, Best Male Newcomer with Nahuel Pérez Biscayart, Best Supporting Actor with Antoine Reinartz, Best Editing by Robin Campillo, Best Original Score by Arnaud Rebotini, and Best Original Screenplay by Robin Campillo. “Au revoir là-haut” (directed by Albert Dupontel) received five Césars: Best Director, Best Costumes by Mimi Lempicka, Best Set Decoration by Pierre Quefféléan, Best Cinematography by Vincent Mathias, and Best Adapted Screenplay by Albert Dupontel and Pierre Lemaitre. “Barbara” (directed by Mathieu Amalric) won Best Actress with Jeanne Balibar and Best Sound by Olivier Mauvezin, Nicolas Moreau and Stéphane Thiébaud. “I Am Not Your Negro” (directed by Raoul Peck) received the Best documentary César. “Le brio” (directed by Yvan Attal) was acknowledged with Best Female Newcomer award for Camélia Jordana. Further details about MEDIA programme supported films in Academy Awards and Césars Awards can be found [here](#) and [here](#). More information on the MEDIA programme is available in the [factsheet](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of a newly created joint venture by Singapore Airlines and CAE

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over a newly created full function joint venture by Singapore Airlines Limited (“SIA”) of Singapore and CAE International Holdings Limited (“CAE”) of Canada. The joint venture will establish, develop and operate a commercial flight training centre in Singapore. SIA supplies passenger and cargo air transportation, engineering services, training of pilots, air charters and tour wholesaling and related activities. CAE is an investment holding company of the CAE group which designs, manufactures and supplies simulation equipment, provides training, and develops integrated solutions for defence and security markets, commercial airlines, business aircraft operators, helicopter operators, aircraft manufacturers and for healthcare education and service providers. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given that the joint venture has no actual or foreseen activities within the European Economic Area. The operation was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#)

website, in the [public case register](#) under the case number [M.8768](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition de Albéa par PAI Partners

La Commission Européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition de Albéa S.A., basée au Luxembourg par PAI Partners S.A.S, basée en France. Albéa fabrique des solutions d'emballage pour le secteur des cosmétiques. PAI Partners gère et conseille plusieurs fonds détenant des entreprises présentes dans divers secteurs d'activité tels que les services aux entreprises, les denrées alimentaires et les biens de consommation, les industries généralistes et les soins de santé. La Commission a conclu que la concentration envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence dans la mesure où les entreprises ne sont pas actives sur le même marché ou sur des marchés verticalement liés. L'opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée de contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le [site internet concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d'affaire [M.8779](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Eurostat: Janvier 2018 comparé à décembre 2017 – Le volume des ventes du commerce de détail en baisse de 0,1% tant dans la zone euro que dans l'UE28

En janvier 2018 par rapport à décembre 2017, le volume des ventes du commerce de détail corrigé des variations saisonnières a diminué de 0,1% tant dans la zone euro (ZE19) que dans l'UE28, selon les estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. En décembre 2017, le commerce de détail avait reculé de 1,0% dans la zone euro et de 0,9% dans l'UE28. En janvier 2018 par rapport à janvier 2017, l'indice corrigées des effets de calendrier des ventes de détail s'est accru de 2,3% dans la zone euro et de 2,7% dans l'UE28. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229 80379)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

First Vice-President Timmermans visits Portugal and France

On Sunday afternoon, First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** travelled to Lisbon where he met with Mr Antonio Costa, Prime Minister of Portugal. This morning he met with Mr Augusto Santos Silva, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Portugal and shortly after 12.00 he will deliver a keynote speech on Defending European Democracy at a conference on '[Invigorating and Strengthening European Democracy](#)' at the Institute Jacques Delors with the Gulbenkian Foundation. The First Vice-President's speech will be livestreamed [here](#) and will be published on his website later. From Lisbon, the First Vice-President travels to Paris tonight, and will meet with President Emmanuel

Macron on Tuesday afternoon. In Paris, First Vice-President Timmermans will also meet Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for European and Foreign Affairs and Sabine Thillaye, President of the European Affairs Committee of the National Assembly. (For more information: *Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tim McPhie – Tel.: +32 229 58602*)

Future of EU finances – Commissioner Oettinger visits Ireland and Croatia

Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger**, in charge of Budget and Human Resources, is visiting Ireland and Croatia on 6 and 8 March respectively, as part of his tour across EU Member States (#MFFtour27) aimed at gathering views on the future of EU finances and the EU's multiannual budget post-2020 (#EUBudget). In Ireland, the Commissioner meets *Tánaiste* (Deputy PM) and Minister for Foreign Affairs & Trade, Mr Simon Coveney. He is also meeting with *Taoiseach*, Mr Leo Varadkar and Minister for Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, Mr Paschal Donohoe. The Commissioner participates in an event to promote career opportunities in the EU institutions, with Minister of State for Gaeilge, Gaeltacht and the Islands, Mr Joe McHugh. He also addresses the Oireachtas Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform Committee and delivers a speech at a European Chamber of Ireland event. In Croatia, Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger** is meeting with the President of the Republic of Croatia, Mrs Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović. He is also meeting Prime Minister, Mr Andrej Plenković, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Ms Marija Pejčinović Burić, Minister of Economy, Ms Martina Dalić, Minister of Finance, Mr Zdravko Marić and Minister of EU Funds, Ms Gabrijela Žalac. He also meets representatives of the European Affairs Committee, Finance and Central Budget Committee and Committee on Regional Development and European Union Funds at the Croatian Parliament. Last but not least, the Commissioner is planning to meet with representatives of women's organisations. The Commission kicked off this debate on 28 June 2017 with the publication of its [Reflection paper on the future of EU finances](#), available in all EU languages. Then, on 14 February 2018, the Commission presented the Communication "[A new, modern Multiannual Financial Framework for a EU that delivers efficiently on its priorities post-2020](#)". Stakeholders' views will be taken into account when preparing the next MFF, to be presented in [May 2018](#). See a speech "[A Budget Matching our Ambitions](#)" given by Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger** at the conference "[Shaping our Future](#)" on 8 January 2018. (For more information: *Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526*)

Commissioner Moscovici in Hamburg, Germany

Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs will be in Hamburg tomorrow, 6 March 2017. In this, the 50th year of the EU's Customs Union, the Commissioner will tour the Port of Hamburg's customs centre and visit Airbus' manufacturing facility. He will also participate in a number of meetings, including with Mr Olaf Scholz, the First Mayor of Hamburg. (For more information: *Vanessa Mock – +32 229 56194; Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976*)

[Upcoming events](#) of the European Commission (ex-Top News)

[Indicative programme – Foreign Affairs \(Defence\) Council of 6 March 2018](#)

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[Ten years of REACH: making chemicals safer for consumers, workers and the environment](#)

Chemicals are present in every aspect of our lives, at work but also in consumer goods such as clothes, toys, furniture and electrical appliances. They are essential to our daily lives but certain substances may pose risks to human health and the environment. The REACH review published today shows that thanks to the Regulation on Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) EU companies and authorities are ensuring the safe use of chemicals and the phase-out of dangerous substances.

Internal Market and Industry Commissioner Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** said: *“REACH is the most advanced and comprehensive chemical legislation in the world, and*

many other jurisdictions have followed the EU's lead in regulating chemicals. EU industry now makes chemicals safer for citizens and the environment. We need to build on this success and ensure that EU manufacturers do not face competitive disadvantages compared to non-EU manufacturers, notably by making sure that imported goods comply with EU rules on chemicals."

Environment Commissioner Karmenu **Vella** said: "A majority of Europeans are worried about being exposed to hazardous chemicals. Through REACH, the EU is successfully addressing their concerns, generating knowledge about chemicals and banning harmful ones on the EU market. REACH is already inspiring chemical legislation in other countries and further improvements will allow us to protect our citizens' health and the environment even better."

REACH keeps delivering concrete results to Europeans with:

- **Safer products for consumers, workers and the environment.** Under REACH, the EU has made progress in restricting or banning the use of certain chemicals that may be harmful to human health or the environment and driving their replacement by safer alternatives. Some examples are:
 - o **Banning harmful chemicals:** 18 restrictions have been issued for different groups of substances such as chromium, nickel and lead in consumer products; bisphenol A, an endocrine disruptor, in cash register receipts and also nonylphenol compounds, toxic to the aquatic environment, in textile articles.
 - o **Replacing the most dangerous substances ("substances of very high concern") with safer alternatives:** So far, 181 chemicals that can have serious effects on human health and the environment have been identified as such and 43 are included in the "REACH authorisation list", which means that companies need to get an authorisation to use them and that they are being gradually phased out as suitable alternatives become available.
- **Non-animal testing:** REACH promotes alternative, non-animal methods for the hazard assessment of chemicals, reducing the need for tests on animals. The Commission provided around €40 million per year to support research on alternative methods between 2012 and 2016.
- **A comprehensive data set for chemical safety on the EU Single Market:** So far, the REACH registration procedure has gathered information on more than 17,000 substances in 65,000 registration dossiers of the main chemicals manufactured and used in the EU. This has improved communication and transparency in the supply chain, allowing Europe to better address risks linked to chemicals and further harmonise the internal market for chemicals.

For better protecting of consumers, workers and the environment, the European Commission proposes today a number of concrete actions to improve the implementation of REACH. These measures are put forward to **improve the quality of registration dossiers** submitted by the companies, to **simplify the overall authorisation process** and to ensure a **level playing field between the EU and non-EU companies**. The Commission wants to further support SMEs in **their compliance** and enhance **enforcement by national authorities**.

The Commission also wishes to **improve the coherence of REACH** with worker protection and waste legislation. More details [here](#).

Next steps

The Commission will discuss the outcomes and follow-up actions of the second REACH review with the European Parliament, Member States and stakeholders at a public conference, planned for June 2018.

Background

REACH is the European Regulation on Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals. It entered into force in 2007, replacing the former legislative framework for chemicals in the EU that was put in place in the late 1960s and 1970s. In principle, REACH applies to nearly all chemical substances.

In line with the “polluter pays principle”, REACH shifted the burden of proof to industry, making it responsible for the safety of chemicals along the supply chain. Companies must identify and manage chemical risks, demonstrating how substances can be safely used. It requires new forms of cooperation among companies, enhancing communication along the supply chain, as well as developing tools to guide and assist companies and public authorities in its implementation.

The first registration deadline was in 2010, with registrations starting in 2009. Pre-registrations (requisite to be able to register existing substances by the staggered deadlines) took place in 2008. 31 May 2018 will be the final deadline for companies to register all chemicals manufactured, imported or placed on the EU market above one tonne per year. This report is the second REACH review.

Since its set up in 2007, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) has a key role in the implementation of all the REACH processes. ECHA hosts the world’s largest database on chemicals and enables easy online access to chemical safety data. ECHA also implements other EU legislation related to chemicals and is expected to become a reference for the sustainable management of chemicals.

For More Information

[MEMO](#)

Commission Communication: [General Report on the operation of REACH and review of certain elements – Conclusions and Actions](#)

[Commission Staff working document](#)

January 2018 compared with December 2017-Volume of retail trade down by 0.1% in both euro area and EU28

In January 2018 compared with December 2017, the seasonally adjusted volume of retail trade decreased by 0.1% in both the **euro area** (EA19) and in the **EU28**, according to estimates from **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**. In December 2017, the retail trade volume fell by 1.0% in the **euro area** and by 0.9% in the **EU28**.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

AFIS for SIS II to be deployed this month

The Schengen Information System (SIS II) is a highly efficient large-scale information system that supports law enforcement cooperation and external border control throughout the Member States of the European Union (and Schengen Associated Countries).

The SIS II enables competent authorities, for example police officers and border guards, to enter and consult alerts on specific categories of wanted or missing persons and objects.

SIS II acts as an information sharing system between all the countries that use it and holds information in the form of "alerts". Each *Person alert* can contain biographical information such as, name, date of birth, gender and nationality. In addition to this, SIS II can also store fingerprints and photographs of the person an alert is related to.

Although the legal basis of SIS II permits the storage of fingerprints, they have only been used so far to confirm the identity of a person who has been identified following a check on his/her name and/or date of birth. Though this feature has been useful, the real added value of fingerprints is to be able to identify a person from his/her fingerprints alone.

In order for this to occur, an Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) is necessary and is now ready to go live.

How is an AFIS used?

Many people, sought after by the police, can be evasive about their identity

and tend to use multiple aliases. Some subjects of SIS II alerts for “refusal of entry” have even sought to legally change their identity to avoid detection. AFIS provides the technology to identify a person on the basis of fingerprints held in SIS II.

What is the purpose?

The SIS II central system database already contains many thousands of fingerprint records, but there was no fingerprint search capability at the central level. The SIS II AFIS allows all Member States to leverage on a centralized policing-oriented database. As such, it will strengthen the fight against crime within Europe.

Who is part of the AFIS Project?

The Project Management Forum (PMF) is responsible for managing technical implementation at both national and central system levels. Its members are:

- The eu-LISA AFIS team,
- National Project Managers of all the SIS II Member States,
- Representatives of the European Commission,
- SIS II contractor – responsible for the design and delivery of the AFIS to eu-LISA.

The first PMF meeting took place in June 2016, followed by 15 further regular meetings, that gathered the end-users from the Member States and Associated Countries. Training sessions for the Member States has already been delivered in Strasbourg and via web-based seminars.

When will it be implemented?

The Phase 1 Go-live will take place on 5 March 2018. It will introduce the biometric search capability into SIS II. Ten Member States (AT, CH, DE, LI, LU, LV, NL, PL, PT & SI) have confirmed that they will be ready to use the biometric queries from day 1. Within 2018, it is expected that other Member States will also use this functionality offered by the Central System.

Further work will take place to develop the AFIS’ capabilities in Phase 2 which will be implemented in 2019.