



European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) Confédération européenne des syndicats (CES)

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The ETUC will contribute to the information campaign on the REACH regulation

The inauguration on 3 June 2008 in Helsinki of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) marks the real start-up of implementation of the REACH Regulation. REACH obliges industry to register the chemicals it manufactures or imports in quantities of more than one tonne a year. Many of the companies concerned are unaware of this obligation and risk finding themselves in breach of the legislation. Acting through its member organisations, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) will contribute to the information campaign meant to raise European companies' awareness of the new regulation.

The ETUC plans to draw on all its member organisations and their thousands of elected representatives in most companies in Europe to distribute its own information material on REACH, as well as the information provided by the European Commission.

The ETUC is a key player in the success of REACH. It is the only organisation capable of reaching, through workers' representatives, the greatest number of companies in Europe, irrespective of their size.

Many European firms, in particular SMEs, are still unaware of their obligations under REACH and could end up in breach of the law. Indeed, to continue manufacturing or importing the 30,000 chemical substances currently placed on the market in quantities of over one tonne a year, industry must now register these substances with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) to demonstrate that they may be used safely.

With its trade union representatives, the ETUC and its member organisations wish to draw employers' attention to their obligations under the REACH Regulation.

The Helsinki-based agency tasked with implementing the new European Union legislation will manage the procedures for registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals.

The ETUC took a very clear stance in favour of this reform because, by encouraging industry to develop safer substances, REACH combines superior competitiveness for the European industry with improved protection of workers, [1] consumers and the environment.

[1] The findings of the ETUC study assessing the benefits of REACH show that the new legislation will make it possible to prevent yearly in Europe some 90,000 cases of skin and respiratory diseases (excluding cancers) caused by exposure to dangerous chemical substances.



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