



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

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European Parliament adopts REACH: completing an important step forward

The European Parliament has set the seal on seven years' debate by adopting the draft reform of EU legislation on the trade in chemicals. The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) welcomes the REACH regulation's progress on the management of chemical risks in Europe, but condemns the chemical industry's lobbying to rein in the reform.

The law as adopted puts the burden of proof firmly on producers for the 30 000 substances covered by the reform. *"That marks clear progress, because industry will now have to provide information on the safety of their chemicals before they can put them on the market"*, said Joel Decaillon, the ETUC's confederal secretary with policy responsibility for REACH.

But the ETUC can only condemn the chemical industry's seven-year lobbying campaign to get the European institutions to scale down the reform. More specifically, European trade unions take issue with the fact that information vital to protecting workers' health given in the chemical safety reports will now only be required for a third of the chemicals originally planned.

"If the chemical industry thinks it will win the drive for competitiveness at the cost of public, occupational and environmental health, it has another think coming. It will only win out by being more open about the safety of its products and bringing innovative products to market that are safer for human and environmental health," added Joel Decaillon.

The REACH regulation now has to be approved by Council before being applied in mid-2007 in the 27 Member States. The ETUC will continue working at European and national levels through its members to see that the reform is properly implemented and continue talking to the European authorities and employers about ways of improving it.



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