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Press release | 03.10.2012

Nanomaterials

Commission only commits to nano-steps on nanomaterials regulation

The European Commission today presented its 2nd regulatory review on nanomaterials in response to a demand from the European Parliament (1). The Greens criticised the failure to commit to proper EU regulation in spite of clear deficiencies underlined by the European Parliament in reviews of existing legislation on related areas. Commenting on the proposals, Green environment and public health spokesperson **Carl Schlyter** (MEP, Sweden) stated:

"Despite the glaring need to provide proper EU-level regulation of nanomaterials, the Commission has today only committed to nano-steps. It is frustrating that the Commission is dismissing any legislative changes to deal with nanomaterials that fall under the EU's chemical legislation (REACH) even though it acknowledges that companies have failed to specifically address safe use of nanomaterials under REACH. Merely tweaking the annexes some time in the future will fail to address the fundamental shortcomings of REACH with regard to data requirements and registration deadlines for nanomaterials.

"The Commission has dodged the key issue by comparing nanomaterials with normal substances on the sole basis that not all nanomaterials may be toxic. It is highly misleading to suggest that the generic rules of REACH, designed for normal substances, are appropriate for nanomaterials, and contradictory to the calls for a case-by-case approach for the risk assessment of nanomaterials.

"The Commission is failing to improve transparency of information on nanomaterials and products containing nanomaterials. The key problem is the lack of information on the use and impacts of nanomaterials. Bringing together existing information on a web platform will do nothing to address this. The past inaction of the Commission with regard to an inventory has triggered a number of concerned EU member states to move forward with national registers. The Commission is only now committing to assess the possibility of an inventory at EU level but it is hard to understand why it has taken so long, given it was asked to do so in 2009 as part of this review.

"More than 8 years after originally committing to 'proactive' regulation on nanomaterials in the area of public health, consumer protection and the environment, the Commission is still dragging its feet. The Commission's reluctance to properly address nanomaterials not only creates risks for human health and the environment, it also does a disservice to the technology itself."

(1) European Parliament resolution of 24 April 2009 on regulatory aspects of nanomaterials,

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bTA%2bP6-TA-2009-0328%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN

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