

ANEC President's conclusion notes

Hazardous chemicals in products

The need for enhanced regulations

29 October 2013

European Economic and Social Committee – EESC, Brussels

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We commenced today by learning about the Austrian Standard Institute, Consumer Council's analysis of key gaps to address in European legislation, and suggestions on how to tackle hazardous chemicals in consumer products. We heard about present specific European regulatory provisions for chemicals in (consumer) products from the European Commission. And we heard of many encouraging initiatives and experiences from Austria, The Netherlands, Germany Belgium, Sweden and Denmark including: food contact materials, water supply materials, indoor emissions, textiles; toys; child care articles; tattoo colour, and products containing nano materials. Information requirements for consumer products were also discussed. Finally we had an illuminating panel debate on the strategies for toxic free products.

At the beginning of the day I explained the aim of today's conference was to identify concrete options for regulatory action in the areas where gaps exist, I believe we have succeeded in our goal to advance this debate with some important recommendations coming from this meeting.

From my perspective, the conference has been a great success both for the interesting and committed interventions from our expert speakers, and for the active participation of our audience. I give thanks to the European Economic and Social Committee for hosting this event. And, on behalf of the organisers I would like to thank the speakers for their valuable presentations and contributions that made today possible, as well as all of you for coming here today. Special thanks to Stefan Scheuer for having expertly moderated and lead us through today's discussions.

Having welcomed here today more than 150 participants, we take this as a signal that the debate around chemical consumer safety is of great importance to many stakeholders.

I would also thank the seven national authorities from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, and Sweden:

- Austrian Ministry of Health (BMG)

- Austrian Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (BMASK)
- Belgium Public Service (FPS) Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment
- Danish Environmental Protection Agency (Danish EPA)
- Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment
- German Federal Environment Agency (UBA)
- Swedish Chemicals Agency (KEMI)

The collaboration with them has been essential to the realisation of this event and we count on continuing a constructive and fruitful debate with them in the future.

After careful consideration of the work carried out here today, ANEC and ASI Consumer Council will publish a joint declaration on our recommendations to the European Commission.

It will send a signal to the relevant Commissioners to:

1. establish a platform to elaborate a strategy to address chemicals in products in a comprehensive manner (particularly in articles);
2. explore opportunities for enhancing the legal framework for chemicals in products including the establishment of a horizontal framework;
3. identify major gaps and how they can be closed in priority areas
4. strengthen chemical provisions in existing product regulations e.g. for toys or food contact materials;
- 5.** consider the implementation of new regulations for chemicals in products in priority areas such as child use and care articles, products releasing substances to the indoor air, water supply materials, textiles and tattoos;
- 6.** consider specific provisions for nano materials in product regulations;
- 7.** ensure that proper declaration and registration requirements for (nano) chemicals in products are in place to provide for full transparency;
- 8.** review and reinforce monitoring and market surveillance practices.

We believe these actions will strongly contribute to the laudable overall aim set by the European Union to achieve a “non-toxic environment” as soon as practicable, as stated in the 7th Environmental Action Plan agreed by the EU institutions and adopted by the European Parliament last week.

I wish you a safe journey home without the disruptive winds of the last two days across Europe. But perhaps with a future wind of change that result in the implementation of our recommendations.

Ladies and Gentlemen thank you again for your attention.

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