

Proposed lobbying pitch

Revision of the European Union Chemicals Policy

Status of the issue/debate:

The EU chemicals policy – known as the REACH Regulation – was adopted by the Council and the European Parliament in 2006 after a long and fierce legislative battle. REACH stands for Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals. The aim of the Regulation is to protect public health and the environment from the risks of chemicals while enhancing the global competitiveness of the EU chemical industry.

The Regulation has not changed much since its entry into force. Yet, since then, further chemical substances have been identified as harmful, particularly several polymers and endocrine disruptors. In addition, the European Commission committed – as part of the European Green Deal – to work towards a toxic-free environment leading to zero pollution and adopted the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability in October 2020 in that perspective.

The Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability points at the need to revise the REACH Regulation in response to the following identified shortcomings:

- gaps in knowledge of substances
- unaddressed combination effects of chemicals
- poor communication in supply chains
- complex evaluation of registration applications
- heavy authorization procedures
- slow restriction processes
- unequal enforcement throughout Member States

A targeted revision of the REACH Regulation has been considered accordingly by the European Commission.

Yet, a recent leak of the draft 2023 Commission Work Program showed that the objective of the Commission to launch the legislative review of the REACH Regulation, initially envisaged for late 2022, would be delayed to the last quarter of 2023. The purpose of the revision has changed too. “Strengthened health and environmental protection” and “support for industry transition towards safer and sustainable chemicals” have been replaced by “securing European competitive advantages” and “reducing burden”.

This delay can have significant political consequences with European Parliament elections scheduled to take place in May 2024. It is impossible to imagine that the review could possibly be conducted between late 2023 and March 2024 (when the European Parliament will go on recess prior to the election). Therefore, the likelihood is that the review of the REACH Regulation will not be taking place in the current legislature and under the current college of Commissioners.



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This creates major uncertainty for EU institutions (Commission, Council, European Parliament) and for Member States bound to deliver as per the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability, but also for interested stakeholders (chemical industry, environmental NGOs, public health NGOs, trade unions, third countries). In short, the delay redistributes the cards between players and notably between those advocating further public health and environmental protection versus and those fighting for the competitiveness of the chemical industry.

Objective of the pitch:

Develop a comprehensive /multi-faceted strategy to impact the initial draft of the Commission revision proposal and its evolution throughout the legislative process in the European Parliament and in the Council.

Each student will be assigned the role of representing an institution, a Member State, business, an NGO or a third country.

While preparing, students are encouraged – using the tools and tips learned in class – to develop and document their strategy based on the preferences of the player they represent. Alliances between players can be considered as appropriate and credible.

Players:

EU institutions

- European Commission
- European Parliament – EPP
- European Parliament – Greens
- Council – Germany
- Council – Sweden
- Council – Slovenia
- Council – France

Corporate lobbies

- CEFIC (European chemical industry federation)
- Business Europe

NGOs

- European Environmental Bureau
- European Public Health Alliance
- European Trade Union Federation

Third countries' interests

- American Chamber of Commerce to the EU



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As part of the Pitch, students are expected to complete the following:

1. **Preliminary position outline** (10 points) – *due February 24, 12:00 pm*
 - a. 1-page document to be presented on Friday, February 24
 - b. Preliminary positions should include main concerns, objectives, red lines, etc.
2. **Preliminary position presentation** (10 points) – *due February 24*
 - a. Each student will have 10 minutes to outline the initial position for their respective actor/institution.
 - b. Students can consider how much information to disclose to the group based on your institution (e.g. your actor would accept a reduction of some chemicals use by 15%, but you begin with negotiation stance of reduction by 10%)
3. **Final Position Paper** (20 points) – *due April 1*
 - a. 2-page final position paper
 - b. See position paper guidelines for formatting and structure
4. **Group Lobbying Pitch** (10 points) – *TBD (late April)*
 - a. Half-day event where students will negotiate the outcome of the REACH revision proposal.
 - b. An agenda will be provided in advance. Students are required to attend the for the full time.



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