

SAFEGUARDS

SGS CONSUMER TESTING SERVICES

HARDLINES, SOFTLINES, ELECTRICAL & ELECTRONICS, AUTO

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NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN EUROPE JOIN FORCES TO FOLLOW UP ON REACH REQUIREMENTS

According to the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) some large European retailers are not adequately informing citizens about harmful chemicals in everyday products. In a [recently published report](#), it was revealed that many companies failed to provide basic information they are legally obliged to under EU law. Many of the investigated products were found to contain certain chemicals listed as substances of very high concern (SVHC).

REACH¹ is an EU wide legislation that is meant to ensure the phase out of potentially hazardous chemicals. It also sets out transparency requirements to give shoppers the right to know about whether a SVHC² listed on a [candidate list](#) are in products they might choose to buy. Article 33.2 of REACH states that consumers should at least receive the name of the SVHC with information on how to safely use the product within 45 days of the request, free of charge. These obligations applied since 2008 when the first SVHCs were officially listed.

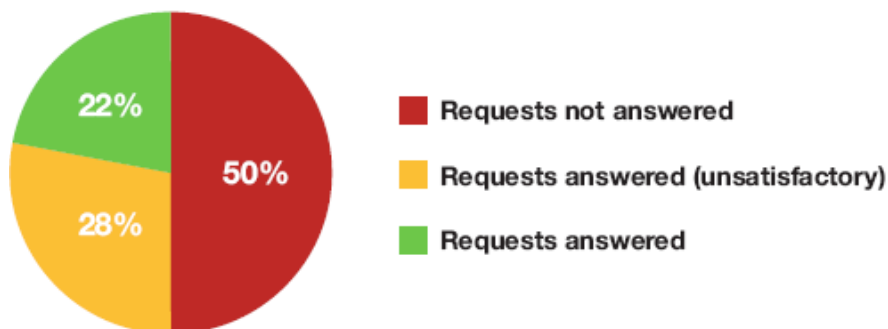
However, the EEB reveals this month in their report that half of the 158 information requests sent to European retailers between April-August 2010 received no response. The report, which sets out to test the willingness of retailers to provide information, also discovered that only 22 percent of the requests received satisfactory answers which meet minimum legal requirements under REACH. The legal department of a retail group with over 800 shops across Europe simply declared that they were of the opinion that they did not have to provide such information. One Dutch retailer refused to provide information to "third parties", clearly breaching the "right to know". A fashion retail company merely replied to one request via email with "?". One may draw the conclusion from these findings that there is a lack of knowledge or a limited implementation of REACH concepts at least for some players in the consumer good industry.



¹ which stands for Registration Evaluation Authorisation and restriction of Chemicals

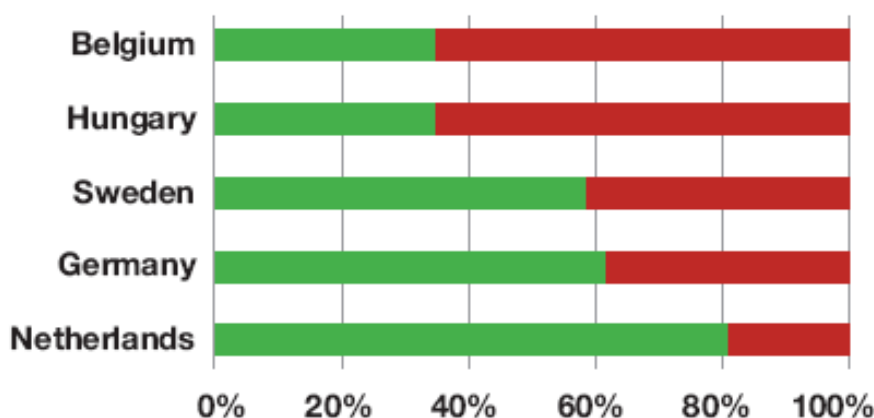
² which stands for Substance of Very High Concern (SVHCs are substances that have been identified as carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic for reproduction or that are persistent and bioaccumulative or warrant similar concern)

Fig. 1: Overall answer rate



(source: [The Fight to Know? Substances of Very High Concern & The Citizens' Right To Know Under Reach— Industry and Healthy, European Environmental Bureau](#))

Fig. 2: Answer rate form request (EU)



(source: [The Fight to Know? Substances of Very High Concern & The Citizens' Right To Know Under Reach— Industry and Healthy, European Environmental Bureau](#))

Going even further than information requests, EEB had chemical analysis performed on a number of various consumer products. High concentrations of phthalates, plasticisers used to make plastic more flexible, were found in many of the 93 products which underwent chemical analysis at an independent laboratory.

A cosmetic bag was found to contain three SVHC phthalates, with a concentration of 8.7% of the phthalate di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP). Four

out of the five sex toys tested were also shown to have very high concentrations of phthalates (one contained 63 percent DEHP).

The recommendations of EEB to retailers are to provide an active dissemination policy via electronic tools. Another requirement by EEB for industry and policy makers is to enhance the identification of substances of concern and speed up corrective actions within their responsibilities to increase consumer's safety.

SGS will follow up and inform interested parties as developments on REACH and other legislation occur. Our REACH expertise combined with consultancy services and experience in consumer product supply chains provides a central point of contact for global solutions. If you would like to learn more about how SGS can support your REACH compliance activities please contact us: <mailto:reach@sgs.com> or visit www.sgs.com/reach

More references here:

- [Candidate List](#)
- [EEB website](#)
- [SIN list](#)

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