EU - PROPOSAL ON PERFLUOROOCTANOIC ACID LISTING IN STOCKHOLM CONVENTION

Recently, the EU COUNCIL adopted a proposal\(^1\) for the listing of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and its compounds in Annex A to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (the Convention). POPs are in focus of legislators around the globe and become an increasing driver of eliminating hazardous substances from consumer products and the food chain.\(^2\)

The Stockholm Convention was created to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants (POPs). The Convention provides a framework, based on the precautionary principle, for elimination of production, use, import and export of currently twenty-three priority POPs, their safe handling and disposal and elimination or reduction of releases of certain unintentional POPs. As a party to the Stockholm Convention, the European Union published Regulation (EC) No. 850/2004\(^3\) (including amendments) to implement the requirements of the Stockholm Convention.

Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), PFOA salts and PFOA-related substances compounds are widely used in consumer products to act as water, oil and grease repellents and industrial applications. However, according to available scientific information and review reports, PFOA and its compounds are toxic to human health and endanger the environment. Having been identified as Substances of Very High Concern (SVHCs) for reproduction 1B, persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBTs), PFOA and APFO were added on 20 June 2013 to the EU’s Candidate List\(^4\) for Authorisation under EU Regulation (EC) No.1907/2006 (REACH). Further harmonised classification of the substances as, among other things, carcinogens, resulted in a ban on PFOA being placed on the market for supply to the general public by Regulation (EU) No. 317/2014\(^5\) amending Regulation (EC) 1907/2006. Since the European Commission tries to avoid double regulation of substances it is unlikely that PFOA will be listed in both, REACH Annex XVII and the EU POP Regulation. Hence, amendments of current legislation may be expected.

\(^1\) Council Decision
\(^2\) POP White Paper
\(^3\) Regulation (EC) No 850/2004
\(^4\) Candidate List
\(^5\) Regulation (EU) No 317/2014
Considering PFOA and its compounds are substances with worldwide dispersive uses and are ubiquitously detected in the environment and due to the potential for long-range environmental transport of PFOA, the measures taken at Union level are not sufficient to safeguard the high level of protection of the environment and human health and wider international action is necessary. Under this background, EU council decided that Union should therefore submit a proposal to the Secretariat of the Convention for the listing of PFOA and its compounds in Annex A to the Convention.

The global footprint of SGS will support you in product compliance with POPs, global RoHS (EU, China, Korea, US, etc.), REACH/SVHC or other regulations. Regardless if you are in need of chemical testing or services in the fields of inspection, certification, compliance assurance, outsourcing, training or auditing SGS is dedicated to satisfy your needs. Providing service to help your products to be fit for the market requirements of the future – whatever the legal frameworks might be.