



Draft Resolution With reference to a new European legislation on chemicals

Resolution is forwarded by Västra Götalandsregionen

The North Sea Commission welcomes the initiative for the new European legislation on Registration, Evaluation and Authorization of CHEMICALS (REACH). However, we have with some concern noted the changes in the proposal from the original White paper from the Commission, to the present proposal.

The North Sea Commission is an organisation with some 70 member regions from seven states around the North Sea. The organisation is among other things working to secure a sustainable regional development in the North Sea area. All in line with the Lisbon Strategy and the Gothenburg Agenda.

For that reason the member regions of The North Sea Commission would benefit from a strong and efficient European legislation regarding chemicals. **Chemicals in general – and hazardous substances in particular – will always be of relevance to health, environment and economic development.**

We would like to underline that not only do we see a strong European legislation in this field as vital to protect the health of our citizens and the balance of our environment. We also see it as a strong contribution to the competitiveness of our industry and businesses.

There are many examples in the member regions of The North Sea Commission – and surely in other progressive European Regions, too — of companies, which are developing new advanced products for local use and for exports. Products, which provide well functioning and attractive services without having to use chemicals, which are a threat to health and environment.

We would go so far as to say that this is potentially a whole new global market, where European businesses could be at the forefront — if they were only encouraged and stimulated by relevant and efficient legislation.

If the future REACH does not give this support, we fear that innovative ideas and technologies will have difficulty competing with old technologies, which more often use hazardous chemicals. The strong and supportive legislation of this kind is entirely in line with EU's Lisbon Strategy and Gothenburg Agenda.

The new legislation must be firmly based on the precautionary principle. Furthermore, it must contain the following elements, in order to guarantee maximum protection for European citizens and environment and to stimulate innovative European businesses:



- There must be satisfactory information available, including proper safety assessments, for all chemical products on the market. This should be provided by the producer/importer.
- Citizens, retailers and industrial users of chemicals should be guaranteed access to information on products that contain hazardous chemicals. This is crucial for their ability to avoid purchasing and using such products.
- Dangerous substances must always be replaced with less harmful alternatives, when such are available. The authorization procedure should explicitly require substitution as the measure of priority (i. e. the substitution principle).

The member Regions of The North Sea Commission expect you to actively work in order to secure a strong and efficient European chemical legislation.