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REACH: NEW RULES FOR THE USE OF CHEMICALS

You have probably already heard: REACH, a new European legislation regulating safer working with chemicals in the future.

This **R**egistration, **E**valuation and **A**uthorisation of **C**hemical substances has already caused quite a bit of a stir in Europe and we can imagine that end users of our chemical products would like to know what the consequences of REACH will be for their company. To respond to this, we would like to explain this new legislation for these customers.

REACH, which went into effect on 1 June, 2007, should safeguard human and environmental safety during manufacture and during use of chemical substances. This legislation applies to every company that manufactures, imports, distributes or uses chemical substances, preparations and/or objects with chemical substances in the European Union. The core of this new European regulation is that these companies must provide their customers and suppliers with information on the substances and their use in order to promote safe use of same. To this end, they must:

- know the risks of all those substances;
- take measures to control the risks;
- apply these measures in their own company.

Thus, as a consequence of REACH business will be responsible for risk control of chemical substances. A system has been devised for this, which entails manufacturers and importers registering all substances they manufacture in or import into the EU. Registration is mandatory if a company uses more than 1 tonne per year of the substance.



The fact that REACH went into effect 1 June, 2007 does not mean that a great deal will now change immediately, or that you, as the end user, will be immediately confronted with this legislation, because registration of these substances will take a (very) long time. The entire trajectory must be completed by 2018. A clear time schedule has been agreed upon (see the schedule below). For example, the period up to 1 December, 2008, has been designated as the transition phase, during which manufactures and importers must preregister the substances subject to registration. Based on said preregistration (in which a company actually announces that it intends to register a substance), companies that all submitted the same substance for preregistration are put in groups. By doing so, these companies can submit joint registration and prevent duplication of a great deal of work.



As a raw materials "mixer" Vecom has intensive consultation with manufacturers and raw materials suppliers. REACH has consequences particularly for the latter. The consequences for intermediaries such as Vecom are chiefly administrative and financial.

What does Vecom do about REACH?

Just like you, our customer, Vecom is an end user. Currently, we are in constant contact with our suppliers to find out in time what substances will stay on the market and which ones will not. However, we do not anticipate this will be any clearer until the middle of 2008. When registering a substance, not only the use by Vecom itself, but also the use by you, our customer, must be registered. Therefore, we will also approach you during the registration period (see table) with the request to give us data on the use of our chemicals, in so far as we do not yet have said information, of course. Vecom will see to it that your use will be included in registration of the relevant substances, thus you will also be ensured of continuity of your process in the future.

Consequences for the end user

It will be clear to you that this procedure will involve some costs. Registration of substances consumed at a rate of between 1 and 10 tonnes annually is expected to cost about € 15,000. Substances sold in considerably higher quantities may even cost as much as € 325,000 to register. These high costs will be the chief reason for the consequences to the end user. Indeed, a number of substances are expected to disappear from the European market because of this, and preparations will have to be reformulated. We will also not escape from a significant price increase for all chemicals in Europe due to REACH. Of course, we will always inform you of any changes in formula and/or requisite price increases in a timely manner.



The Vecom mixing drums: various raw materials are mixed to a final product in the drums.

What else should you be doing now? We recommend you do nothing else at this time other than make a list of all chemicals you use and the supplier from whom you purchase them, because exactly what information about the use of chemicals will be required for registration is not yet known. As soon as this becomes clearer, we will of course let you know. Senter Novem's website (www.senternovem.nl/reach_english/) presents a tool that will help you determine what obligations you must meet. In addition to the Senter Novem website, the Ministry for Housing, Regional Development and the Environment site (www.vrom.nl) also presents extensive information. Of course, Vecom will keep its customers informed of any possible consequences of REACH to the processes they are using.

Source: with thanks to Mavom Chemical Solutions
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TRANSITION PHASE	PERIOD	
REACH in effect	1 June, 2007	
Forming a European agency for chemical substances	11 June, 2007 - 1 June, 2008	
Preregistration (intention to announce registration)	1 June - 1 December, 2008	
REGISTRATION PHASE	TRANSITION TERM	DEADLINE
> 1 tonne per year: substances that were not produced or imported before	No transition term Registration starting 1 June, 2008 for introduction of other substances	
> 1,000 tonnes per year produced or imported	3.5 years	1 December, 2010
> 1 tonne per year CMR substances* > 100 tonnes per year N; R50/53 substances**		
> 100 tonne per year produced or imported	6 years	1 June, 2013
> 1 ton per year produced or imported; or imported objects containing substances	11 years	1 June, 2018
Reporting very hazardous substances in objects	4 years	1 June, 2011; within 6 months

* Carcinogenic, mutagenic substances or substances toxic to reproduction.

** Substances hazardous to the environment that may be PBT (Persistent, Bioaccumulative, Toxic) or vPvB (very Persistent, very Bioaccumulative).