

An Action Plan for the EU chemicals industry: some positives, but who needs carcinogens in cosmetics?

July 10, 2025 By [Michael Warhurst](#)

The Commission on Tuesday presented an [“Action Plan for the Chemical industry”](#) to the European Parliament in Strasbourg. On the positive side, this includes a legislative proposal to strengthen the [EU chemicals agency](#) ECHA, and confirms the Commission’s plan for a targeted revision of the EU’s main chemicals law [REACH](#). However, it also proposes using a fast-track ‘omnibus’ procedure to deregulate the use of cancer-causing chemicals in cosmetics.

In more detail, the Action Plan contains:

1) A [legislative proposal](#) to strengthen the European Chemicals Agency ECHA.

ECHA was originally created by the REACH regulation but now covers many other aspects of chemical safety. In CHEM Trust’s view this legislation is a long overdue measure to strengthen ECHA’s expert committees and to improve its financing. :

“ECHA is the world’s most knowledgeable and important chemical agency. We welcome this proposed law to strengthen its capacity to support faster, science-based regulatory action” said CHEM Trust Executive Director Michael Warhurst.

- This legislation will now be discussed and agreed by the European Parliament and EU Member States.

2) A ‘simplification omnibus’ on cosmetics

The sixth ‘simplification omnibus’ of the Commission this year focuses on chemicals and proposes far reaching changes, which would prolong the use of known carcinogens and create new exemptions from a general ban of carcinogens in cosmetics, as highlighted by [consumer](#) and [health organisations](#) and the [European Trade Union Confederation](#).

Michael Warhurst said:

“Such changes are not ‘simplification’, they are a substantial change to the nature of the regulation and should not be going through an accelerated process without any impact assessment. The EU should help people avoid exposure to carcinogens, not permit it!”

3) A ‘clarification’ on PFAS

On the ongoing EU process for a [universal PFAS restriction](#), which is now with ECHA’s expert committees, the Commission has committed to act fast once the ECHA opinions are finalised.

Somewhat pre-empting those opinions, the Commission says it will ‘consider’ a ban for consumer products and ‘may allow’ critical applications in strategic sectors.

Michael Warhurst said:

“In CHEM Trust’s analysis it is vital that industrial uses of PFAS are controlled in addition to consumer uses, in order to reduce our long-term exposure to these forever chemicals.”

4) A restatement of the commitment to make a proposal by the end of 2025 for a targeted revision of the EU’s main chemicals law REACH.

This is a welcome recommitment, though the Commission’s text focusses on simplification for industry, while simplification for the regulator is also essential, as is modernisation to ensure public and environmental protection.

Michael Warhurst added:

“CHEM Trust supports simplification and acceleration of REACH processes through digitalisation and improved procedures, and the revision must also modernise REACH to reflect scientific advances, and ensure the high level of protection of human health and the environment that is stated in the law’s objectives.

In particular, the addition of a simple safety factor to help address the risk from our exposure to mixtures of chemicals, and an extension of the existing accelerated ‘GRA’ approach to controlling the most hazardous chemicals in consumer products to cover endocrine disrupting chemicals and chemicals that persist or bioaccumulate.”

For more information on the rationale and detail of these policies see:

- [Our recent blog on MAF](#)
- A new [EDC Free Europe Statement on GRA and EDCs](#) explaining why both known and suspected Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals should be added to the GRA system, so the Commission would be able to initiate controls on their use in consumer products.
- More detail on our proposals on REACH revision, including on digitalisation, is available in our “[Simpler, faster, bolder](#)” briefing and in our policy submissions [from January 2025](#) and [from June 2025](#).

Once published, the REACH revision will go through the normal EU legislative procedure, with both Parliament and Member States examining the changes in detail.