



## EUROMETAUX CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT NEWS



In June, please join us online for:

10 June: Water Taskforce meeting

11 June: Two sessions on consultation for nanomaterials

22 June: Risk Management Taskforce

23 June: Human Health Taskforce

24 June: CARACAL Taskforce

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Dear All,

*It seems that from 9 June onwards, Belgium can go back to 'knuffelen' (i.e., cuddling), keeping its fingers crossed that this "hug moment" will not be compromised by new variants. For many of us, it was not until we lost the possibility to be closer than 1.5 m from family, friends and colleagues that we realised the importance of "hugging". The reason hugs feel so good has to do with our sense of touch. A rather obvious way with loved ones and friends -to connect and confirm your presence-, this 'sense' is also, to a variable extent and depending on series of factors of course, part of the work relationships.*

*"Interpersonal touch" allows us to physically explore the world around us and to communicate with others by creating and maintaining social bonds. I have some very prized souvenirs of surprising someone by opening my arms for a hug instead of a distant greeting, defusing a verbal outbreak by lending a hand in the physical and metaphysical sense, reassuring someone by giving them a gentle pat before a presentation and a couple of regrets of not having embraced someone who left.*

*There are several lines of (converging) evidence in the literature suggesting that individuals who engage more frequently in interpersonal touch enjoy better physical, psychological, and relational health. Theorists have proposed that one of the key pathways through which interpersonal touch benefits well-being is by serving as a buffer against the deleterious consequences of psychological stress. But other effects have been reported, like on sleep, well-being, and even fighting infections, thanks amongst others to increasing oxytocin levels.*

*A study examined a sample of 404 adults interviewed every night for 14 consecutive days about their conflicts, hug receipt, and positive and negative affect. Results indicated that there was an interaction between hug receipt and conflict exposure such that receiving a hug was associated with a smaller conflict-related decrease in positive affect and a smaller conflict-related increase in negative affect when assessed concurrently.*

*So clearly, touch is an instinct that appears to be all-around beneficial for our mental and physical health! We should celebrate its return. And while it is obviously important to continue to keep ourselves safe, it's as important that we don't give up hugs forever.*

*After these long months, we could even launch our own prospective studies on how hugs are associated with re-acquainting with the colleagues, re-taming the MCC coffee (it won't have changed), with the stress of making presentations (with shoes on), or talking about essential uses? Anyone interested in the design?*

*Sure, not everyone craves a hug. And that is even more important to respect these days. But even for those ones who would prefer to keep a distance, there seems to be no reason to worry about missing out on the benefits of hugs –giving yourself a hug has also been shown to regulate emotional processes and reduce stress (see e.g. Grunwald et al. 2014).*

*So let's hug out!*



*Violaine Verougstraete, Chemicals Management Director*

# COMMISSION

## **Meeting with DG ENV Director general: a nice first exchange!**

Eurometaux had asked for a meeting with Ms Fink-Hooijer, DG Environment Director General, to discuss the metals contributions to Commission's Sustainable Chemicals, Circular Economy, and Zero-Pollution agendas, aiming to secure a sustainable metals supply for Europe's green & digital transitions. This exchange took place on 18 May. Eurometaux recalled that there is a growing demand for materials needed to meet the Green Deal objectives, and that to meet this growing demand, investments in safe "closed loop" systems, recycling technologies and capacity expansion and mining projects operated to the highest sustainability standards are needed. Crucial for these investments are the predictability of the regulatory context, considering and balancing the different objectives (e.g., climate transition, sustainability and circularity) but also taking into account specificities of the sector and the global nature of operations. The discussion also addressed waste-related issues in the context of the EU Green Deal and Circular Economy Action Plan that aim at restricting exports of waste that have negative environmental and health impacts in third countries (now also reflected in the Zero Pollution Action Plan). Moreover, we underlined that a well-functioning, EU & international waste market is extremely important to fulfill the objectives of the circular economy. A summary of the main learnings of the meeting will be circulated soon (more information: Guy Thiran, Kamila Slupek and Violaine Verougstraete).

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## EU AGENCIES

### EUROPEAN CHEMICALS AGENCY (ECHA)

#### ECHA COMMITTEES

##### **RAC-57 Working groups: Pb in the forefront of the discussions**

RAC started preparing for its June plenary session by working group (WG) meetings allowing for more in-depth discussions. Two such meetings took place, one end of April on the Environmental Classification of Pb in metallic form while a second session on restrictions and authorisations took place mid-May. As expected, the Pb restriction proposal on "ammunition and fishing sinkers" was one of the dominant discussion themes. The RAC WG reviewed the scope and potential Pb health impacts for shooters, wildlife, farming in shooting areas and the consumption of hunted game. The proposal from the Dossier Submitter (ECHA) included a long series of unrealistic worst-case assumptions which were felt too conservative for the impact assessment. It was recommended that for the SEAC's impact assessment some more typical scenarios should be considered to remain somewhat realistic. The WG also recommends that plenary consider extending the scope to include the training of law enforcement and indoor shooting based on the argument that the same risks would apply there. The DS claimed that feasible alternatives for Pb in ammunition and fishing sinkers are available, but RAC have not so far reviewed their hazards and risks. This is however more than relevant, given one of them is bismuth a critical raw material which requires increased Pb mining. Eurometaux's interest in this case relates to the methodologies applied given it is the first terrestrial environmental assessment on a metal (more information: Hugo Waeterschoot).

#### ECHA OTHER ACTIVITIES

##### **ECHA Management Board: first view on what CSS activities ECHA is pursuing for Commission.**

ECHA's group on Strategy, Planning and Implementation (MB-SPI) is a key group that advises ECHA's decisive Management Board. One of the concerns raised by the MB was to ensure ECHA's management body remains as having a strategic overview of ECHA's involvement in the different CSS projects as well as the resources required and associated risks. For this purpose, the MB-SPI reviewed and discussed *a key messaging and reporting tracking format* and a first example that also allows industry to check in which CSS projects ECHA is involved and how they progress in time. Guy Thiran represented industry in this meeting and supported this activity given it provided transparency and insight on CSS activity involvement by ECHA. It was further notable that some countries want ECHA's MB to be (come) more involved in the operational and content aspects, but this was not further considered. One interesting learning from the tracking report is that ECHA is conducting an option analysis for Commission on how SCHEER and SCCS, two important scientific

bodies of the EU, could potentially be integrated under RAC. This includes important questions like how to deal with certain non-chemical related tasks (more information: Guy Thiran and Hugo Waeterschoot).

#### **ECHA Management Board consultation ECHA's 2019-2023 strategy: joint replies.**

Industry has been invited to contribute to the Management Board consultation on the mid-term review of ECHA's 2019-2023 strategy. The consultation aimed at obtaining feedback on Member States, Commission and ECHA's key stakeholders' views on what should drive ECHA's strategic considerations in the years to come (2022-2023), considering the evolutions that occurred since the adoption of the current strategy in 2018. The strategy stresses that ECHA's mission is to work together with our partners for the safe use of chemicals and it sets three Strategic Priorities: 1) Identification and risk management of substances of concern; 2) Safe and sustainable use of chemicals by industry; and 3) Sustainable management of implementation of EU legislation. ECHA and the Management Board want to reflect upon these priorities, as well as the respective objectives and areas of operation under each priority, 'to enable a successful implementation in its final period of validity from 2022 to 2023, while maintaining a view on the longer-term perspective'. The questionnaire included questions related to the scope of the review, ECHA's role, ECHA's role in the implementation of chemicals regulation and working relationship(s), advice and communication with ECHA. A joint input was prepared with Cefic, in consultation with other associations following the Management Board developments, highlighting for example the need to reflect on alternative ways to make best use of the resources and reflect about different models (e.g., by investing more in cooperative models with industry, using not only the 'stick' but also the 'carrot' in the working relationship) and areas where the priorities and initial REACH objectives that have been implemented differently than initially designed or aimed for, or have recently been de-prioritised although these objectives are crucial for ensuring safety. The questionnaire also included questions on ECHA's possible role in the CSS. The full replies will be circulated to the Chemicals Management Steering Committee. Outcomes of the consultation will be discussed during the next Management Board meeting (more information: Hugo Waeterschoot and Violaine Verougstraete).

#### **EUCLEF - EU Chemicals Legislative Finder legislative finder: expansion subject to strategic assessment**

The [EU Chemicals Legislation Finder \(EUCLEF\)](#) is an online tool developed by ECHA to give an overview of the European Union's legislation on chemicals. In particular, this tool allows to search for specific substances, to find applicable laws and to check related obligations. The current scope is publicly available at [this link](#) and it is also summarised in this [pdf document](#). According to recent information received from ECHA, a possible expansion of EUCLEF would be subject to a strategic assessment and as part of it ECHA intends to launch a survey very soon (at the beginning of June). More details will be shared by ECHA as soon as available (more information: Lorenzo Zullo).

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## **EUROMETAUX CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT**

### **EUROMETAUX FUNCTIONING**

#### **Chemicals Management Steering Committee: spring meeting**

This spring meeting started with an update on a series of topics related to the "functioning of the Chemicals Management team" (resources, structure, advocacy messages presented to the Executive Committee) but also some questions related to the involvement of the members and the secretariat in UK REACH, multi-metallic projects on environmental exposure communication on Risk Management.

Next on the agenda was the important chapter of the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability (CSS) and the first High Level Round Table meeting, for which there is more info in this News; the revisit of the Sustainable Metal Concept (SMC) was also addressed.

Then came the Zero Pollution Action Plan (ZPAP) and a presentation on how to organise the work on Water to fit within this legislation (i.e., an important aspect even if Air Quality & Human Health can be seen as a more key focus).

Updates were next, with some thought-provoking topics such as the traceability of metals along their lifecycle, the very significant dossier of environmental classification and its implications not only for lead, but also other metals.

The meeting concluded with a very relevant presentation on the taxonomy issue, a short update on the follow-up of the Water procedural letter and the review of ECHA's strategy for 2019-2023 and Industry's & Cefic's follow-up.

Thanks to the numerous participants and stimulating topics, it was once again a motivating meeting for both EM staff and its members whom we would like to take the opportunity to thank (more information: Violaine Verougstraete).

## CHEMICALS STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABILITY

### CSS High-level Roundtable (HLRT): *first meeting*

On 5 May, Guy Thiran participated in the first meeting of this group, chaired by European Commissioners Virginijus Sinkevičius (Environment, Oceans and Fisheries) and Thierry Breton (Internal Market). This first meeting - bringing together 32 representatives of Member States authorities; third sector organisations; scientific organisations, academia and research institutes; industry and business associations; and international groups - was organised in two sessions where all participants could make short statements, first focused on expectations on the role of the Roundtable, secondly on experiences and views on how to support the industrial transition.

All stakeholder groups support the Commission's ambition for a smooth and timely implementation, agreeing that in order to achieve this the group would have to find common ground in order to make concrete progress with the huge challenges ahead. Topics clearly near the top of all agendas are: the need for better enforcement of regulations to maintain a level playing field, reward compliance, penalise non-compliance and maintain competitiveness of EU industry; the importance of innovation and new approaches throughout society and industry. Differences of opinion clearly exist on how to drive and incentivise the industrial transition, and the correct balance between "carrot and stick" approaches. Eurometaux expressed on behalf of the metals/inorganic sector its support for an effective, pragmatic, and proportionate implementation of the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability (CSS), recalling the importance of consistency and coherence with other EU Green Deal objectives, particularly climate, circularity, and strategic autonomy.

Following this first introductory session, future meetings will include targeted discussions on individual elements of the CSS, and review of working group papers prepared in the interim. The next meeting has not been scheduled but is likely to be in September. A first exchange on the list of topics for future meetings will take place on 22 June, in the 32-member Sherpa support group for HLRT, set up by the Commission (more information: Guy Thiran and Simon Cook).

### CSS Essential Use Concept (EUC): *further discussions*

Debate on the EUC continues, in many industry and cross industry groups. EUC was referred to in the recent REACH Inception Impact Assessment, which includes the stated objective of "*operationalising the concept of essential use in restrictions, including the criteria for granting derogations.*" This has prompted many groups to comment, with several submissions being shared with Eurometaux. Contributions vary but in general there are questions on the concept itself, as well as practical challenges associated with implementing its various elements. There are strong calls for more discussion, more clarity (reduced uncertainty), consideration of coherence with other EU objectives and global considerations, a framework rather than pre-defined criteria, a holistic view of sustainability (i.e., not simply a focus on hazard), and implementation of the EUC only if it improves the current regulatory framework with respect to efficiency of risk management.

Eurometaux's comments are in line with others and seek not to repeat messages from previous CARACAL discussions: *Recent debates in CARACAL expert group have shown the complexity of introducing such a concept and the need for further detailed work and discussion. In our view there are still many fundamental questions and issues relating to the EUC that need to be debated openly and clarified, including an assessment of the added value and benefits, the consequences (e.g., on innovation, EU competitiveness), and the concept's legal basis. It is also unclear who should be accountable for deciding what is essential or not, how the determinations of societal value and suitable alternatives would be made, and how the concept aligns with other EU policy objectives, and global considerations such as free trade. At this stage we neither welcome nor reject the EUC. Yet, we support the Council's position to develop an EUC 'framework's' rather than strict criteria, and the Commission's intention to launch a study to assess and clarify the many complex and contentious issues. Nevertheless, we believe that there are other more efficient ways to deal with the need for societal exemptions of risk management of consumer goods. Such derogations can be assessed and included during the RMOA phase when the scope of the restriction is defined. Leaving them out of the scope from the start seems a more practical approach than exempting them from the restriction in a later phase* (more information: Simon Cook).

### REACH & CLP Inception Impact Assessment: *submissions done! (first step...)*

EU Commission has launched a 4-week consultation on the REACH and Classification Labelling and Packaging Regulation (CLP) Revisions Inception Impact Assessments (IIAs), inviting stakeholders to provide feedback on the intended initiatives, Commission's understanding of the problems and proposed solutions. The IIAs give good hints on how Commission wants to ensure that the provisions of the REACH and CLP Regulation reflect the ambitions of the Commission outlined in the CSS. Eurometaux members discussed on 18 May the key priorities and messages for the sector, which were then included in drafts circulated for comments and finally submitted here (<https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have->

[your-say\\_en](#)). Eurometaux's recommendations on REACH are based on the sector's reflections for the future of the Regulation and how it can better embrace sustainability aspects such as circularity, climate and environmental footprints, and effectively contribute to the objectives of the Green Deal. On CLP, Eurometaux's contribution focused mainly on the possible introduction of new hazard classes, the proposals for and setting harmonised environmental and safety values for some substances, the mandate for Commission to request ECHA to develop new harmonised classification and labelling ('CLH') dossiers and suggestions to promote the scientific robustness and credibility of the assessments. This Impact Assessment will be followed by targeted stakeholder consultations as part of supporting studies and workshops and an open Public Consultation for 12 weeks (more information: Hugo Waeterschoot, Simon Cook and Violaine Verougstraete).

## ZERO POLLUTION ACTION PLAN

### **Zero Pollution Action Plan: *issued!***

On 12 May, the European Commission adopted its EU Action Plan: 'Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil', also known as the 'ZPAP'. This Action Plan was foreseen by the European Green Deal in December 2019 and is one of three pillars of the so-called "zero pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment" [together with the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability (CSS) published in October 2020 and the upcoming revision of the Industrials Emissions Directive (IED) expected later this year]. This is a non-binding communication. It aims to set out an integrated vision for 2050 – "a compass" – on a substantial number of EU policies that are dealing with 'emissions' to air, water and soil. It is accompanied by an Annex that lists actions mentioned in the ZPAP and to be implemented by 2024. Many of these actions are not new, have already been going on for some time or have already been announced. As expected, there are also two accompanying Staff Working Documents (SWD), one on 'digital solutions', and the other one on 'monitoring and outlook framework'. Rather than attempting to revamp the system (such as the CSS), the ZPAP is an umbrella initiative that tries to bring many policies together under one common vision: "to reduce pollution to levels no longer considered harmful to health and the environment". The text mentions the need for synergies, effectiveness, proportionality, trade-offs, etc. It also links the 'zero pollution ambition' with the need to invest in clean and sustainable design, circular economy business models, cleaner transport and mobility, and low-emission technologies. An analysis of the content was prepared and circulated on 26 May (more information: Noam El Mrabet).

## CLASSIFICATION

### **Li CLH Taskforce: *first meeting***

France has submitted a proposal to classify Li carbonate, Li hydroxide and chloride as toxic to reproduction for humans Cat. 1 A (developmental toxicity and fertility). The Public Consultation on the Annex XV proposal ended in October and RAC has started to develop its opinion. The first plenary debate is scheduled for 10 June. This classification has the possibility to impact several companies and sectors. Eurometaux has been requested to set up a Taskforce (comparable in its functioning modalities to the lead CLH and cobalt CLH Taskforces we had previously) to ensure the information flow and facilitate the activities of the different industry sectors/companies involved/impacted by the proposal. The Taskforce is chaired by Jennifer Diggins and Bob Miller (Albemarle) A first call of the Taskforce took place on 5 May. The aim of this call was to provide the background of the proposal and discuss with the group where to go, to ensure a classification process that is as fair as possible. Key issues in the debate that RAC will hold next week include the reliability and validity of publications versus guideline studies and the 'weight of evidence' that is applied. These aspects are relatively subjective and can quickly become a grey area, requiring transparency in the debate. The taskforce will be briefed on the outcomes of the RAC discussion and further steps (e.g., advocacy, impact assessment) discussed at that time (more information: Hugo Waeterschoot and Violaine Verougstraete).

## ENVIRONMENT

### **Environment Taskforce meeting & *ecorelevance Workshop: forward looking perspectives required***

The Environment Taskforce held a long and intensive webinar session on 26 May. Evidently, the primary focus was on the running Environmental Classification of Pb metal proposal presently under review in RAC. The Taskforce took note and debated the consequences of the way RAC proposes to classify the massive form based on releases caused by the

normal handling and use of articles and how the Ecotoxicity Reference Value (ERV) is derived based on and driven by non-standard low quality ecotoxicity references. All this is contrary to the present metals classification guidance and the years of established best practices with many other metals including Zn, Cu and Ni. The Taskforce will continue to follow this Pb activity and provide support to ILA and Eurometaux where it can, as well as contributing to future advocacy activity when needed.

The upcoming challenges like the implementation of the unintended combined exposure 'MAF' (Mixture Assessment Factor) under the REACH Revision and the need to define Good Quality status under the Water Framework Directive led to the need for the metals sector to consider anticipative activities. In this respect Professor Karel De Schampelaere (University of Ghent) and Patrick Van Sprang (ARCHE) gave a most interesting presentation on the ecorelevance project, proposing ways forward on how to make risks assessments more ecologically relevant, hence less hypothetical. This input together with the suggestions and building blocks that were presented at the Science Forum meeting in April, provides a good base for Eurometaux to design a MAF response programme. In addition, the taskforce agreed to set up a special session (11 June) on potential exposure and fate data gathering projects to help consortia and companies to deal with the MAF and other metal exposure improvements potentially triggered by MISA 4 (exposure). This potential collective action to enhance efficiency and consistency, was speeded up to allow sectors to express interest asap, hence allowing to estimate the required resources and complete the MISA workplans (more information: Jelle Mertens, Stijn Baken and Hugo Waeterschoot).

## REACH REGISTRATIONS

### **UK REACH: *the metals industry is exploring possible synergies.***

UK REACH was recently discussed in the Registration and Maintenance Taskforce. In particular, there is general interest to join forces across metals to handle UK REACH. The idea is to build on the experience developed over the past years, optimise resources, align understanding and practices (e.g., data sharing), as well as deliver the same messages in case of future scientific debates or when contacting local authorities.

A brief online questionnaire was prepared to better understand who is interested in what, as a basis for follow-up discussions. Despite roles and interests in UK REACH varying across metal consortia and associations there is overall support for the idea to establish a UK REACH Forum. Some consortia had suggested Eurometaux to take on the secretariat role. However, at the last Chemicals Management Steering Committee, considering resources but also EM's mandate, it was agreed that Eurometaux should remain focused on the EU, except in case of consistency issues (justifying e.g., engagement at OECD where EU is an active player). It was recommended to appoint a third party as secretariat. Eurometaux will keep monitoring the discussions and supporting proper liaison with EU REACH activities (more information: Kai-Sebastian Melzer, Lorenzo Zullo and Violaine Verougstraete).

### **Update of the REACH Registration dossiers: *upcoming joint Cefic-Eurometaux guidance on REACH Article 22.***

Eurometaux and Cefic are cooperating to develop a joint guidance document on REACH Registration dossier updates related to REACH Article 22 and the Implementing Regulation 2020/1435, which clarifies the meaning of updating "without undue delay". The guide compiles best practices on updates of different nature, including changes in registrants' status/identity, substances composition, tonnage bands, identified uses and CSR. Eurometaux focused its contribution mainly on updates of joint registration dossiers and in particular on a user-friendly checklist to facilitate co-registrants understanding their role and duties. The document will be presented this week to ECHA and it is expected to be finalised around June/July (more information: Sandra Carey, Kerstin Heitmann, Federica Iaccino, Lorenzo Zullo).

## WATER

### **First Water Framework Directive (WFD) Refit Impact Assessment (IA) Workshop: *policy options***

The first of the two workshops regarding the impact assessment of the WFD, and in particular on the potential revision of the lists of pollutants affecting surface and ground waters and the corresponding regulatory standards in the EQS Directive, Ground Water Directive (GWD) and the WFD was organised by Wood/Trinomics on 21 May. The focus was on the different policy options proposed ahead of the workshop in writing, and several polls were conducted to assess the participants' views. The session was divided into surface water and ground water. Silver was not mentioned during the workshop. When discussing which existing Priority substances EQS should be reviewed, only 9 % of the audience considered that nickel should be reviewed. Comments on the different policy options can be sent to add to the draft we are currently writing (more information Lara Van de Merckt).

### Next Water Taskforce meeting: 10 June

We have prepared quite a full and – we believe- interesting agenda for our next Water Taskforce meeting scheduled for the 10<sup>th</sup> of June. Topics will include the Prioritisation process update, Diffuse Sources, the ZPAP and an update of the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) document on sediment and the Copper in sediment Workshop (more information Lara Van de Merckt).

## TOOLS

### Bioelution: making progress?

Three meetings were planned for May to discuss ‘bioelution’: two discussions on the test guideline aimed at generating “metal release data” at OECD level and one in the CARACAL Bioelution sub-group that debates on the applications of these data (i.e., classification of alloys and other complex metal-containing materials, read-across and grouping). Separating the discussions on the generation of data from their use was proposed by Commission in 2017, with the hope that having an accepted test protocol would facilitate the consideration of the data in CLP (article 12(b)). Although some progress has been made at OECD level, with a draft test guideline that has been commented and already revised, the discussions come to a halt as soon as some countries feel that the application of the protocol might actually be supported. The discussion then falls back on terminology issues that are either minor or not in the remits of the group to discuss or data requests that are crucially dependent on the actual application. This is why we were waiting rather impatiently for the CASG Bio discussion on 27 May, to evaluate where the same countries stand in terms of using of the approach but also to try and address their further concerns and discuss what pertains to applicability in the right forum. Commission had prepared the meeting by compiling in a document all the comments submitted by NL, DK, DE, SE (but luckily also Spain 😊), the replies prepared by Eurometaux and some comments prepared by ECHA and Commission. The discussions were -as expected not that easy- but allowed for clarifications and progress on some aspects. For example, in answer to the question of one of the countries whether it would not be more reasonable to “assess whether changes to relevant pieces of downstream legislation are more suitable to relieve the industry of the perceived detrimental effects of the allegedly unwarranted “over classification” of alloys”, Commission clarified that the classification of substances and mixtures *should be based solely on scientific assessment against the classification criteria (...). Any methods/approaches used should avoid over-classification and under-classification as far as possible and the classification should be based on available information and on the basis of the most relevant methods/approaches.*

Some countries questioned once again the use of bioaccessibility data on the alloy in view of CLP article 12(b) (on the consideration of bioavailability of classification of mixtures) and 6(3) testing of mixtures for Substances classified as Carcinogens, Mutagens or toxic to Reproduction (CMRs), highlighting herewith their disagreement with Commission’s legal analysis of these CLP articles.

Interestingly, and avoiding herewith the debates to become unproductive, Austria came with practical questions on enforcement of the approach, focusing much more on concrete questions related to communication of the alloy properties and refinement of classification considering metal release, representativity of the sample, refinement of exposure routes etc. Commission proposed to advance work along those lines to further reflect on how to use the data but also to clarify what kind of evidence remains missing.

A next meeting of the CASG Bio will take place after the summer.

At OECD, industry and EURL ECVAM will finalise the Response to Comments (RCOM) on the comments sent in by the OECD WNT group and plan a meeting after the summer as well.

These outcomes will be discussed with the Human Health Taskforce on 23 June (more information: Adriana Oller and Violaine Verougstraete).

## METALS & INORGANICS SECTORIAL APPROACH (MISA)

### MISA 4 : last exposure webinar on 7 May and submission exposure workplans on 30 June

The last of the MISA exposure webinars was held on 7 May to discuss consumer exposure and human exposure via the environment, followed by a session on the new Technical Completeness Check (TCC) and an update by ECHA on the MISA updates. For both exposure-related topics, Eurometaux and ECHA recalled the outcomes of the self-assessments performed by the consortia and the expectations regarding the information to be included in the Registration dossiers. This was followed by examples of assessments presented by EBRC and ARCHE and a discussion to draw key learnings. On the TCC, ECHA presented a status update on the manual verification of the completeness of Chemical Safety Reports (CSR)s and the first experiences ECHA has accumulated. The presentation and subsequent discussion highlighted several



hints and tips that will be of direct use for the updates of the dossiers but also some other questions that will be further discussed with ECHA. ECHA then concluded the webinar by providing an overview of the updates (workplans and dossiers) from their perspective. End of 2020, they noticed that the dossier updates rates were high and very satisfactory but also that several consortia had postponed their updates. As a consequence, ECHA expects the speed of workplans and dossier updates to be high in the coming months. Two of the reasons for the lower amount of updates in Q1 2021, besides resources-related aspects, were that consortia were waiting for the last webinar on exposure to prepare their workplans on exposure but also to receive some clarifications on the TCC. It was agreed at the end of the webinar that workplans on exposure should be submitted by 30 June. To help the consortia/associations to prepare these workplans, the detailed minutes and key learnings from the 7 May webinar will be circulated asap. In addition, a discussion will take place on 11 June with the Environmental taskforce on possible multi-metallic projects on environmental exposure elements. For the projects that will gain support from the consortia/associations, Eurometaux will prepare short descriptions to include in the workplans (more information: Federica Iaccino, Hugo Waeterschoot and Violaine Verougstraete).

#### **iUVCB Platform: update**

The iUVCB Platform work is proceeding on the harmonisation of the iUVCB dossiers, focusing on improving the identification reporting, classification explanations and hazard assessment rationales. The goal of the current refinements is to prepare the data set by this summer, to then proceed more specifically on the dossiers updates. Crucial in this phase is the availability of the updated and upgraded multi-metallic database, which allows quick and precise comparison between metals data that are regularly compared with the data found on ECHA's dissemination website, and thus ensures timely consistency with the updates that are officially submitted. In the coming weeks data sharing supporting explanations will be prepared to facilitate existing and future data sharing agreements set up in the iUVCB registrations (more information: Federica Iaccino).

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## **OUTREACH**

### **OTHERS**

#### **Cefic webinar: "How to address transparency in the supply chain"**

Cefic organised a webinar on 17 May, to address how to trace chemicals in complex supply chains. DG GROW explained several regulatory activities ongoing on the Digital Product Passport development and how to structure existing and new product information in a centralised system (timing: end of 2021 for official proposal). The automotive industry illustrated its own material database, in the form of a global platform born in 2000 and developed with the intention to trace chemicals used in the different steps of automotive production: data gathering was based on the 90% declaration rule, meaning that material manufacturers enter information on a product, and customers can complement it further chain maintaining 10% of the information hidden for confidential reasons. Nowadays, they want to change that rule to attain the full material declaration in the coming years. Lorenzo Zullo and Luca Mohammadi presented a few case studies developed by CheMyCAI, showing how information traceability can be handled across the supply chain and how information is encrypted in the block chain and connected for further analysis and any possible recalculation, ensuring confidentiality of data submitted at each step (e.g., actors in the supply chain receive and pass on information but have no access to details). Finally, ReCarbonX presented how to trace corporate emissions for the purpose of carbon footprint calculation. Overall, these case studies demonstrated how information traceability can be handled in the supply chain, ensuring precise data gathering and confidentiality across the actors, which could result in useful applications for tracing data for exposure assessment refinements (more information: Federica Iaccino).

#### **2021 Cobalt Conference "Cobalt in the Green Recovery: A Sustainable Future"! : a very nice panel**

Eurometaux was invited to participate in a panel discussion on chemicals management and its impact on batteries during the Cobalt Conference held on 19 May. The panel, very well moderated by Caroline Braibant, included Veronika Jezsó (DG GROW), An Hagenaars (Umicore), Tuulia Svanehav (Northvolt), Jonathan Buston (UK HSE) and Violaine Verougstraete (Eurometaux). The questions allowed to bring up past and ongoing cobalt-specific regulatory developments, as well as more generic future developments such as the EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability but also the developments of UK-REACH.

Key messages from industry were focused on the importance of predictability, transparency and avoiding oversimplification (by addressing hazard only). The EU Commission representative encourage industry to provide input into the several ongoing processes to achieve together balanced and effective regulatory processes. Thanks to the CI for the invitation (more information: Violaine Verougstraete).

### **Second meeting of the UN GHS Informal Working Group on germ cell mutagenicity: definitions and tests**

The criteria for classification for germ cell mutagenicity in category 1B have led to disagreements in interpretation. The EU has submitted a proposal to the UN GHS sub-committee to revise these criteria. End of December, the committee agreed to form an Informal Working Group in the next biannual working plan. A first meeting of this Working Group was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> of March to discuss terms of reference to be approved at the next UN GHS sub-committee meeting in July. A second meeting of the group took place on 25 May and was attended by Samuel Buxton (NIPERA) and Claudine Albersammer (ICMM). During this meeting, Jan van Benthem presented what the Genetic Toxicology Technical Committee of HESI is doing in terms of germ cell mutagenicity. The opinion is that combining positive somatic cell tests with demonstrated ability of the substance to reach the gonads may be sufficient for Category 1B classification. However, not just the qualitative ability to reach the gonads but the quantitative amount that reaches the gonads may be necessary. The group also went through the definitions and tests documents that were circulated ahead of the meeting. The group agreed to extend the scope of the mutagenicity and genotoxicity definitions to include terms like clastogenicity, aneugenicity but did not conclude on which definition is more appropriate to carry forward, i.e., current UN GHS definitions, OECD definitions, WHO definitions, REACH definitions, ICH/FDA definitions of genotoxicity & mutagenicity. The group agreed that no test listed in the current chapter should be deleted, including Test Guidelines that have been deleted by the OECD Council. Some tests will not be recommended to be conducted in the future, however existing data may still be used for classification. A background should be included in the document on which tests are preferred. The group will reconvene on 8 July (more information: Claudine Albersammer and Samuel Buxton).

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## CALENDAR

**Please find here below a non-exhaustive list of the meetings that are planned so far for 2021.  
This list will be kept up to date on a regular basis and communicated throughout the year.  
Please save the dates for the meetings of interest for you.**

### **For meetings at Eurometaux**

For the moment due to the current situation beginning of 2021, **it will be possible to join our meetings by Webex (links to join will be sent ahead of the meetings).**

Any further update, decisions and/or cancellations will of course be communicated in due time.

### **For meetings at ECHA**

ECHA confirmed that **until the 30 June 2021 all ECHA meetings will continued to be held remotely.**

ECHA will keep the situation under review and will provide any further information as appropriate.

This information is published on ECHA's [website](#)

Further information on the COVID-19 situation information can be found on the [ECDC website](#)

- 31 May-4 June: ECHA RAC-57 & SEAC-51 Meetings
- 7-11 June: ECHA RAC-57 & SEAC-51 Meetings Week 7 June: OECD CBC & BIAC meetings
- 10 June: Water Taskforce Meeting
- 11 June: Evaluation Taskforces: Webinar on Consultation of definition for nanomaterials
- 11 June: discussion on multi-metallic projects environmental exposure
- 14-18 June: ECHA MSC-74 Meeting
- 15-16 June: WPC meeting
- 21-22 June: OECD Working Party on Hazard Assessment

- 22 June: Risk Management Taskforce Meeting
- 23 June: Human Health Taskforce Meeting
- 24 June: CARACAL Taskforce Meeting
- 23-24 June: ECHA MB-62 Meeting
- 24-25 June: REACH Committee Meeting TBC
- 28-29 June: OECD Working Party on Exposure Assessment
- 29-30 June: CARACAL-39 TBC
- 31 August: Chemicals Management Steering Committee Meeting
- 06-10 September: ECHA RAC-58 & SEAC-52 Meetings
- 13-17 September: ECHA RAC-58 & SEAC-52 Meetings
- 21 September: Risk Management Taskforce Meeting (TBC)
- 23-24 September: ECHA MB-63 Meeting
- 22-23 September: ECHA Committee Meeting TBC
- 27 September-1 October: Chemicals Management Autumn week

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## GENERAL INFORMATION & ACRONYMS

Follow the logo and check out our new Metals Gateway website.



This website is a (new) one stop information source for regulators & risk assessors dealing with metals/metal compounds and is tailored to the specific needs of the metals industry sector.

A continuously updated list of acronyms is available under the Reach Metals Gateway (RMG)

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