

12 December 2012

## **Preparatory meeting: Platform for NGO-ECHA discussions**

### Meeting note

**Time:** Wednesday 12/12/2012, 14:00 – 15:00 Helsinki Time

**Place:** ECHA Conference Centre

### **1. Opening**

As part of ECHA's continued efforts to improve transparency and engage with Accredited Stakeholder organisations, ECHA hosted a kick-off meeting to discuss the purpose, scope and expectations of regular discussions with NGOs.

### **2. Regular discussions with public interest NGOs and trade union representatives**

#### **Purpose, scope and expectations - Tour de table**

All participants from NGOs and ETUC welcomed the opportunity to have informal discussions with ECHA, stressing the importance of discussing topical concerns and making recommendations on an informal basis.

All participants agreed that the meetings should serve as a platform to receive early warnings of concerns before they escalate and to discuss common opportunities and avoid misunderstandings through enhanced dialogue.

#### **Specific issues of interest**

- **Increased visibility for workers issues by ECHA**  
In some cases information was difficult to find on ECHA's website. A suggestion was made for a dedicated web page for workers with links to relevant external sources of information was also mentioned.
- **More information from ECHA regarding substitution**  
A need to improve the information available on ECHA's website, specifically on the *Chemicals in our lives* section in order to improve public awareness was raised. NGOs keen to collaborate with ECHA on this topic.
- **NGO input via public consultations**  
Of utmost importance for both parties and ECHA will continue to improve the process based on feedback received from Accredited Stakeholders and other actors. ECHA stressed the importance for NGOs to duly use the opportunity of public consultations.

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- **Dossier quality**  
Mentioned as an area of concern and although NGOs acknowledged that industry is responsible for the quality of their dossiers, they felt that more could be done by ECHA to promote the topic.
- **Improvement of ECHA's dissemination portal**  
Information both difficult to find and hard to understand, especially for the general public. ECHA reminded NGOs of the on-going ECHA Dissemination Portal Survey where they could give their feedback and share their concerns which would then be taken into account when revamping the portal.
- **Closed sessions held during Committee meetings**  
Mentioned as an area of concern for NGOs and could potentially be a subject of discussion in one of the future meetings.
- **ECHA Multi-Annual Work Programme – Stakeholder contribution**  
MAWP currently being drafted and will undergo public consultation in 2013. It was recognised by all parties as a crucial channel to give ECHA feedback on its work for the coming 5 years.

### Participants for future meetings

Participants for future meetings will be determined by the topic to be discussed. All Accredited NGOs will be invited and should decide between their organisations who would be the most appropriate representative to attend based on the topic of the meeting. Similarly, ECHA staff attending the meeting would be chosen to correspond with the specific agenda items.

## 3. Practicalities for regular interaction

### Physical meetings/teleconferences/other means

Participants agreed that physical meetings in conjunction with other events are the preferred means of organising future discussions. The possibility to join via tele/video conference would also be provided. The Member State Committee meetings were considered to be a good occasion as they have the largest representation of NGO observers travelling to Helsinki. Also annual Stakeholders' Day Conferences and the Accredited Stakeholder Workshops were mentioned as options.

### Frequency & Length of the meetings

NGOs agreed that the meetings should not take place on a regular basis but rather when needed. The length of individual meetings would depend on the topics for discussion and timings of other adjacent meetings.

### Agenda setting

Participants proposed that the main topic of the next meeting would always be set during the previous meeting. Once the main topic had been identified, all Accredited NGOs would

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be consulted on other potential topics of interest. A main topic for the next meeting was proposed to be the ECHA website as it was raised several times during the discussions and acts as an *umbrella topic* covering many of the other issues raised. New web sections for SMEs and feedback received from the annual website customer satisfaction survey can also be included in the discussions. The dissemination portal may also be considered as a topic but ECHA noted that an advisory group had already been set up for that purpose and that the NGO-ECHA platform should not duplicate their work. ECHA also highlighted the currently ongoing survey amongst stakeholders on improvement suggestions for the dissemination portal (deadline to respond by 21 December).

### **Notes & follow-up actions**

Participants agreed on common topics of interest for future meetings and agreed that the topic of the next meeting to be held in February during the 28<sup>th</sup> Member State Committee should be the improvement of the ECHA website.

Following the meeting, all of ECHA's 14 Accredited NGOs will be contacted and their feedback and recommendations for the discussion platform will be taken into account for future meetings. They will also receive the meeting note and will be consulted on the topic(s) of the next meeting.

NGOs raised the need to have a clearer picture of who to contact in ECHA for specific issues, on top of the published [contact points](#). It was agreed that the ECHA Stakeholder email address ([stakeholder@echa.europa.eu](mailto:stakeholder@echa.europa.eu)) could be used for any enquiries from Accredited Stakeholders which would then be forwarded to relevant colleagues based on the nature of the enquiry. The same email address could be used for any enquiries relating to the NGO-ECHA discussion platform.

ECHA's Communications Unit prepares meeting notes of each meeting and circulates to participants. In order to maintain the informal nature of discussions, the meeting notes will be concise with a focus on recording key discussion points and practicalities for the next meetings.

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## **Annex I – Meeting Agenda**

### **Preparatory meeting Platform for NGO-ECHA discussions**

Wednesday 12 December 2012, Helsinki

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| <b>14:00 – 14:05</b> | <b>Opening of the meeting by ECHA</b>   |
| <b>14:05 – 14:35</b> | <b>Regular discussions with public interest NGOs and trade union representatives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Purpose, scope and expectations - Tour de Table</li><li>○ Specific issues of interest</li><li>○ Participants for future meetings</li></ul> |
| <b>14:35 – 14:50</b> | <b>Practicalities for regular interaction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Physical meetings/teleconferences/other means</li><li>○ Frequency</li><li>○ Length of the meetings</li><li>○ Agenda setting</li><li>○ Notes</li></ul>                             |
| <b>14:50 – 15:00</b> | <b>Any other business</b>   |