



ECHA/PR/08/03

Helsinki, 4 April 2008

Committee for Socio-economic Analysis started work towards risk-management and cost-benefits of proposed restrictions

The Committee for Socio-economic Analysis (SEAC) of ECHA met in Helsinki for the first time 2 – 3 April. This committee is responsible for preparing the opinions of the Agency relating to the socio-economic impact of possible legislative actions on chemical substances. The Committee discussed and agreed on its rules of procure. It also established a working group to look into methodology issues and working methods.

ECHA's Executive Director, Geert Dancet, said in his opening statement: *"A challenge to the SEAC is that socio-economic analysis, introduced by the REACH regulation, is a new tool in the EU chemicals legislation. It must deal, in a balanced way, with the interests of industry as well as with the environment and health which are equally important considerations."*

The Committee for Socio-economic Analysis plays a key role in the restriction and authorisation processes under REACH. It will prepare the Agency's opinion on applications for authorisations, proposals for restrictions, and other questions that arise from the REACH Regulation relating to the socio-economic impact of possible legislative action on substances. The work on actual dossiers can in practice only start in June 2009 when Member States can present the first proposals for restricting the use of chemicals requiring Community level measures. In the field of chemicals, socio-economic assessment of the impact of possible legislative actions is a new and uncharted territory. One of the primary tasks of the Committee is therefore to agree on its working methods and on the methodology underpinning its future opinions.

At this stage, the Committee consists of 28 members, nominated by Member States and appointed for a 3-year term by the Management Board on 13 February 2008. A list of the current SEAC members is available on the website of the Agency. A link to the list is available below.

The meeting agreed on the Committee's operating rules. The rules will safeguard the transparency of the Committee's operations while maintaining its independence and ensuring confidentiality of data. They also cover the participation of observers in the meetings. The rules will come into effect after a formal approval by the ECHA Management Board. Relations with the

Committee on Risk Assessment was an issue stressed at the meeting as the two Committees will work in parallel on the same dossiers from different angles.

SEAC is scheduled to meet twice in 2008. The next meeting will be held in October.

Now all three ECHA committees (Member State , Risk Assessment & Socio-economic Analysis) and the Forum (of exchange of information on enforcement) have started operating.

Links:

General information on the ECHA Committees:

http://echa.europa.eu/about/organisation/committees_en.html

Members of the Committee for Socio-economic Analysis:

<http://echa.europa.eu/doc/20080213MembersOfSEAC.pdf>

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