

Helsinki, 25 July 2019

Subject: submissions to the public consultation on the restriction proposal on microplastics

Dear Sir/Madam,

In recent days, several newspapers have reported on a proposal by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) to restrict certain intentional uses of microplastics, including the synthetic infill material used on artificial sports surfaces. We would like to clarify that neither ECHA nor the European Commission plan to ban artificial pitches and sport fields. However, ECHA and the Commission continue to consider how best to curb sources of microplastic pollution.

In this context, ECHA is currently conducting a Public Consultation on a REACH Annex XV proposal for a restriction on intentionally used microplastics to which you or your organisation have responded. When reading the information submitted we got the impression that certain respondents were concerned the restriction would require the immediate replenishment of existing artificial pitches with alternative infill material, or the closure and removal of the pitches themselves.

With this letter, we wish to inform you that the use of existing pitches would not be immediately affected should the proposed restriction be adopted. That is, playing on these pitches may continue as today although their maintenance could be affected as soon as the stock of microplastic infill material would be exhausted.

Based on the information provided in your submission, ECHA's scientific committees will discuss whether a transition period should be used to allow a managed transition to the use of alternative infill material. Similarly, we will explore if technical 'risk management' measures to reduce the loss of granules into the environment could be implemented instead of a ban on use. If you wish to submit additional information, you can do so as long as the Public Consultation is open (20 September 2019).

We hope that this letter¹ helps you in better understanding the restriction proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have further questions related to the restriction proposal or the process.

Yours sincerely,

(e-signed)²

Christoph Rheinberger

Phone: +358 9 6861 8847

Email: christoph.rheinberger@echa.europa.eu

¹ Due to the public interest in the topic, this response will be published on ECHA's website.

² As this is an electronic document, it is not physically signed. This communication has been approved according to ECHA's internal decision-approval process.