

EUROMETAUX CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT NEWS



Please join us in December:

- **16: CARACAL Taskforce**
- **18: Risk Management**
- **19: Chemicals Management Steering Committee**

Contents

COMMISSION.....	4
EU AGENCIES.....	4
EUROPEAN CHEMICALS AGENCY (ECHA)	4
ECHA COMMITTEES	4
ECHA OTHER ACTIVITIES.....	6
EUROMETAUX CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT	7
CHEMICALS STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABILITY.....	7
REACH REGISTRATIONS	7
RISK MANAGEMENT.....	8
INDUSTRIAL EMISSIONS.....	8
WATER	9
SOIL	10
TOOLS.....	10
METALS ENVIRONMENT EXPOSURE DATA PROGRAM (MEED)	11
OUTREACH	11
OTHERS	11
KAMILA'S SUSTAINABLE CORNER.....	11
COMMUNICATION.....	12
GENERAL INFORMATION & ACRONYMS.....	12
CALENDAR.....	13

Dear All,

Probably like many of you, I have a to-do list notebook in which I note down “to do’s”, “to not forget” and “to think about”.

At the end of the day, I copy paste my “not done’s” on the next page. This transfer to the next day usually proceeds without pondering or suffering: after all these years, I know the value of time and I rarely have the feeling I lost it.

My notebook goes everywhere with me and hence endures the same weather/travel/meeting conditions as me. Hence, I admit that after a couple of weeks, it tends to look like the agenda of a non-motivated teenager: it has lost its cover, my writing has gone wild, and the strikethroughs became so energetic that there are even some holes in the paper.

So, when I took it out last week while flying back from Helsinki, to do my usual “postponement” exercise, I could feel the surprise of my perfectly Vuitton-organised neighbour.

Somehow, this encouraged me to give my notebook a more prolonged look. I noticed that some of my scribbled ‘do’s’ came back on several (!) pages in a row, up to a week, as if the actions were struggling to arrive at the top of the page (and meet the done category). This triggered my curiosity: why did some actions not make it immediately? Was there a pattern in the topics, the type of action or the concerned audience? Was it the result of prioritisation, simple laziness or distraction? And more broadly, why do we postpone (actions), and some more than others?

I looked up at what was said on “procrastination” and found a significant amount of literature, quizzes, apps that kept me so busy for the rest of the journey back that the taxi driver had to draw my attention to the fact that we had reached my place.

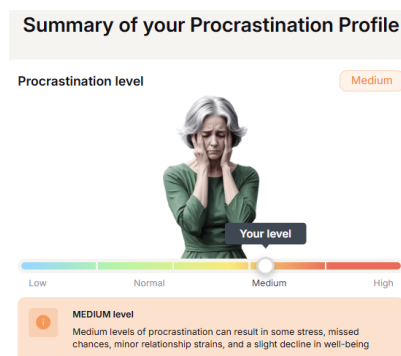
So, at least 95% of us procrastinate at least occasionally and about 15-20% of us do it consistently and problematically.

Among the drivers, you will find creativity or anxiety and in the latter model, there is enough to find series of justifications for postponing:

- The perfectionist will postpone the work to be done to be certain to find the perfect moment to do it
- The unquiet who fears failure will prefer the (temporary) security of the non-launched action
- The hyperactive will jump to something else to do
- The neurotic prefers to have a long list of to do’s to be certain he is busy and considered indispensable
- The refractory to authority cannot stand orders (even from his notebook)

Another ‘typology’ distinguishes the thrill seekers who enjoy the rush of just barely finishing a task on time, the avoiders who end up waiting because of fear of disapproval or failure, the undecided who have trouble making decisions and sticking with them and finally the impulsive who have low self-esteem and are easily distracted.

To define your profile, you can use plenty of tests, with your pattern reviewed by an expert who comes back to you proposing goals to achieve and daily exercises. My results showed this:



because I am an “over-doer”. I am afraid that the number of times I selected ‘sometimes’ in the questions (see example below) may have impacted the outcome.

Do you often feel overwhelmed by the amount of work you have to do?

Almost always

Sometimes

Rarely

Almost never

But gee, I really do look unhappy!

So, looking for solutions (a range is foreseen), I decided to go for two ways forward: one the classical recommendation to get to a positive reinforcement as soon as a task is done (yes, the reserve of mignonettes has decreased drastically again in Eurometaux) or consult the list made by Georges Perec of the 50 things to not forget to do before you die...

Yes again a to-do list!!!!

But a to-do list that would include:

- *a trip on the Bateaux Mouches*
- *decide to throw away a certain number of things that I keep without knowing why I keep them*
- *tidy up my library once and for all*
- *acquire various household appliances: a dishwasher, a washing machine*
- *dress differently: wear a tie, wear a three-piece suit*
- *go and live in a hotel in Paris*
- *live in the countryside*
- *get away and live for a long time in a big foreign city*
- *travel to the Arctic Circle*
- *live an experience outside of time: in a cave, without a time reference point*
- *take a long trip on a ship*
- *...*

Violaine Verougstraete

COMMISSION

CARACAL: meeting just before Christmas

The next CARACAL (53rd) meeting will take place on 18-19 December. This CARACAL was initially scheduled for the end of November but the Commission had to delay it due to the lack of available meeting rooms.

The agenda includes relevant points such as an exchange of views with DG ENV and DG GROW Directors on the outlook for the next College of Commissioners in the area of EU chemicals policy, as well as presentations on essential uses: Commission Communication and an update on substitution planning and on an ongoing study on PFAS pollution. A follow-up on the issue of registration of recovered aggregates is also expected. During the CLP part of the meeting, discussions on the 23rd ATP as well as on the new CLP guidance.

The next CARACAL Taskforce call to prepare our input to those topics will take place on Monday 16 December 2024, 10:00-11:00 CET. We will share the usual Master document summarising the uploaded documents and a 'relevancy for interventions colour code' ahead of the call and discuss it with the participants (more information: Ainhoa González Pérez).

EU AGENCIES

EUROPEAN CHEMICALS AGENCY (ECHA)

ECHA COMMITTEES

RAC-71: intense plenary meeting, from practical guide on read-across to PFAS and silver nitrate

RAC met for its last meeting of 2014 to discuss its usual mix of exposure limits, applications for authorisation, restrictions and classifications. Regarding Occupational Exposure Limits (OELs), the secretariat explained that a capacity-building workshop on Benchmark Dose Modelling (BMD) has taken place for the RAC members and that a consultation will take on the proposed 'policy' of the ECHA OEL team to use the BMDL10 (lower confidence limit) as point of departure for OELs and Exposure Risk Relationships modelling more systematically, and extend the use of BMD modelling to other processes (in REACH). RAC debated several endpoints for the derivation of an OEL/ERR (Exposure-Risk Relationship) for Bisphenol A. Immunotoxicity, effects on the mammary gland, metabolic effects, developmental neuro- and immunotoxicity were assessed to identify the most appropriate point of departure, bringing in several evaluations, including from EFSA, the German BfR and previous REACH restrictions. The discussion will continue in March, for example on the following: RAC is of the opinion that developmental effects after exposure should be accounted for and could explore two options: a) include an assessment factor or b) in line with the Endocrine Disruptor (ED) status of BPA, conclude that no threshold can be set based on the available information.

Three sectors with PFAS uses were (re-)discussed in the context of the Universal PFAS restriction: The textiles, upholstery, leather, apparel, carpets (TULAC), Food Contact Materials and Packaging, Construction products. While on the first two sectors, RAC mainly discussed updates and changes in the opinion, the use of PFAS in construction products was considered for the first time. PFAS are widely used in the construction products sector because of their technical properties such as ability to reduce surface tension, water resistance, UV resistance, non-flammability, corrosion prevention, chemical and thermal resistance, ability to reduce friction durability, soil and water resistance. One key aspect of the discussion is the assessment of alternatives. RAC considered this assessment should not be purely hazard-based as alternatives may result in various (environmental or e.g., occupational) concerns during their lifecycle even though the alternative itself can be considered as safer alternative solely on the basis of their CLP hazardous properties. Further work needs to be done. RAC also highlighted some uncertainties, e.g., with emissions estimates. RAC also noted uncertainties related to the long-lifecycle (commonly in the order of decades) of construction products that can affect the estimate of effectiveness in reducing the identified risk(s).

Regarding classification: ECHA announced that it is drafting a CLP Read-Across Practical Guide, which will make use of the existing ECHA guidance on grouping and read-across but be tailored to CLP. It will build on existing experience, including adopted RAC opinions and court cases, the EFSA and OECD Guidance and bring in the lessons from future RAC opinions and from the application of technical developments such as omics. Stakeholders will be consulted on a first draft via written procedure in RAC, Q2 2025. A short update was provided on the ECHA ED Guidance that was published, illustrating however that the challenges associated with the timeline for implementation are perceived differently by industry and RAC members. Silver nitrate was on the agenda for mutagenicity, reproductive toxicity (fertility/development/lactation) and Specific Target Organ Toxicity via Repeated Exposure (STOT-RE). These endpoints were discussed in the preceding RAC-71 CLH Working Group meeting. On mutagenicity, the majority of the RAC members were in support of classifying as Muta2. The available *in vitro* and mainly *in vivo* Comet data with silver nanoparticles were considered a sufficient concern. It was recognised that the case is complex and that the uncertainties need to be included in the RAC opinion. The repro 1B classification for fertility and developmental effects was supported. For lactation, RAC considered the available evidence to not justify a classification for reproductive effects via lactation. For STOT-RE, RAC based its opinion mainly on findings with silver nanoparticles. RAC considered the concern and number of supporting studies sufficient to classify as STOT-RE1 for neurotoxic effects. As some reservations were raised, the wording of the opinion should highlight these concerns, among others on the use of nano data while data on silver compounds were available. EPMF has already communicated these outcomes to its members. In March 2025, carcinogenicity will be discussed, and the opinion be finalised.

Finally, Eurometaux, Cefic and CropLife Europe had the possibility to meet the RAC chair to discuss the overall dynamics of RAC and its perception. A letter will be sent to ECHA's Executive Director to request the possibility of having the industry in the room (rather than online). This may facilitate the interaction and capacity-building on all sides, which will be even more critical for the new CLP endpoints (more information: Violaine Verougstraete, on silver nitrate: Jelle Mertens).

SEAC-65: the saga on authorisations continues with the first very large upstream application

SEAC continued its authorisation application (AfA) review, this time assessing the large upstream application submitted by the Cr6 suppliers, the CTAC-Sub2 submission. Until recently, almost all Cr6 users (mostly plating shops, probably >2000) were allowed to continue their activities as they were covered by the Sub1 application. However, the court annulled the granted application and requested suppliers to come forward with a much more detailed AfA, Sub2. Under Sub2, users (platers and others) are only covered when they provide comprehensive answers to the questionnaire collecting data for the AfA on technology, exposures, risk management conditions and substitution planning - which 305 users did. SEAC adopted its opinion supporting a 12-year review period. This first large upstream application sets precedence in that it provided exposure and risk data for each individual downstream user and excluded all those who did not provide this evidence.

The Commission also presented its long-expected clarification on SAGA, a concept used in authorisations (and soon in restrictions) that defines if a Suitable Alternative is Generally Available. If so (as Cr6 for decorative plating), then no exemption to a ban/restricted use can be granted unless the conditions of the SAGA do not apply to an individual user. This is difficult to demonstrate including in applications checked by SEAC, hence in practice a form of a sectoral use ban is introduced (more information: Simon Cook and Hugo Waeterschoot).

SEAC-65: U-PFAS restriction, the sectoral review continued

The universal PFAS restriction (a generic ban introduced 18 months after the Entry into Force unless derogated for a temporary period of 5 or 12 years) in SEAC updated its review of 2 sectors (Textiles and Food Contact Materials) and reviewed the construction sector for the first time. These updates aim at strengthening the applied methodology which was further developed during the review process. SEAC suggested to apply a derogation of 12 years for Personal Protective Equipment, and a 5-year exemption for very specific food contact materials such as industrial non-stick backing equipment, most seen as non-controversial. This was quite different for the uses in construction materials where the Dossier Submitters proposed exemptions for fire safety purposes and bridge and building bearings, with SEAC concluding that there is "weak evidence for low substitution potential". Hence SEAC was not able to conclude on the proportionality and therefore seems to be leaning towards contesting the potential derogations. This may

set quite some precedence for other upcoming uses. Eurometaux noted that some PFAS are used in metal applications in the construction sector (all relating to surface treatment and/or coatings, but with PFAS-containing formulations having low market penetration), whereby SEAC concluded that there is sufficient strong evidence that they are substitutable, hence no derogation.

ECHA also clarified the sectors that will be reviewed in the March meeting: applications of fluorinated gasses, transport and energy - all most relevant to the metals sector (more information: Simon Cook and Hugo Waeterschoot).

MSC: launched a revision of its approach to identify priority substances for authorisation

Every 2 years ECHA produces a list of priority substances for authorisation as a proposal to be considered by the Commission in its next update of REACH Annex XIV. The selection criteria defined in the past are based on volume, wide dispersive use and hazards. Hence, many metals and metal compounds were recommended for prioritisation, culminating in the selection of lead metal last year. Commission, ECHA and some Member States agreed that the substances recommended for authorisation are probably not always the most relevant ones, noting that some (like metals) would cause a too large number of authorisation applications and/or be better handled under other risk management tools. Having this in mind, they started a review process of the criteria soliciting comments and suggestions from Member states and Stakeholders. Eurometaux responded to this initiative based on its experience with a series of metal (compounds), suggesting that a detailed Risk Management Option analysis (RMOa) (carried out before being listed on the candidate list) and relying on an exposure estimate instead of a volume estimate as criterion could improve the relevancy and efficacy of the prioritisation program.

ECHA distributed the received input to all MSC members and stakeholders for its discussion at the December meeting. From the received responses we noted that Eurometaux focused its comments on practical suggestions, as requested for (more information: France Capon, Klaus Kamps and Huge Waeterschoot).

MB-SPI: preparing the approval of ECHA's work program for the next years

The ECHA Managing Board (MB) is expected to approve the workplan and budget for the 2025-2027 ECHA activities. Those are described in the Single Programming Document (SPD) for the period 2025-2027. Eurometaux reviewed the proposal and discussed its findings with Cefic and other sectors, which Guy Thiran subsequently defended at the MB preparatory Working Group on Strategy, Planning and Implementation (SPI). The SPD has come a long way and included in its presented version a more stable structure with an increase in transparency.

In the past, industry requested to include an indicator to show the progress made compared to the Strategy Statement (ECHA's mission, vision and long-term objectives) and to not only focus on quantitative performance indicators but also on quality. Some progress was made on the descriptive indicators including some changes suggested by Eurometaux, but not on the reduction of the number of quantity indicators. However, we were informed that ECHA had no choice here given it follows a demand by the Commission to allow them to justify the financial balancing budget.

The SPD further included 2 new interesting points: "a list of negative priorities" that are no longer a priority and considered for downsizing and an approach to assess the implementation of the Strategy Statement. The latter one is a response to the demands from stakeholders and others. An assessment of the first point showed that ECHA wants to reduce or even delete support to stakeholders including industry, given not directly related to the core legal mandate. We have of course already contested this stating that it would only result in longer discussions in ECHA's Committees that are presently already overloaded. And despite being announced in the draft agenda, no new update was provided on ECHA's new tasks for the future (more information: Guy Thiran and Hugo Waeterschoot).

ECHA OTHER ACTIVITIES

Exchange & Capacity-building Group on Battery Materials (ECaBaM): final report and dates for next workshop

The final report of the 2nd ECaBaM workshop that took place in Helsinki on 28-29 October 2024 is now available in [Eurometaux's REACH Metals gateway](#).

Preparations will now start for the third workshop, that will take place on 7 and 8 April 2025 in Brussels at the MCC (Eurometaux premises). This third workshop will potentially focus on prioritisation and end of

life/recycling challenges and will work mainly through breakout sessions where focussed discussions are expected (more information: Ainhoa González Pérez).

EUROMETAUX CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT

CHEMICALS STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABILITY

REACH & CLP: *brainstorming session*

The REACH & CLP Project Group met on the 20th of November for a brainstorming session with its members on what would be Eurometaux's priorities for the 2025 REACH revision. Discussion topics included the future of authorisation, where simplification is needed, pros and cons of sector legislation for restrictions vs REACH, 'safe use', Assessment of Regulatory Needs (ARNs), where to bring in some changes in priority/prioritisation scoring, and how to bring up the specificities of the sector. Participants agreed on the need to improve predictability and transparency of the legislation, that REACH 1.0 was about collecting info, REACH 2.0 is about risk management, and the need to keep a holistic view on the regulatory landscape while defining advocacy priorities and actions to consider risk management beyond REACH. In terms of competitiveness and simplification, which are the key words in the Commission at the moment, participants concluded that it may be more realistic to target an increase in efficiency and transparency.

In terms of next steps, Eurometaux will digest this feedback to contribute to the cross-sectoral workshop on REACH 2.0 organised by Cefic on 6 December to discuss the positions of different industries. Based on these activities, Eurometaux will further define a proposal for a common position on REACH 2.0 (more information: Ainhoa González Pérez).

REACH REGISTRATIONS

Registration Compliance: *Taskforce meeting 20.11.2024*

The Registration Compliance Taskforce met in November to discuss key updates across Registration, Evaluation and Board of Appeals topics.

Under **Registration**, the Taskforce provided an update on the monthly ECHA-Industry Meetings, where discussions focused on topics such as IUCLID, registration processes, REACH-IT, and data sharing. These meetings aim to enhance internal communication with ECHA, making it easier to efficiently report issues and suggest improvements for tools.

Additionally, the Multi-Metallic Database maintenance and further developments were presented together with the updated Terms and Conditions and Disclaimer prepared by Mayer Brown law firm. An update on the impact of Russia sanctions on REACH compliance was also provided. The Taskforce agreed that direct communication with regulators should continue, and there was a suggestion to explore discussions through the CARACAL platform (see more below).

Under **Evaluation**, it was explained that the Member State Committee (MSC) reached its final decision to use the invertebrate *Hyalella Azteca* test (OECD 321, HYBIT) as the preferred test for assessing bioaccumulation in aquatic environments, replacing traditional fish testing. This decision could affect test outcomes, particularly considering the species' ability to bioaccumulate metals in its carapace structure. The Taskforce noted the need for further exploration of these implications, which will be further discussed within the Environment Taskforce and potentially brought to ETAP.

In the context of the ECHA **Board of Appeal** (BoA), the Taskforce also discussed the ECHA BoA's stance on the possibility of contesting a decision based on human rights, though not on the technical content of the decision itself. The BoA concluded that the ECHA/MSC should evaluate the decision's details at the time it was made, along with the robustness of the justification provided by the registrant (more information: Federica Iaccino, Lorenzo Zullo, Hugo Waeterschoot).

REACH Dossier updates under Russian sanctions: *industry call for solutions*

The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) has recently published an updated Q&A on REACH dossier updates under Russia sanctions ([See Q&A 2071](#)). However, the guidance does not fully resolve key challenges faced by the industry and in particular on how to unlock the submission of dossier updates that have been blocked for 2 years. The main problem is that the REACH registration of companies subject to

Russian sanctions, which have been communicated to ECHA and national authorities by consortia, has not been withdrawn yet. As such, the lead registrant, according to Commission and ECHA guidance, cannot proceed with the submission of REACH dossier updates.

Eurometaux will keep engaging with the Commission, ECHA and Member States Authorities to enable consortia to proceed with dossier updates effectively and in compliance with both REACH requirements and sanctions (more information: Federica Iaccino and Lorenzo Zullo).

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk Management Taskforce: *workshop on restriction of U-PFAS learnings and further anticipation*

Most companies and sectors only became aware about the use of PFAS compounds they use in materials, equipment or substances due to the extensive restriction proposal from 5 EU countries to ban them all unless a temporary derogation was given based on lacking feasible alternatives. Hence, companies and sectors did not contribute effectively during the Public Consultation (PC1) at the start of the restriction review process in the ECHA Committees (RAC and SEAC). The fact that PFAS compounds have no hazard classification so far was the main reason why Safety Data Sheets did not include any warning or even chemical composition referring to PFAS.

Eurometaux therefore organised a workshop on 13 November, to increase the awareness of companies and sectors on the proposed restriction, how it is reviewed in the ECHA Committees, how to respond to it and learnings for the metals sector so far. The record attendance showed the broad interest in the issue. Main conclusions were that the sector by sector review conducted by RAC and SEAC allows specific sectors to attend the ECHA sessions but they can only raise information submitted during the PC1, but no new information.

Sectors that will be reviewed are only to be announced by ECHA with 6 months' notice due to the slow updates of the background document that is to include the comments of the PC1 provided by the countries. Hence it is critical to prepare for the upcoming second consultation PC2, if companies feel they cannot substitute the PFAS substances they use before the implementing timing (expected to be mid-2027).

Members will be kept informed on learnings and further sectors under review via the Risk Management Taskforce mailing list (more information: Simon Cook, Violaine Verougstraete and Hugo Waeterschoot).

INDUSTRIAL EMISSIONS

Industrial Emissions Directive: *compliance with emission limits*

The new IED introduces new provisions in Article 15a to address compliance assessment approaches for IED installations. DG Environment sent a letter to the Article 13 Forum to launch a consultation asking for feedback on the aspects that should be included, focusing in particular on the method for assessing compliance with emission limit values in permits. Deadline to submit comments is 5th of December 2024. (more information: Violaine Verougstraete or [Eleonora Tosi](#)).

Large Volume Inorganic Chemicals (LVIC) BREF: *status update*

In the context of the drawing up of the LVIC BREF (Best available technology Reference document), in November the EU-BRITE held a half-day online workshop on "Hydrogen production via water electrolysis" to present the outcome of the 2024 JRC Stakeholder Consultation on "Information on key potential environmental aspects and level of deployment".

The workshop aimed to inform on the status of deployment of hydrogen production by water electrolysis and related potential key environmental aspects. The survey did not receive a lot of responses (only 34). On the basis of information received, H₂ projects in the EU are in total 23. Only 5 of them are above the IED threshold (Electrolysis of water for production of hydrogen where the production capacity exceeds 50 tonnes per day). Moreover, to date only 3 projects are under operation even though the majority of the H₂ projects present a high maturity level (i.e., TRL 8-9). It is expected that 19 projects will start operation under nominal regime by 2028.

As concerns the electrolyser technology, most of respondents have Polymer Electrolyte Membrane (PEM) electrolysers, followed by Alkaline (ALK) electrolysers. From the responses, 67% of the projects are operated as stand-alone processes, meanwhile 18% of the projects are associated with the production of

other chemicals (3 projects associated with NH₃ production and 1 project associated with aniline production).

Cefic and Fertilizers Europe presented their experience/challenges related to H₂ production. According to them, the main drawbacks related to H₂ production are still the transport, storage, high electricity consumption, no large-scale experiences and problems related to safety aspects. In addition to that, it was mentioned that PFAS are used in membrane manufacturing in PEM electrolyzers.

To summarise, data shows that deployment of this technology is slower than expected, the availability of operational data is very limited, and in the near future the EU Survey could be relaunched in case there is significant progress (probably after 2027).

The next step for the LVIC BREF will be the first Data Assessment Workshop as a web-based meeting, tentatively early 2025 (more information: Violaine Verougstraete and [Eleonora Tosi](#)).

New BREFs:

- Mining BREF: the kick-off meeting started on 2nd December 2024 and will continue until 5th December 2024.
- Landfill (LAN) BREF: on 22nd November 2024 EU-BRITE officially started the process of drawing up the LAN BREF. A communication was sent to relevant stakeholder, the first step of this process is the setting up the Technical Working Group (TWG), which consists of experts from Member States, EU industrial associations and environmental NGOs. Eurometaux will follow this BREF, which is relevant for the landfilling of residues from industrial processes taking place at non-ferrous metal installations. The kick-off meeting is planned for mid-2025. If you wish to be involved in the process please send an email to Violaine Verougstraete or [Eleonora Tosi](#) by 13th January 2025.

WATER

Strategic Coordination Group meeting (14/10): *key outcomes*

A Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) was held on 14 October. One of the main items on the agenda was the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) Work Programme (2025-2027), which is very ambitious in its tasks and deliverables. The EU Commission took the time to collect and address comments from Member States on this point.

It was also explained that the new Taskforce on Exemptions will be for Member States only (no stakeholders allowed). This new Taskforce will focus on limiting "unruly" exemptions rather than allowing more of them, and will also focus on exemptions after the 2027 deadline of the Water Framework Directive (WFD).

Another interesting item on the agenda was the EU Commission's presentation on the forthcoming EU Water Resilience Strategy. This strategy seems to be very much a communication package (similar to the Zero Pollution Action Plan), it seems to be an "umbrella" that will cover existing legislation, make recommendations to Member States and focus on the implementation of current legislation. Whether any new legislation will emerge from this strategy remains to be seen. A call for evidence will soon be launched by the EU Commission.

The State of Water Reports (EU Commission exercise, similar to the recently published EEA State of Water Report (see last CM news)) based on the monitoring of the 4th river basin district plans will be published soon.

Water Taskforce: *meeting*

The last meeting of the Water Taskforce of 2024 took place on 27 November. The meeting covered all the recent advocacy activities carried out by Eurometaux, but also discussed the next possible steps.

First of all, an update on the legislative process of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) was given, in addition to all the advocacy activities (papers, meetings, etc.) carried out since last June. The upcoming meetings with the EU regulators as well as the possible further advocacy actions for this file were discussed. A detailed and practical analysis of the recently published EEA report was also presented. Its implications and possible actions were also discussed.

Feedback from the last EC-organised meetings was presented, with a specific point on the status of the EU-wide Environmental Quality Standards (EQS) dossier on copper. The meeting then focused on the upcoming Water Resilience Strategy, takeaways from the new Commissioner's hearing on this issue and further advocacy actions. The last point of discussion was the EFSA call for data (see last CM News). The meeting ended with a short update on the Drinking Water Directive activities. Consequently, a long list of follow-up action points for the coming months was drafted, and we are not going to be bored so please join us if you have not already done so 😊 (more information: Lara Van de Merckt).

SOIL

Soil Monitoring Law: *update*

On 8 November, an Eurometaux delegation met with the European Commission (EC), Directorate General Environment, Land Use and Management Unit, to discuss the new soil monitoring law (now in trilogue). What emerged from this meeting is that the EU Council's General Approach (GA), prepared under the BE Presidency, already seems to be the fruit of active discussion and consensus between Member States and the Commission, so it is likely that the outcome of the trilogues will be more along the lines of the GA.

The European Commission has explained that the Directive will cover all EU soil, but with a flexible approach to managing and accessing soil health (with general/science-based definitions and tailor-made regimes). Sites already covered by the Industrial Emissions Directive should not be covered by the Soil Monitoring Law (SML) (in terms of its overall requirements) if "properly applied". Historical contamination (>7 years) would not be covered, i.e., mining would be excluded. It is also recognised that mining would be covered by the new IED (and during the years of operation up to remediation) but would be excluded from the general requirements of the SML.

The EC also stated that a working group would be set up to develop guidance on the implementation of the Soil Monitoring Law, and recognised the metals industry's in-depth knowledge of soil risk assessment. The "one out all out" is out and the soil health assessment will (most likely) follow the EU Council's General Approach proposals (with the ambitious targets and the more "realistic, operational" targets). The natural and essential nature of metals has been recognised. The natural background should be taken into account thanks to the GA. However, the SML will focus on "contamination", i.e., excessive concentrations, as it is too difficult to consider deficiency at this stage and it was noted that the science on deficiency is limited. The Commission stated that these types of issues will be addressed and discussed further during the implementation phase (more information: Lara Van de Merckt).

TOOLS

MeClas Steering group: *annual call*

The MeClas Steering Committee had a call on 15 November to discuss the 2024 achievements and the priorities for 2025.

Work is ongoing and will continue in 2025 to merge the Multi-Metallic Database (MMDB) and the database of the MeClas tool. Integrating the two databases will ensure consistency but also save resources at the longer term (manual checks) and reduce the potential for errors. Consistency checks are being carried out and possible reasons for mismatch between classifications in the two databases are being checked. Users of MeClas have reported that the non-access to the Ecotoxicity Reference Value (ERV) value seems to be becoming a hurdle for the use/acceptance of the tool. Eurometaux will consult the data holders to ask whether the publication of the ERVs MeClas could be considered.

A list of proposed priorities for the 2025 work was discussed and sent to the Steering Committee for approval/comments by 15 December. It includes e.g., the ED mixture rules for Tier 2, finalising the integration MMDB/MeClas, completing the update of the manual, etc. The draft minutes were circulated to the Steering Committee on 25 November (more information: Frederik Verdonck, Federica Iaccino, Hugo Waeterschoot and Violaine Verougstraete).

METALS ENVIRONMENT EXPOSURE DATA PROGRAM (MEED)

MEED: annual progress workshop

The annual progress workshop on MEED was organised this year in Ostend (Belgium) on 18 and 19 November 2024 and was attended by almost all sponsoring consortia. While 2023 was the year of the design of the smart testing program, 2024 is/was the year of the gap filling mixture toxicity testing. All test work on the metals-metals mixture is finished and shows so far that the assumed concentration addition applied in the Mixture Allocation Factor (MAF) approach is too conservative in nature when applied to metals as even some antagonism has been observed. The metals-organics gap filling is still ongoing, and attendees were briefed on the progress and further timing.

All this experience allowed to launch a discussion on what a scientific robust alternative could be proposed to overrule the MAF. A first approach was explained and will be further refined based upon the further learnings and comments received.

Sponsors were also informed about the current financial situation that was able to be rebalanced due to a successful support granting by the Flemish authorities based on the innovative character of the Ecorelevance work and the benefits this may provide for companies to prove they are not affecting the biodiversity with their emissions to surface waters. This Ecorelevance part of the MEED program will still run until mid-2026.

A final point of discussion related on how to progress with the mesocosm experiment as a final validation part of the MEED study. Member States see this as a credibility and relevance check of the program if we want to use the outcome for a MAF alternative. The costs for such a crucial step require ensuring its feasibility to prove its relevance. The Workshop further concluded on the proposed scientific publications of the program and welcomed the long series of posters and presentations prepared for the upcoming SETAC Europe 2025 meeting (in May in Vienna). The sponsoring members further mandated the MEED Steering Team to come forward with a scientific communication strategy and to start the discussion on a MAF correction alternative during a workshop with supporting regulators (more information: Hugo Waeterschoot, Marnix Vangheluwe and Violaine Verougstraete and Diana Dobre).

OUTREACH

OTHERS

Enhesa: briefing on EU chemicals management trends at workshop in Asia

Eurometaux provided an update on trends in the EU chemicals management policies and experiences at the Enhesa Asia Chemicals Summit on 5 November, Eurometaux raised attention for the upcoming REACH review, the changes in risk management policies, the raising attention for ESPR (Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation) and experience with the new CLP criteria (ED, PBT, ...) and the new hazard categories of Most Hazardous Substances (MHS) or Substances of Concern (SOCs). The focus was on the relevancy for metal importers or producers in the EU and the precedent setting nature of these concepts at worldwide scale.

The meeting was attended by large number of Asian based companies including regional seats of members. The discussion confirmed how Asian systems are picking up on EU chemicals management ruling (e.g., new endpoints and definitions), different than in other jurisdictions (e.g., north America).

Eurometaux used this opportunity to brief Asian country representatives on how their input at OECD and UN could support the metals views, given of direct relevance for them (more information: Hugo Waeterschoot).

KAMILA'S SUSTAINABLE CORNER

EU List of Waste: battery black mass classification

The process for allocating hazardous codes for the waste batteries and battery-related waste is progressing. Following the thorough work done by the Joint Research Center (JRC), the European Commission has proposed relevant amendment to the EU List of Waste (LoW), allocating new hazardous codes to:

- waste batteries (all chemistries);
- battery waste, wastes from manufacture, supply and use of batteries covering all battery chemistries;
- intermediate waste fractions (black masses) from waste battery treatment;
- slags from waste battery recycling.

For the metals industry, the LoW update is extremely important to create a level-playing field and to make sure that those waste streams, containing strategic materials, remain available for recycling in the EU and contribute to reaching the goals of the Circular Economy and in particular of the Critical Raw Materials Act and Batteries Regulation.

The Public Consultation, to which Eurometaux responded positively, has shown overall stakeholders' agreement to the proposed hazardous classification. In addition to that, stakeholders highlighted the need for swift implementation of the new codes across the Member States and indicated practical implications for the collection and storage facilities, battery logistics and recycling operators who will need to ask for permits to treat hazardous waste, if not obtained before. Also, the proposed transition period of 24 months triggered some requests for prolongation to 36 months to allow both authorities and waste operators to adapt.

As the Public Consultation is now closed, the European Commission will summarise now the responses and decide if any changes could be brought into the draft Delegated Act. Once approved internally and finalised, the Delegated Act will enter the scrutiny period (2 months) by the European Parliament and the Council. The institutions can only say Yes or No to the draft. They can't bring any amendment (more information: Kamila Slupek).

COMMUNICATION

Metals Academy: 2025 programme & registration process

On 20 November, the exciting and enticing draft programme was sent out to all our members and those who showed interest in joining this 4th edition of the Metals Academy, along with the link to register. To date we have received more than 30 registrations, most of them newcomers.

Therefore, in the weeks to come, we will go ahead with finalising the draft programme and confirming the speakers, and will confirm to participants that they have been accepted or not, keeping in mind that a group of maximum 40 students is planned, and we wish to ensure a level-playing field for all our members.

We thank you once again for your enthusiasm and will keep you all informed as soon as possible. And it goes without saying that we are really looking forward to organising – once again – this fantastic event (more information: Ailsa Lee and Violaine Verougstraete).

GENERAL INFORMATION & ACRONYMS

Follow the logo and check out our Metals Gateway website.



This website is a 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)

CALENDAR

Please find here below a non-exhaustive list of the meetings for end of the year 2024 and already planned for 2025.

For meetings at Eurometaux: most of our meetings will be held as hybrid meetings, and **our members will be informed ahead of the meetings** (links to join will be sent ahead of the meetings).

For meetings at ECHA: this information is published on ECHA's [website](#)

- 2-5/12: SEAC-65
- 9-13/12: MSC-88 (TBC)
- 10-11/12: RAC-72 DWD Working Group
- 18/12: Risk Management Taskforce
- 19/12: Chemicals Management Steering Committee
- 18-19/12: CARACAL
- 19-20/12: ECHA MB-76

2025

- 14-15/01: 2nd Endocrine Disruptor Workshop
- 28-30/01: RAC-72 CLH WG
- 29-30/01: Ad-hoc CARACAL (if necessary)
- 04-06/02: RAC-72 AfA WG
- 10-14/02: MSC-89 (Tentative)
- 18/02: Chemicals Management Steering Committee
- 24-25/02: RAC-72 REST WG
- 26-27/02: RAC-72 DWD WG
- 03-07/03: RAC-72 Plenary
- 03-07/03: SEAC-66
- 10-12/03: Chemicals Management Spring Week
- 10-14/03: SEAC-66
- 20-21/03: ECHA MB-77
- 26-27/03: CARACAL-54
- 07-08/04: 3rd Batteries Workshop
- 28-30/04: RAC-73 CLH WG
- 05-06/05: RAC-73 DWD WG
- 05-08/05: Metals Academy 4 (La Ramée, Jodoigne)
- 07-09/05: RAC-73 AfA WG
- 11-15/05: SETAC Europe (Vienna)
- 20/05: Chemicals Management Steering Committee
- 26-27/05: RAC-73 REST WG
- 02-06/06: RAC-73 Plenary
- 02-06/06: SEAC-67
- 09-13/06: SEAC-67
- 10-13/06: MSC-90-TENT
- 17-18/06: ECHA MB-78
- 30/06-02/07: RAC-74 CLH WG
- 03-04/07: RAC-74 AfA WG
- 03-04/07: CARACAL-55
- 01-02/09: RAC-74 REST WG (Tentative)
- 03-04/09: RAC-74 DWD WG
- 08-12/09: RAC-74 Plenary
- 08-12/09: SEAC-68
- 15-19/09: SEAC-68

- 23/09: Chemicals Management Steering Committee
 - 25-26/09: ECHA MB-79
 - 06-10/10: MSC-91 (Tentative)
 - 07-09/10: RAC-75 AfA WG
 - 27-29/10: RAC-75 CLH WG
 - 29/09-01/10: Chemicals Management Autumn Week
 - 11-13/11: RAC-75 DWD WG
 - 17-18/11: RAC-75 REST WG
 - 19-20/11: CARACAL -56
 - 24-28/11: SEAC-69
 - 24-28/11: RAC-75 Plenary
 - 01-05/12: SEAC-69
 - 08-12/12: MSC-92 (Tentative)
 - 11-12/12: ECHA MB-80
 - 16/12: Chemicals Management Steering Committee
-