

An overview of the consequences of the REACH implementation for the composites industry.

The basics of REACH

REACH is the acronym for: Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation (and Restriction) of Chemicals.

REACH is the new European chemicals legislation that came into force by June 1st 2007. In REACH the responsibility to work safely with chemicals is shifted towards the chemical industry. Chemical products that are placed in the market must be safe to humans and to the environment.

The industry has to describe all hazards of the chemical products, the exposure under different circumstances and all possible risk management measures that have to be taken to ensure safe working.

The REACH regulation is based on a description of the chemical hazards and risks for chemical substances.

There are approx. 30.000 different substances that fall under the REACH regulation. The amount of information that has to be submitted depends on the quantity of the substance that is manufactured or imported per year. For all chemicals that are produced in quantities of more than 10 tons per year, an extensive chemical safety assessment (CSA) has to be performed. The result of this CSA is reported in a dossier for the particular substance.

The implementation of the REACH Regulation is executed by the European Chemical Agency (ECHA) in Helsinki.

REACH knows a number of different actors in the supply chain. The most important roles are explained here shortly:

Manufacturers are companies who produce substances within the European Union.

Importers are companies that import substances (alone or in preparations or in articles) from outside the EU and put them on the European market.

Manufacturers and importers (M/I) have to register their substances.

Distributors are companies that store and place on the market substances, preparations and articles inside the EU and make them available to third parties without further processing.

Downstream users (DU's) are companies (other than manufacturers or importers) that use substances on their own or in preparations in their industrial or professional activities.

DUs (in general) do not have to register, but have other obligations that will be explained below.

Companies that buy substances to be used in preparations (*formulators*) are in fact downstream users.

Be aware that one company can have different roles in REACH.

Time schedule

REACH entered into force at June 1st 2007. There is a full year of preparation until June 1st 2008. Then a period of 6 months will pass in which substances have to be pre-registered by the M/I. The pre-registration is basically an announcement that the M/I are going to register the substances they produce or import.

The registration is done in different steps. The highest priority is given to substances that are either dangerous or produced (or imported) in volumes higher than 1000 tons per year. The deadlines are as follows:

30 November 2010:

- Substances produced/imported in volumes of 1000 t/a or more;
- known CMR substances (category 1 and 2) in volumes exceeding 1 t/a
- Substances classified as R50/53 in volumes of 100 t/a or more

31 May 2013:

For all other substances manufactured/imported in volumes of 100 t/a or more

31 May 2018:

For all other substances manufactured/imported in volumes of 1 t/a or more

Identified uses

Substances can be used in many different applications or processes. The M/I have to describe all uses which they consider as proper uses for their substances. These uses are called Identified Uses (IU). For these IUs the M/I have to develop exposure scenarios (ES). In an exposure scenario the use of the substance is described together with all relevant information about exposure of humans and the environment to the substance. The ES has to be accompanied by a description of all necessary risk management Measures (RMM) that have to be taken in order to ensure a safe use of the substance.

Downstream users

Most composite producers are downstream users. Therefore the most important obligations of the DU will be described here more in detail.

1. If you use dangerous substances and preparations, you will still receive **safety data sheets**, which under REACH may have one or more exposure scenarios attached. If you receive an exposure scenario, you must check whether your current use is covered and whether you comply with the conditions described in that exposure scenario.

If you use a substance or preparation **outside the conditions described in the exposure scenario**, or if your use is not covered by the exposure scenario, you have several options:

- you may make your use/use conditions known to your supplier so that the supplier can prepare an exposure scenario covering your use conditions
- you may change your conditions of use so they comply with the supplier's exposure scenario
- you may find another supplier who provides an exposure scenario covering your conditions of use
- you may prepare your own chemical safety report, or
- you can find an alternative substance, preparation or process and stop using the substance/preparation in question.

2. If you **place dangerous preparations on the market** (as a formulator) you will still have to provide safety data sheets to your customers. In some cases, this may require you to consolidate or develop exposure scenarios covering uses of substances in preparations further down the supply chain and to attach them to the safety data sheet.

3. **Communication along the supply chain** on the use of substances and preparations **will significantly increase under REACH**:

- REACH increases the extent of information to be communicated to you by your suppliers to enable you to use chemicals safely. In addition, REACH requires you to communicate new information you may have on hazards and possible inadequacy of recommended risk management measures to your suppliers.
- You may initiate communication upstream and downstream, e.g. when pro-actively identifying your uses to a supplier, or collecting information on customers' uses.

- You may also be asked to forward information, e.g. upstream when a customer has new information on substance properties or downstream when registrants seek information on the end-use of their substances.

4. **The use of some substances may be subject to an authorisation** requirement. This will be indicated by your supplier, usually in the safety data sheet. You may use the substance provided that the use is in accordance with the conditions of an authorisation granted to an actor up his supply chain. If your use is not covered by such an authorisation, and you want to continue this use, you will have to apply for an authorisation for your own use and, if relevant, for your customers' uses.

5. **Some substances may be subject to restrictions** on their use, placing on the market or to bans. Restrictions that were in place under the Marketing & Use Directive (76/769/EEC) are carried over in REACH.

6. If you **produce or import articles** you may have to register substances which are intended to be released from the articles. This is not required if that use of the substance is already covered by another registration. If the article contains above 0.1% (w/w) of certain substances of high concern, you may have to notify the Agency and inform your customers on safe use of the article, depending on the quantity of the substance used and whether exposure can be excluded. Consumers of articles can also request information about these substances.

7. Consequences of Registration for Downstream Users.

You are not required to register the substances that you use, but the registration of these substances by their manufacturers and importers will affect you in a number of ways:

- Substances which are not registered will no longer be available on the EU market.
- The classification and labelling of some substances may change and if you are a formulator using such substances you will need to review the classification of your products, and their safety data sheets, accordingly.

- Safety data sheets will also be updated or extended with information generated through the registration process. If you receive an exposure scenario attached to a safety data sheet, this will trigger additional obligations for you.

EuCIA has a good cooperation with the suppliers of UP resins, acting together in the Plastics Europe UPR Group. In this cooperation details are being worked out on how to ensure a smooth introduction of REACH in the composites industry. Currently the UPR group is working on the preregistration of essential substances used to a large extent in the composites industry, such as styrene and specialty resins such as vinyl esters.

The role of EuCIA

EuCIA will – in good cooperation with the UPR Group- work out the identified uses for a number of essential substances in the composites industry as soon as the Technical Guidance Documents (TGD) on this issue is ready. The development of these TGDs is done in a number of REACH Implementation Projects (RIP). Not all of these projects have been finished yet.

EuCIA will also work together with the raw material suppliers on the development of the proper exposure scenarios.

EuCIA is a sector group of EUPC, the European Plastics Converters. In EUPC considerable expertise is present to cope with occurring questions on the implementation of REACH.

A EuCIA REACH update

This document is a broad outline of the principles of REACH and its consequences for the composites industry. For reasons of clarity a lot of REACH related processes are described here only superficially. EuCIA will go more in detail into a number of aspects of the REACH regulation in a monthly update. This update will be published on the EuCIA website every month.

Important links

EuCIA: www.eucia.org
EChA: http://echa.europa.eu/reach_en.html
EuPC: www.plasticsconverters.eu
EUPC Services:
www.eupcservices.org/services/helpdesk

CMR: Carcinogenic, Mutagenic and Reprotoxic
CSA: Chemical Safety Assessment
CSR: Chemical Safety Report
DU: Downstream User
EChA: European Chemicals Agency
ES: Exposure Scenario
IU: Identified Use
M/I: Manufacturer and Importer
PBT: Persistent, Bio-accumulative and Toxic
RIP: REACH Implementation Project
RMM: Risk Management Measure
TGD: Technical Guidance Document
vPvB: very Persistent and very Bio-accumulative

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European Composites Industry Association
Avenue de Cortenbergh 66, 1000 Bruxelles
T. +32 (0)2 732 24 41 - F. +32 (0)2 732 42 18
E-mail: info@eucia.org
Website: www.eucia.org