

## PFAS industrial chemicals: BfR is participating in the EU-wide restriction proposal

BfR Communication No. 023/2021 of 19. July 2021

Supported by the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR), on 15 July 2021 Germany stated its official intention, together with four other EU Member States, to submit a restriction proposal for all per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) to the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA). The aim is to restrict the manufacturing, placing on the market and use of PFAS across virtually all areas of application in the European Union. During the next two months, industry associations and companies have the opportunity to provide information about the current market situation in a questionnaire that can be found at <https://link.webropolsurveys.com/S/A268AB47DAB9D5DA>. A comprehensive restriction proposal is to be submitted to ECHA by July 2022 at the latest.

PFAS are industrial chemicals which, because of their water, grease and dirt repellent properties, are widely used in industrial processes and are found in numerous consumer products such as paper, textiles, ski wax, electronics products, wall paints, cleaning agents, pans and cosmetics. They are not easily degradable, and can accumulate in the environment and in humans. The BfR is participating in a restriction proposal for PFAS within the EU. The restriction covers both manufacturing and placing on the market as well as the use of PFAS across virtually all areas of application.

According to the European Chemicals Regulation REACH, a restriction procedure is initiated if an unacceptable, inadequately controlled risk is established for a substance. For PFAS, this is justified in particular by the extreme longevity (persistence) of the substances. In the case of continued release, this leads to an accumulation in the environment which might be reversed only with enormous efforts, if at all. The participating Member States – Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Norway – further point to the toxic properties of certain PFAS with respect to human health. Along with the declaration of intent to submit a restriction proposal, they are publishing a questionnaire directed at industry associations and companies affected by the restriction, and at organisations that produce alternatives to PFAS.

The questionnaire will be available on the Federal Office for Chemicals (BfC) website at <https://link.webropolsurveys.com/S/A268AB47DAB9D5DA> until 19 September 2021. The aim is to clarify questions on the current market situation and industrial use of PFAS that remained unanswered following an initial stakeholder survey as part of a 'risk management options analysis' in 2020, and to define possible derogations from the restriction. These may be proposed, for example, if it can be demonstrated that the use of PFAS in a specific application is indispensable for society.

Within one year – by 15 July 2022 – the participating Member States will submit the finalised restriction proposal to ECHA. In addition to a risk assessment, it will include recommendations for restriction measures and derogations. These will then be discussed by the bodies of ECHA, taking into account comments from a public consultation. The decision on the restriction measures of a substance is taken by the EU Commission on the basis of an opinion it receives from ECHA.

The use of perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS) has been widely prohibited since 2006, and that of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) since July 2020. The BfR supported the Norwegian partner authority with the health assessment in respect of the PFOA restriction proposal. In 2020, the Federal Environment Agency (UBA), the BfC and the BfR submitted a restriction for perfluorohexanoic acid (PFHxA) including its salts and related substances.

**Information regarding the risk assessment of chemicals and the restriction procedure under REACH:**

[https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/reach\\_the\\_new\\_european\\_chemicals\\_legislation-9749.html](https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/reach_the_new_european_chemicals_legislation-9749.html)

**Documentation and links concerning per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS/PFC):**

[https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/a-z\\_index/poly\\_and\\_perfluoroalkyl\\_substances\\_pfas\\_pfc\\_-130146.html#fragment-2](https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/a-z_index/poly_and_perfluoroalkyl_substances_pfas_pfc_-130146.html#fragment-2)

**BfR FAQ on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances:**

[https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/frequently\\_asked\\_questions\\_about\\_per\\_and\\_polyfluoroalkyl\\_substances\\_pfas\\_-244188.html](https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/frequently_asked_questions_about_per_and_polyfluoroalkyl_substances_pfas_-244188.html)

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