

23 October 2013

## **Agreement on new chemicals initiative 2014-2017**

The following agreement has been made between the Danish Social Democrats, the Danish Socialist People's Party, the Danish Social Liberals, Denmark's Liberal Party, the Danish Conservative People's Party, the Danish Red-Green Alliance, the Danish People's Party and the Danish Liberal Alliance on the new chemicals initiative for the period 2014-2017. A total of DKK 184.8 mill. has been allocated for the period 2014-2017.

The aim of this agreement on future chemicals initiatives for 2014-2017 is to ensure solid initiatives in the chemicals area. This agreement is based on broad political agreement about the action plans for 2006-2009 and 2010-2013. The future initiatives are also an integral part of the green conversion initiatives, which focus on ensuring a high level of protection of the environment and health, as well as on growth, innovation and resources.

Chemicals and products are manufactured and traded across national borders and therefore international regulation is particularly important. For many years, Denmark has been among the frontrunners in common European chemicals initiatives. This position must be maintained and enhanced in the years to come. Active participation in important international fora as well as strengthened collaboration with other countries in the field of chemicals will give Denmark maximum impact, and Denmark can thus help ensure that all countries strive towards adopting uniform and ambitious regulation.

Consumers must be confident that they can safely use all the products available on the market. This means that there must be better control, requirements for imported products, clear and reliable information, as well as more knowledge about allergies, endocrine disruptors and other harmful aspects of chemicals in consumer products.

The following main areas are prioritised in the chemicals initiative for 2014-2017:

### **International collaboration (DKK 92 mill.)**

Generally, Denmark will participate actively in setting the international chemicals agenda in order to create the knowledge and ensure the regulation necessary to prevent substances of concern from harming people and the environment, whilst also ensuring that products can be recycled. Initiatives must be based on close dialogue and collaboration between the authorities, enterprises and other stakeholders.

Danish enterprises should have confidence in the registrations of European chemical manufacturers under REACH. Today, the quality of the majority of registrations made by manufacturers is unsatisfactory and they do not contain all the data on chemicals that is necessary. This is a problem for Danish enterprises using chemicals. If Danish enterprises do not have adequate knowledge about the hazards specific chemicals entail, they cannot ensure that these chemicals are used responsibly. Danish enterprises, and ultimately consumers, may thus become affected. Therefore, ensuring that chemical manufacturers meet their obligations under REACH is a priority. Another important area of focus under REACH is the Candidate List which, with Danish contributions, will continuously be developed so that it can be applied by enterprises to phase out substances of very high concern when they are developing new products.

In this respect, in collaboration with like-minded countries, Denmark will specifically work on ensuring that the European Commission Road Map on adding all relevant substances of very high concern to the Candidate List by 2020 is implemented. Initial focus will be on regulating substances of very high concern to which people and the environment are likely to be exposed. Generally, it is important that all Danish work on EU legislation focuses on strategic collaboration with other EU Member States and ensuring that chemicals do not prevent recycling of materials and products.

Work on the new EU regulation on biocidal products, among other things, will stress the importance of setting new focus on sustainable use of biocidal products (household poisons like mosquito repellent, disinfectants, wood preservatives, etc.) as well as collaboration with enterprises and retailers. The EU Biocidal Products Regulation strengthens authorisation of household poisons, and stipulates that more decisions are to be made at EU level. According to the rules, treated articles from countries outside the EU may only be placed on the market if the relevant biocides are authorised by the EU. Denmark must be able to influence the EU work on authorisations and prepare Danish enterprises for the new, stricter rules. This requires considerable efforts and close dialogue with enterprises.

Every year, the EU adopts new or changed rules in the chemicals area. Therefore, it is important to ensure compliance with new as well as old rules. Failure to carry out sufficient inspection and enforcement will create unfair competition where law-abiding enterprises are in an unfavourable position and where the environment and health are put at risk. Inspection and enforcement of regulations in the chemicals area comprises many activities, such as information and preparation of guidelines for inspection and enforcement in Denmark and in the EU. The initiatives in the chemicals area must also be seen in the context of other areas, such as imports and exports of waste, as only combined inspection and enforcement will help secure focus on chemicals of concern and recycling. The chemicals initiatives focus on providing information on legislation for enterprises as well as extended collaboration with other authorities and EU countries on carrying out inspection and enforcement. The Chemical Inspection Service will therefore continue its active participation in international inspection networks and promote international collaboration on the exchange of information on illegal chemicals, products and articles so that illegal chemicals or products do not reach the consumer.

Globally, there must be continued active Danish work in relation to the chemicals conventions to prevent globally manufactured articles from being harmful to health and the environment or from undermining the competitiveness of Danish and European industry. Focus must be on collaboration between authorities, industry and NGOs prior to international meetings. Strengthened dialogue with stakeholders in Denmark will improve possibilities to ensure that Danish and EU key issues are high on the global agenda. Stakeholders may contribute by activating their network in other countries and thus gather support. In particular, Denmark will be a frontrunner in global discussions about endocrine disruptors and articles with substances of concern in global markets.

The initiatives on acquiring new knowledge about endocrine disruptors will remain a high priority so that Denmark can contribute documentation to negotiations in the EU and globally. A new Danish national expert in the EU as well as continuation of the Centre for Endocrine Disruptors will enhance this process.

**Non-toxic products (DKK 77 mill.)**

In order to protect consumers, new knowledge must be collected about chemicals of concern in products to prevent them from endangering health and the environment. The Danish EPA has a recognised consumer programme in this area, where specific consumer products are inspected to check whether they pose a risk due to their contents or emissions of chemical substances. The Danish consumer programme and the National Allergy Research Centre will continue collecting new knowledge about chemicals of concern in products, particularly in relation to products for children and young people. In addition, there will be continued focus on the use of unnecessary chemicals and fragrances, meaning that, in the long term, the overall aim is to reduce the overall exposure of people to unnecessary chemicals and thus to contribute to reducing the impact on people who are allergic to chemicals and fragrances. In this context it will be ensured that the knowledge collected by the Danish Research Centre for Multiple Chemical Sensitivities will not be lost and will be made available for patients. Among other things, together with the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Health intends to carry on their advisory function for people who are sensitive to fragrances and chemicals.

Information campaigns are still an important tool in disseminating knowledge about chemicals in products. There are a number of other possibilities for informing and motivating people, and these are to be strengthened and developed in the future.

The establishment of a new Chemicals Forum consisting of authorities, industry, consumer organisations and other relevant stakeholders is to ensure knowledge-sharing and dialogue in the products area. The Chemicals Forum will recommend commencement of new initiatives, such as analysis, assessment and guidelines based on the challenges facing industry, and it will find new solutions in the product area. In addition, together with the Danish EPA, the Chemicals Forum will also disseminate information on new legislation for enterprises and consumers. The Chemicals Forum can also contribute to voluntary phasing out of certain chemicals, as a lack of dialogue and knowledge-sharing may prevent substitution of chemicals of concern. The Danish EPA will facilitate regular meetings in the Chemicals Forum.

Inspection and enforcement of legislative compliance of consumer products for children and young people will be a special initiative, together with extended collaboration and partnership between authorities on carrying out such inspection and enforcement. Particularly, collaboration with the Central Customs and Tax Administration (SKAT) and the Danish Safety Technology Authority will ensure more effective enforcement.

### **Circulating resources (DKK 15.5 mill.)**

The chemicals area is an important building block in the field of increasing recycling of resources. Materials should largely be free from the chemicals preventing recycling. This requires knowledge about the impacts of chemicals on the environment and human health. The initiatives for the chemicals area must therefore form the basis for specific initiatives on e.g. substitution. In order to ensure circular exploitation of resources in the future, the existing research-based knowledge about the properties of chemicals in products and processes must be used actively in close collaboration between universities, authorities and enterprises.

Therefore, a new collaboration is to be established on substitution of chemicals. The new collaboration will be based on existing facilities at Danish universities, where experience from existing work on substitution of chemicals at specific large enterprises will be exploited. Specifically, new and structured frameworks for dialogue and knowledge-sharing between

researchers, authorities and enterprises will help create more sustainable use of chemicals in products and processes in Denmark. Focus is particularly on providing small and medium-sized enterprises with new tools and innovative possibilities to substitute chemicals of concern in products and materials, and thus contribute to improving the competitiveness of Danish enterprises.

An important part of the work on substitution will be to ensure that small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular, can receive consulting services on how to move forward in phasing out chemicals of concern. For example, enterprises can make digital contact through crowd sourcing, where the new facility is to help find specific knowledge and experience in the university environment.

DKK 15.5 mill. will be allocated for the period 2014-2017 for the establishment of the new facility, which will then be operated independently.

### **Presentation of new chemicals initiatives**

On the basis of the above allocation, the parties agree that the Danish Minister is to present the chemicals initiatives by the end of November 2013. The chemicals initiatives will specify the various elements of the agreement on chemicals initiatives for 2014-2017. The chemicals initiatives will be reviewed and decided together with the current parties to the agreement, with a view to presenting a description of the specific implementation of the chemicals initiatives by mid-December 2013.

The parties have agreed to meet once every year in the period 2014-2017 to review the progress of the agreement.