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### **Chemicals in articles: EU LIFE Project AskREACH started**

**Certain substances are harmful to man and the environment. The AskREACH project (project number LIFE16 GIE/DE/000738) will raise awareness on Substances of Very High Concern in articles among the European population, retailers and industry. Consumers can use a smartphone app to get information on such substances or send requests for information to suppliers. The European Chemicals Regulation REACH provides the legal framework.**

Substances of Very High Concern (SVHC) refer to e.g. carcinogenic substances, endocrine disruptors or substances deemed of special concern for the environment. The European Chemicals Regulation REACH stipulates duties to communicate information with regard to SVHC. If an SVHC is present in an article above a concentration of 0.1%, this information must be communicated to every commercial recipient by every supplier in the supply chain. Consumers are also entitled to this information upon request and can thus use it to make well-informed purchase decisions.

To raise awareness of the REACH consumer right among the European population the German Environment Agency (UBA) has launched the EU LIFE project AskREACH in collaboration with 20 project partners from 13 EU Member States. In Greece LIFE AskREACH is coordinated by the National Observatory of Athens in collaboration with ECOCITY. The project focuses on the following objectives:

- raising consumer awareness on SVHC in articles, enabling consumers to make responsible purchasing decisions
- raising supplier awareness, compliance with REACH information duties,
- improving the information flow on SVHC between consumers and suppliers,
- improvement of supply chain communication processes that ultimately aim at substituting SVHC in articles.

During the project a database will be developed which can be filled with information on SVHC in articles by article suppliers. Several large companies already expressed their support for the project and will be the forerunners who enter their data into the database. The database will then be connected to a smartphone application (app) which can be adapted to all EU languages. EU citizens may use this app in order to obtain information on SVHC in articles. If the desired data is not yet available in the database, an information request is automatically sent to the article supplier. Suppliers will be assisted with another IT tool apt to facilitate communication in the supply chain. The project includes two awareness-raising campaigns in all the participating EU states. The campaign will also be replicated in at least five EU states which are not project partners. The project results will be made available to all the EU Member States.

Project partners are authorities, scientific institutes and non-governmental consumer and environmental organizations:

Austria:	Austrian Consumers' Association (VKI), Friends of the Earth Austria (GLOBAL 2000)
Croatia:	Friends of the Earth Croatia (ZelHR)
Czech Republic:	Arnika – Toxics and Waste Programme
Denmark:	Danish Environmental Protection Agency (DKEPA), Danish Consumer Council (DCC)
France:	Institut National de l'Environnement Industriel et des Risques (INERIS)
Germany:	German Environment Agency (UBA), Baltic Environmental Forum Germany (BEF DE), Friends of the Earth Germany (BUND), Society for Institutional Analysis (sofia) at the University of Applied Science Darmstadt
Greece:	National Observatory of Athens (NOA)
Latvia:	Baltic Environmental Forum Latvia (BEF LV)
Luxembourg:	Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology (LIST)
Poland:	Buy Responsibly Foundation (FKO)
Portugal:	Association for the Sustainability of the Earth System (ZERO)
Spain:	Ecologistas En Acción (EEA)
Sweden:	Swedish Chemicals Agency (KEMI), Swedish Consumers Association (SCA)
Europe:	European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

The project is funded by the EU LIFE programme (project number LIFE16 GIE/DE/000738). The project duration is 1 September 2017 - 30 August 2022. A website with information on the progress and results of the project is expected to be available in March 2018.

Until a European database and AskREACH apps are available consumers may use existing apps from Denmark (TjekKemien) or Germany (Scan4Chem, ToxFox). Scan4Chem by UBA is available in German and English. It simplifies SVHC requests but is not yet connected to a database with SVHC information.

#### **LINKS:**

UBA thematic website "REACH for consumers"

<http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/en/topics/chemicals/reach-what-is-it/reach-for-consumers>

Download App Scan4Chem Android

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=de.uba.scan4chem>

Download App Scan4Chem iOS <https://itunes.apple.com/de/app/scan4chem/id1205416098>