

Draft legislative proposal for the restriction of formaldehyde and formaldehyde releasers in articles and vehicles

- Revised position paper -

Formacare welcomes a restriction on formaldehyde and formaldehyde releasers in articles and vehicles under REACH, given its aims to protect consumers from articles with potentially high emissions of formaldehyde, to tackle unfair competition on articles coming from outside Europe, and to harmonise the quality of articles within Europe regarding potential health effects, in particular concerning wood-based panels. In this regard, we take note of the revised draft proposal from the European Commission, published on the Comitology Register on October 6th.

We support multiple elements of this revised proposal:

- The original limit values and proposed transition periods have been kept. The European Commission did not modify the limit values for formaldehyde emissions from articles, respectively 0.062 mg/m³ for wood-based panels and furniture, 0.080 mg/m³ for other articles, and 0.062 mg/m³ for vehicles. Formacare supports these limit values and the proposed transition periods of 3 years for articles and 4 years for vehicles.
- The new paragraph addressing the need for multiple reference conditions for the compliance of all articles covered by the scope of the restriction proposal, concluding Annex X part I. In the objective to provide clarity on how industries will have to perform the necessary testing for compliance, the European Commission proposes that further guidance be developed by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA). We support any initiative aiming at clarifying the situation for all involved operators and ensuring a level-playing field for compliance.
- The clarifications concerning loading factors under paragraph 1(c) of the Annex. The testing conditions are paramount to the proper measurement of formaldehyde emissions from diverse articles.

The only recommendations Formacare would like to put forward are:

- To keep the “intentionally added” terminology. Changing it to “confer a sought-after function” is not expected to ensure a common understanding of the legal text by industry operators and enforcement authorities alike.
- To consult stakeholders and experts in the preparation of the announced guidance in relation to testing conditions for compliance.



Overall, Formacare supports the revised proposal from the European Commission and calls on the competent authorities in the REACH Committee to adopt the restriction during the meeting on October 26th, to ensure consumer safety and protect the single market for formaldehyde-added articles.

About Formaldehyde

Formaldehyde is a naturally occurring chemical widely produced for applications such as glues for wood panels, coatings for paints, lubricants, high-end plastics, etc. The formaldehyde value chain provides direct jobs to 30,000 people in Europe, with as many as 1,7 million jobs in downstream sectors being supported by formaldehyde applications.

About Formacare

Formacare is the formaldehyde sector group of the European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic) representing key European producers of formaldehyde, aminoplast glues and polyols. Made up of representatives from large chemical and manufacturing companies across Europe, Formacare promotes the safe use and manufacturing of formaldehyde in accordance with the strictest health, safety and environmental regulations.

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