



Elisabeth KÖSTINGER,
Austria's Federal Minister for Sustainability and Tourism

cc:

Mag. Dr. Thomas JAKL, Deputy Director General of the Ministry and Head of
Department, Directorate V/5 - Chemicals Policy and biocides

Harald KASAMAS, Senior Officer, Directorate V/5

Austrian Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism
Stubenring 1, 1010 Vienna, Austria

ANEC-ML-2018-0049

Brussels, 23 April 2018

Subject: Austrian Presidency's actions on consumer product safety

Dear Minister Köstinger

We write on behalf of ANEC, the European consumer voice in standardisation, with a view to the upcoming Austrian Presidency of the EU Council.

A crucial action point of the 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP) is for the European Commission to develop a **European Strategy for a Non-toxic Environment by 2018**. This should focus strongly on hazardous chemicals in consumer products, including nanomaterials and endocrine disrupters.

The strategy does not appear in the EC work programme for 2018 and it would seem that the Commission is therefore going to fail to deliver proposals on this vital issue in a timely fashion. Hence, ANEC wishes to express strong concerns about this serious omission and delay in developing the strategy.

In this context we applaud the [European Parliament's Report on the implementation of the 7th Environment Action Programme \(2017/2030\(INI\)\)](#) (adopted on 17 April) which criticises the lack of progress. We trust the Austrian Presidency can take further steps in progressing the elaboration of the non-toxic strategy by ensuring a strong political commitment to consumer protection.

Only by pursuing fully the Environment Action Programme until 2020 can Europe maintain achievements for health and environment made over the past decades, and hope to meet the vision of a Union whereby 2050, resources are managed



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Raising standards for consumers

sustainably and European citizens “live well, within the limits of our planet” and are **safeguarded from risks to health and wellbeing**.

ANEC believes the **European Strategy for a Non-toxic Environment by 2018** has a key role to play in the ‘circular economy’ policy and the interface between chemicals, products and waste legislation.

- ❖ We call on the Austrian Presidency to **urge the European Commission to immediately develop the European Strategy for a non-toxic environment in accordance with the 7th EAP objective**, also with a view to directing political decisions regarding options to address the interface between European chemicals, products and waste legislation ¹.

The chemical safety of articles is a precondition for a successful implementation of the ‘circular economy’ objectives. ANEC issued a further contribution to the topic in our paper, [‘Keeping hazards in the circle?’](#).

We believe there are fundamental flaws in the current European legislation addressing chemicals in consumer products. Regulatory frameworks are insufficiently lacking ambition (e.g. Toy Safety Directive); there is no community approach to address chemicals in consumer products in a consistent systematic manner; or such an approach is missing altogether (e.g. products for children other than toys; materials in contact with drinking water; textiles; products with emissions to indoor air, etc.). REACH cannot close these gaps due to the inherent shortcomings of the legislation (e.g. lengthy procedures, substance-by-substance approach, no positive lists of allowed substances). Moreover, many requirements of REACH do not apply to imported articles.

Our priority areas, with suggested solutions, are detailed in our further paper, [‘Hazardous chemicals in products - The need for enhanced EU regulations’](#).

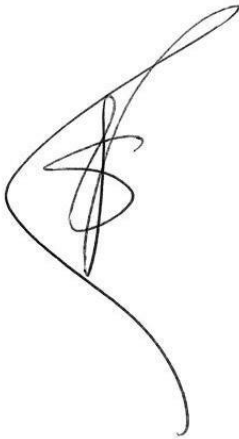
- ❖ We call on the Austrian Presidency to **urge the European Commission to develop a new European horizontal policy approach to addressing chemicals in products**, including the relevant regulatory frameworks, to ensure the consumption of only safe products.

¹ [COM\(2018\) 32 - Communication on the implementation of the circular economy package: options to address the interface between chemical, product and waste legislation](#);

We trust your Ministry will promote the protection of consumers' health during the Presidency, especially in ensuring progress on dangerous chemicals.

Of course, we are available for discussion or clarification of our views.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Franz Fiala', with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the bottom left.

Franz Fiala

Stephen RUSSELL
ANEC Secretary-General

Dr Franz FIALA
ANEC Sustainability WG & Chemicals PT Chair
Austrian member of the ANEC General Assembly