



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
ENVIRONMENT

The Director - General

Brussels,
ENV.B2/EM/

Mr Jeremy Wates
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Dear Mr Wates,

I would like to thank you for your letter of 12 October 2020 concerning the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability. President Von der Leyen asked me to reply on her behalf.

As you are probably aware, the Chemicals Strategy has been adopted on 14 October 2020. We are confident that the Strategy defines an ambitious vision for a toxic-free environment and a concrete plan of actions to achieve this vision. It aims to boost innovation for safe and sustainable chemicals. It also aims to increase protection of human health and the environment against hazardous chemicals.

One of the first actions we will propose is to ensure that the most harmful chemicals are no longer used in consumer products or affecting vulnerable groups like children. The most harmful chemicals will only be allowed in products if their use is proven essential.

In the meantime, as this ban can take place only once legislation is revised, we will present in 2021 a roadmap to prioritise restrictions under REACH for those most harmful chemicals. And we will do this as far as possible by groups of substances, rather than one by one as we do today.

Protection will go hand in hand with innovation of safer alternatives. The Strategy aims to boost the development of new chemicals and materials that are safe and sustainable by design: from the production to the end of life, including by greening chemical production. This will help to boost socio-economic recovery and support green growth and jobs.

Importantly, we will also consolidate the legal framework, by ensuring coherence of the various regulatory processes to assess and manage chemicals under different pieces of legislation, by speeding up implementation and by strengthening enforcement and compliance.

All new legislative initiatives announced in the Strategy will be underpinned by the Commission's better regulation tools, as this will allow us to assess the best regulatory option on the basis of updated scientific evidence and stakeholders' inputs. The Action Plan announced with the Strategy details the ambitious timing proposed for the follow-up initiatives and your input in those processes will be very appreciated.

For creating a virtuous circle between protection and innovation and succeeding in this crucial transition to a toxic-free environment, we need to work and monitor progress together. We will establish a high-level roundtable with representatives from industry, science and the civil society to realise the strategy's objectives in dialogue with the stakeholders concerned. Discussions of the roundtable are envisaged to focus in particular on how to make the chemicals legislation work more efficiently and effectively and how to boost the development and uptake of innovative safe and sustainable chemicals across sectors.

We are confident that the Strategy will be a decisive key step for moving towards a healthy planet and a more sustainable economy and society. We fully count on your support for supporting the ambition and objectives of the strategy in the coming years.

Yours sincerely,

(e-signed)

Florika FINK-HOOIJER