

To:

- Mr. Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the EU Commission
- Mr. Jyrki Katainen, Commission Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness
- Mr. Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
- Mrs. Elżbieta Bieńkowska, Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
- Mr. Vytenis Andriukaitis, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety

Date 27<sup>th</sup> of July 2018

Subject **Commission initiatives on chemicals and circular economy**

Dear First Vice President Timmermans, Vice President Katainen, Commissioner Vella, Commissioner Bieńkowska and Commissioner Andriukaitis,

In the past four years you have enabled us to make progress on EU environment policy, especially focusing on climate change and circular economy, which we intend to continue to take forward ambitiously. With this letter we would like to stress the importance of progress in EU chemicals policy.

With the 7th Environmental Action Program (EAP), adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in 2013, the EU agreed as one of its three priorities to safeguard the health and well-being of our citizens, including by strengthening EU chemicals policy. Indeed, the sound management of chemicals is not only vital to protect our citizens and environment, but also to strengthen EU competitiveness and innovation. It is a challenging policy area that urgently requires us to develop and enhance policy frameworks and provide direction to citizens and industry. The 7th EAP sets out clear actions with timelines on how to achieve this.

As we reach the end of this Commission's term, we would like to remind you of our concerns in the area of EU chemicals policy and the progress we are making in this context. For this reason the Council at different occasions<sup>1</sup> reiterated the need for specific initiatives and requested the Commission to follow up on this.

In this regard, we are seriously concerned about the (potential) delay of several initiatives that are foreseen to advance EU chemical policy and that are also necessary to achieve a circular economy, in particular:

- **The strategic approach to pharmaceuticals in the environment** (announced for 2015).
- **The strategy on a non-toxic environment** (announced for 2018) including the horizontal measures announced in the EAP for 2015 to ensure: (1) the safety of manufactured nanomaterials and materials with similar properties; (2) the minimisation of exposure to endocrine disruptors; (3) appropriate regulatory approaches to address combination effects of chemicals and (4) the minimisation of exposure to chemicals in products, including, inter alia, imported products, with a view to promoting non-toxic material cycles and reducing indoor exposure to harmful substances.
- **The integrated product policy framework** (announced for 2018, the circular economy action plan)
- **The strategy on endocrine disruptors** to minimize exposure of EU citizens to endocrine disruptors, beyond pesticides and biocides, covering i.e. cosmetics, toys and food packaging. In this regard, we note the recently announced<sup>2</sup> communication entitled "towards a comprehensive framework on endocrine disruptors" as a first step.

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<sup>1</sup> Council conclusions on:

- the protection of human health and the environment through the sound management of chemicals, adopted 19 December 2016;
- the EU Action plan for a circular economy, adopted 20 June 2016;
- the EU Action plan for a circular economy, adopted 25 June 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Roadmap: Towards a more comprehensive EU framework on endocrine disruptors. Ares(2018)3295383.

Although we note that on certain elements some progress is made, such as criteria for endocrine disrupting substances, the REACH review and the REACH annex for nanomaterials, important gaps in our legal and policy framework remain.

In order to achieve the goals we have set for 2020 and to avoid any further delay, we hereby urge you to facilitate the swift development of EU policy and to present these proposals within the term of the current Commission.

We are ready to cooperate and to contribute to the development of these initiatives.

Yours sincerely,

**Kimmo Tiilikainen**

*Minister of the Environment, Energy and Housing,  
Finland*

**Brune Poirson**

*Minister of State, attached to the Ministre d'Etat,  
Minister for the Ecological and Inclusive  
Transition, France*

**Svenja Schulze**

*Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature  
Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany*

**Kaspars Gerhards**

*Minister for Environmental Protection and  
Regional Development, Latvia*

**Arūstis Navickas**

*Minister of Environment, Lithuania*

**Carole Dieschbourg**

*Minister for the Environment, Luxembourg*

**Stientje van Veldhoven**

*State Secretary for the Environment, The  
Netherlands*

**Ola Elvestuen**

*Minister of Climate and Environment, Norway*

**Norbert Kurilla**

*State Secretary, Ministry of Environment  
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**Karolina Skog**

*Minister for the Environment, Sweden*