

## Economic Commission for Europe

### Inland Transport Committee

#### Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

31 January 2022

#### Joint Meeting of the RID Committee of Experts and the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

Bern, 14–18 March 2022

Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda

#### Proposals for amendments to RID/ADR/ADN: new proposals

### Potential environmental restriction of polytetrafluoroethylene used for the manufacture of tank service equipment seals and gaskets

Transmitted by the International Tank Container Organisation (ITCO)

#### *Summary*

<b>Executive summary:</b>	ECHA PFAS (Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances) Consultation
<b>Action to be taken:</b>	Information for the Joint Meeting of the RID Committee of Experts and the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods
<b>Related documents:</b>	see <a href="https://echa.europa.eu/registry-of-restriction-intentions/-/dislist/details/0b02363449b e1866">https://echa.europa.eu/registry-of-restriction-intentions/-/dislist/details/0b02363449b e1866</a>

### Introduction

1. The REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) proposal for the restriction of the manufacture and supply of PTFE (Polytetrafluoroethylene) puts at risk reliable leak tightness of service equipment fitted to rail tanks, tank vehicles, tank containers and other modes and packages where PTFE is widely used in the manufacture of seals and gaskets.
2. The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) consultation process is considering the REACH proposal to limit risks to the environment and human health that might result from the manufacture and use of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). ECHA estimate 4700 substances are within the scope of PFAS which includes PTFE.
3. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) includes PTFE within the criteria for 'polymers of low concern' as they do not present significant toxicity concerns and cannot degrade into other PFAS.
4. PTFE materials are critical for many applications. There is no adequate replacement for PTFE.
5. There is a provision within the REACH proposal for exempting PTFE from the restriction's scope if defined as a material of "essential use".
6. REACH notified the process in the registry of intention in the first half of 2021 and is to submit the completed assessment and proposal to the ECHA for opinion-making in the first half of 2022. The opinion-making phase takes 12 to 15 months. After which, the proposal and the opinions of RAC (Committee for Risk Assessment) and SEAC (Social Economic Analysis) are forwarded to the European Commission for decision making by the

Commission with the Member States (the entry into force of a restriction is anticipated to take place in 2025).

## **Proposal**

7. Interested persons concerned with the potential restriction of the manufacture and use of PTFE should contact ECHA and take part in the consultation process at the following address:

<https://echa.europa.eu/registry-of-restriction-intentions/-/dislist/details/0b0236e18663449b>

8. ITCO is evaluating arrangements to implement an industry wide recycling scheme to collect used PTFE seals and gaskets for safe recycling.

## **Justification**

9. PTFE is widely and successfully used for seals and gaskets in the service equipment for all types of tanks transporting dangerous substances. There is no adequate replacement to PTFE that provides an equal resistance to degradation and containment qualities.

10. PTFE is listed on the OECD list, but it is used in a broad range of products, without any adequate replacement.

11. PTFE used for seals and gaskets is justifiably a material that should be defined as a material “of essential use” within the scope consultation process.

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