

14th Meeting, 6-7 May 2020
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Information Paper

Subject: Work on lead in ammunition

The EU and the 23 Member States that are contracting parties to the Agreement for the Conservation of African Eurasian Waterbirds have committed to endeavouring phasing out the use of lead shot in wetlands. Furthermore, phasing out the use of lead shot in wetlands is one of the points addressed in the agreement signed in 2004 by BirdLife International and FACE (Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation in the EU) under the auspices of the Commission.

In December 2015, the Commission requested ECHA to prepare a dossier in accordance with Annex XV of the Regulation (EC) N° 1907/2006 on Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) for a potential future restriction of the use of lead shots in wetlands across the European Union. The dossier includes a risk assessment, an analysis of alternatives and a socio-economic assessment.

The Agency's Committees for Risk Assessment (RAC) and Socio-Economic Analysis (SEAC) opinion¹ was sent to the Commission on 17 August 2018.

All documents are available on the ECHA website² for consultation.

Based on the opinions of RAC and SEAC, the Commission considers that there is an unacceptable risk to the environment as well as a possible risk to human health from the use of lead in gunshot in wetlands and where spent gunshot would land within wetlands, which needs to be addressed on a Union-wide basis.

Based on the opinion, in accordance with Article 73 (1) of REACH, the Commission started the legislative procedure to amend Annex XVII of the REACH Regulation. The Commission proposal is currently being discussed in the REACH Committee.

The Commission services would like to invite NADEG members to contact the competent national authorities in charge of REACH, in particular their national representatives in the REACH Committee, to raise their awareness on the issue and to ensure a positive vote on the draft Commission Regulation. A vote in the Committee is expected in June³.

¹ <https://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/07e05943-ee0a-20e1-2946-9c656499c8f8>

² <https://echa.europa.eu/registry-of-restriction-intentions/-/dislist/details/0b0236e180c0ac38>

³ The draft regulation will be at the agenda of the Committee for a vote if the conditions allow to convene a physical meeting in June 2020.

In parallel, the Commission asked ECHA to assess the potential ban of lead in terrestrial habitats other than wetlands and in fishing weights (cf. resolution 11.15⁴ of the Convention on Migratory Species 11.15⁵). ECHA concluded that there are sufficient indications of risk from those uses of lead to justify additional regulatory measures⁶. On 16 July 2019, the Commission requested ECHA to prepare an Annex XV dossier for restriction on the placing on the market and use of lead in ammunition, i.e. gunshot used in terrains other than wetlands and bullets used both in wetlands and in terrains other than wetlands, as well as of lead in fishing tackle.

ECHA is currently working on the Annex XV dossier for restriction, to be submitted to the Scientific Committees in the autumn of 2020. All the information on this process will be made publicly available on ECHA website⁷.

NADEG members can also contribute to the on-going restriction process (potential ban of lead in terrestrial habitats other than wetlands and in fishing weights). Once the discussion starts in the ECHA Scientific Committees, there will be two public consultations.

⁴ <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/document/unepcms-resolution-1115-preventing-poisoning-migratory-birds-0>

⁵ <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/document/unepcms-resolution-1115-preventing-poisoning-migratory-birds-0>

⁶ https://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/13641/lead_ammunition_investigation_report_en.pdf

⁷ <https://echa.europa.eu/registry-of-restriction-intentions/-/dislist/details/0b0236e1840159e6>