

## **Proposal to align classification, labelling and packaging of chemicals to UN standards**

***The European Commission today has proposed to align the current EU system of classification of chemical substances and mixtures to the United Nations Globally Harmonised System (GHS). The internationally accepted harmonised classification criteria and labelling elements will be integrated in new EU legislation, replacing the current law on the classification, labelling and packaging of chemical substances (Directive 67/548/EEC) and mixtures (Directive 1999/45/EC). The proposal is an important step on the Community's part towards global efforts to enhance the protection of human health and the environment from the effects of dangerous chemicals. The harmonisation of requirements at global level will give trade and competitiveness a boost and includes new pictograms. The proposed regulation will complement the new REACH Regulation on the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals. The proposal will now be discussed in the European Parliament and in the Council.***

Commission Vice President Günter Verheugen, responsible for enterprise and industry, said: *"This proposal will remove trade barriers and facilitate global trade and harmonised communication of hazard information of chemicals. It will also promote regulatory efficiency, facilitate compliance, and provide a more consistent market place for companies to operate and thus lead to less administrative burdens."*

Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas said: *"Labels which clearly identify the hazardous nature of chemical substances are fundamental for protecting workers and consumers. The proposed regulation is an important step in the global drive to protect human health and the environment from the effects of dangerous chemicals."*

The proposal incorporates the classification criteria and labelling rules agreed at UN level, the so called Globally Harmonised System of classification and labelling of chemicals (GHS). It will introduce new classification criteria, hazard symbols (pictograms) and labelling phrases, while taking account of elements which are part of the current EU legislation.

The proposed regulation requires companies to classify, label and package appropriately their hazardous chemicals before placing them on the market. It aims to protect workers, consumers and the environment by means of labelling which reflects possible hazardous effects of dangerous substances. The labelling provisions take on board the red-framed hazard pictograms, signal words, hazard and precautionary statements provided for in the UN GHS, cf. the symbols below:

#### **Current system**



**F+**  
**Extremely Flammable**

#### **Proposed system**



**Danger**  
**Extremely flammable (liquid and vapour)**

The proposed regulation also takes over provisions of the REACH Regulation regarding the notification of classifications, the establishment of a list of harmonised classifications and the creation of a classification and labelling inventory.

The proposal will undergo co-decision, seeking agreement of the European Parliament and the Council. After entry into force the deadline for substance reclassification will be 1 December 2010 and for mixtures 1 June 2015.

It is estimated that the number of classified chemicals resulting from the application of the new system would be approximately the same as under the current system. The application of the new system, which for some hazard classes employs slightly different criteria, may result in a change of classification for individual substances and mixtures.

More information:

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/reach/ghs\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/reach/ghs_en.htm)