

Session 3 speaker:

Tracking Chemicals of concern in products

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Anne Marie's main working area is within development and implementation of EU legislation for chemicals, e.g. REACH regulation, product specific legislation, waste legislation

Short abstract

Awareness of our unsustainable patterns of consumption and production has resulted in initiatives from the European Commission on sustainable design and circular economy. To combine safe use of chemicals with the ambitions to increase circularity, chemicals that are used must be safe from start, i.e., free from substances harmful to the environment and health. In other words, we need to strive towards a non-toxic circular economy.

Although there is an overall goal to phase out particularly hazardous substances in a circular economy, this may take some time. For products where phasing out is not yet possible, information about their presence can be helpful to ensure safe use. Complex supply chains can make it difficult to obtain the required information on chemical substances in products. Systems to overcome those difficulties are available, but not always known and used. Information available to companies may also raise the awareness of the presence of the hazardous substances and act as a starting point for substitution.

For some substances legal provisions to provide information on their presence in products are already in place in the EU. The most well-known are the consumers so called "Right to know" in the REACH regulation and provisions in the waste legislation for suppliers of articles to notify to the SCIP database. In more recent proposals for new and revised legislation from the European commission, requirements on product passports have been introduced. Information on hazardous substances is one type of information that could be required in a product passport.