

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014 - 2015, 22 October 2014

Ref No: SQ14-001312

OUTCOME: 7 - Health Infrastructure, Regulation, Safety and Quality

Topic: National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: McLucas, Jan

Question:

Does the European Chemicals Agency outsource assessments?

Answer:

The European Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and restriction of Chemicals (REACH) regulation places the responsibility for establishing the safe use of chemicals on the companies manufacturing and importing chemicals in the European Union (EU).

The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) administers the REACH regulation, and conducts compliance checks on at least 5 per cent of the information dossiers submitted by industry. Industry is required to include a Chemical Safety Report for chemicals that are manufactured or imported annually in quantities over 10 tonnes or more. Compliance checks are used by ECHA as an instrument to promote the continuous improvement of the hazard, use and exposure information in the registration dossiers, with the aim of better assessment of risks and the safer use of chemicals.

Evaluations of the submitted dossiers, to clarify any potential risk to human health or the environment that the substance may cause, are conducted by the competent authorities of the EU Member States, in accordance with the agreed Community Rolling Action Plan (CoRAP). There are 201 substances listed on the CoRAP, with 134 substances currently under evaluation. The listing of a substance is on the basis of risk-based criteria, such as potential persistence, bioaccumulation and toxicity, endocrine disruption, or carcinogenicity, mutagenicity and toxicity to reproduction. Once a substance has been evaluated registrants may be required to submit further information.