

**For Immediate Release**

**PFAS Restriction Threatens European SMEs That Use Fluoropolymers In Many Standard and High Performance Processes**

*ESBAF calls for a balanced approach in PFAS regulation safeguarding SMEs using fluoropolymers.*

Brussels, July 17, 2023 — The European Small Business Alliance for Fluoropolymers (ESBAF) represents small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that are affected by the restriction on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) due to their dependency on fluoropolymers. ESBAF is calling on EU regulators to adopt a balanced approach that protects both the environment and SMEs safely utilizing fluoropolymers.

Fluoropolymers have been categorized as PFAS based solely on their molecular structure. However, their environmental and toxicological profiles are distinctly different to most of the other lower molecular weight PFAS. Fluoropolymers are an integral building block of various products that form the base of the European economy. This makes the issue particularly significant in the context of the EU's pursuit of self-reliance and reduced dependence on other regions.

The proposed PFAS restriction allows for temporary derogations for strategic or critical end-uses but ignores their supply chains consisting of numerous European SMEs that are safely utilizing fluoropolymers. Consequently, many manufacturing uses of fluoropolymers could face bans 18 months after the restriction takes effect, leading to company closures and job losses.

"While certain PFAS may be considered a source of toxicological or environmental concern, fluoropolymers are not. In fact, fluoropolymers meet the OECD criteria for polymers of low concern. They are chemically and biologically stable, non-bioaccumulative, and non-toxic," said Tanja Gal from METAX, a family-owned manufacturer of mechanical seals based in Hungen, Germany.

Stefan Munsch, owner of Munsch-Chemie-Pumpen, a mechanical engineering company based in Ransbach-Baumbach in Germany, elaborated on the complexity of supply chains involving fluoropolymers: "Our operations largely involve pumping acids and alkalis for various industries such as semiconductors, steel, and lithium extraction, as well as producing electric serums for green hydrogen production. There are no alternatives to fluoropolymers for these applications."

Stefan Munsch added, "We endorse the objectives of the restriction, which aim to protect human health and the environment. However, a partial exemption for the restriction of fluoropolymers in certain end-uses isn't feasible due to the required selection across the entire value chain, from raw compounds to seals, to granules, to our pumps, and finally to the end-use applications. Our supply chains are too complex to implement such partial derogations."

ESBAF's membership represents the whole supply chain: compounders, manufacturers, distributors, and OEMs, all of them European SMEs. The alliance intends to contribute to the work of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) and will advocate for a more proportionate PFAS restriction that excludes fluoropolymers.

ESBAF is supported by Dentons Global Advisors. For more information or to get involved, interested parties can reach out to [ESBAF@dentonsglobaladvisors.com](mailto:ESBAF@dentonsglobaladvisors.com).

# EUROPEAN SMALL BUSINESS ALLIANCE FOR FLUOROPOLYMERS

## WHAT IS ESBAF?

Under a recently proposed REACH restriction of PFAS, **the EU is banning fluoropolymers** safely used in countless manufacturing processes for critical applications, such as hydrogen, semiconductors, or medical devices.

The proposed PFAS restriction allows for temporary derogations for strategic or critical end-uses but ignores their supply chains consisting of numerous European SMEs that are utilizing fluoropolymers.

While fluoropolymers have proven to be safe and are widely used in various industrial processes, the complex nature of supply chains has led to a lack of awareness among regulators regarding the potential threat this restriction poses for a large number of European SMEs.

Recognizing the significance of this issue, a coalition of European small businesses directly involved in the fluoropolymer supply chain has come together to form the European Small Business Alliance for Fluoropolymers (ESBAF).

**ESBAF is uniquely positioned to leverage its collective understanding of the supply chain** to ensure that the EU is aware of the consequences of its proposed actions and drafts a more proportionate PFAS restriction. Our membership represents the whole supply chain: compounders, manufacturers, distributors, and OEMs, all of them European SMEs.

## OBJECTIVES

- **Unite European SMEs** safely using fluoropolymers to advocate for a balanced PFAS restriction.
- **Raise awareness** among EU decision-makers about the potential negative consequences of the proposed PFAS restriction on European SMEs along complex supply chains.
- **Submit input to the EU's public consultation** on the PFAS restriction to ensure that the voices of SMEs are considered.

## THE EU PFAS RESTRICTION

On 7 February 2023, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) published the Annex XV REACH restriction report for per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) that has been prepared by 5 Competent Authorities from Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden. The restriction dossier proposes a near-total ban on all PFAS substances, including fluoropolymers.

As the dossier does not consider the complexity of supply chains and the crucial role that fluoropolymers play in many manufacturing processes.

**The restriction as it now stands would ban components necessary for ongoing chemical and manufacturing processes.** Many small businesses in Europe would be forced to find sub-standard alternatives or to close; with a real perspective that entire industries could lose their competitiveness and innovation potential.



## CONTACT US

*If you are a European SME using fluoropolymers, consider joining our alliance to ensure that your voice is heard.*

*ESBAF is supported in Brussels by Dentons Global Advisors.*

*For more information:*

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