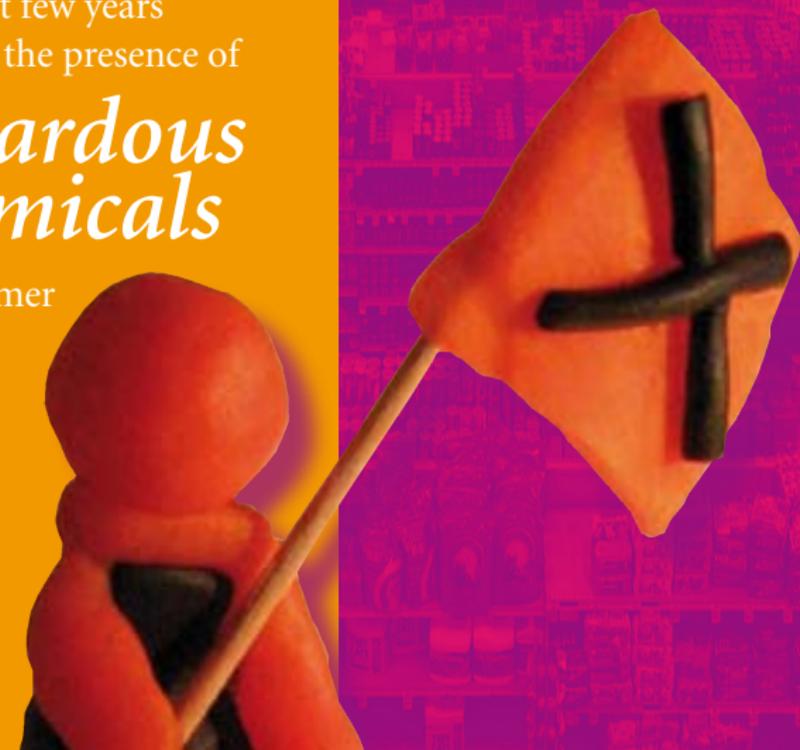


For women, the safety of the products they buy is a key concern. A major threat to product safety in the last few years has been the presence of **hazardous chemicals** in consumer goods.



They can be found ***in all kinds of everyday consumables***

ranging from toys and clothes to electrical equipment, furniture, kitchenware, baby care, DIY and home improvement, or office supply products.



The new EU chemicals legislation, called

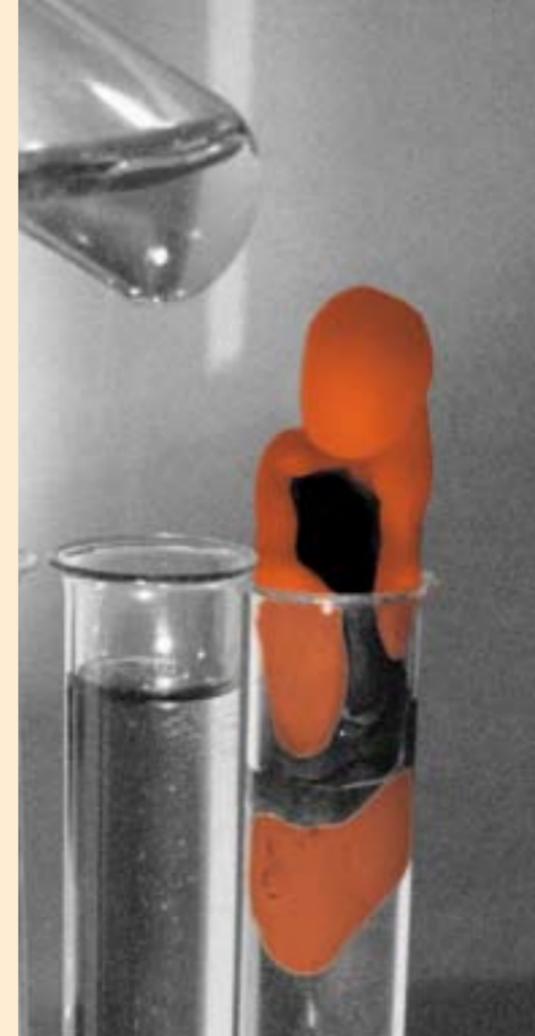
REACH,
is one instrument to address this problem.

In June 2007 REACH entered into force and is legally binding in all 27 EU member states.

As shoppers, we now have the opportunity to change the way consumer products are manufactured.



One of the positive aspects of REACH is that it ***gives consumers the right to find out about hazardous chemicals*** in everyday consumer products.



Article 33, paragraph 2 of

REACH requires companies to let customers know, upon request, if a product they are selling contains a hazardous chemical.



This means every time we go shopping, plan a purchase or have just bought a product and wonder if it is safe, we can ask a company about the presence of

More resources on REACH:

www.wecf.org/reach

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/reach.htm>

<http://ec.europa.eu/echa/>

hazardous chemicals with the following properties in it:

- chemicals that cannot break down (persist)
- chemicals that build up in the human body over time (bio-accumulative)
- chemicals that are toxic
- chemicals that cause cancer (carcinogenic)
- chemicals that change DNA (mutagenic)
- chemicals that cause miscarriages or damage the foetus (reprotoxic)



The company is then legally obliged to give us information

about the presence of hazardous chemicals in the product

within 45 days

after the request was made. As consumers we can thus play a key role in making sure companies and retailers finally start selling products free of hazardous chemicals.

A list of such hazardous chemicals, also called “substances of very high concern”, should become available in autumn 2008 on the website of the new EU Chemicals Agency (ECHA), who is overseeing the implementation of REACH. But we do not have to wait until then. We can start asking about hazardous chemicals in consumer products now!

Watch out

for these hazardous chemicals in consumer products!

Brominated Flame Retardants (Deca BDE, Penta BDE)

PCs, notebooks, mobile phones, TV sets, irons, mattresses, carpets, furniture, wires, textiles, lightening

Perfluorinated Chemicals (PFOS, PFOA)

kitchenware (Teflon & non-stick products), outdoor wear & water repellent clothing, food containers

Phthalates (DEHP)

cosmetics, fragrances, children's toys, textiles, flooring, carpets, furniture, lubricants, wood finishing, cars, buggies, baby changing mattresses, electronic appliances

Bisphenol-A

baby feeding bottles, water bottles, electrical and electronic goods, i.e. CDs

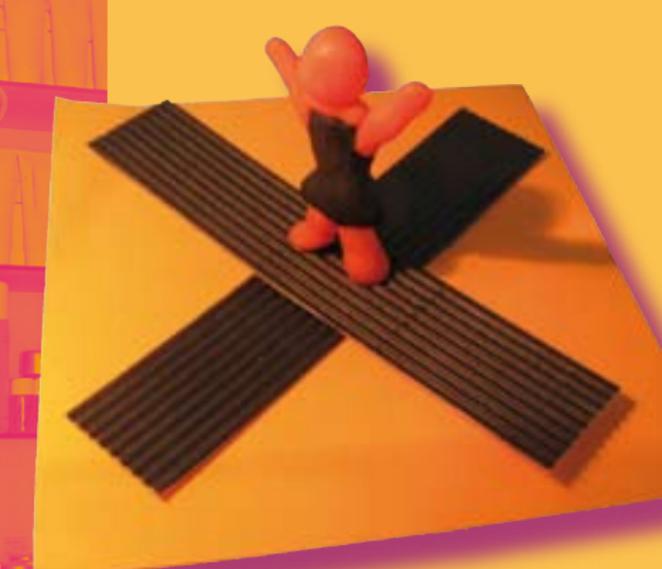
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WECF | Women in Europe for a Common Future



A women's guide to shopping for toxic-free products