ECHA to provide recommendations for occupational exposure limits

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**The European Commission and ECHA have signed an agreement for the Agency to provide recommendations on a regular basis for occupational exposure limits (OELs) that protect workers exposed to hazardous chemicals. The agreement requires ECHA to assess four to five OELs per year from 2020 onwards.**

**Helsinki, 21 January 2019** – *"The preparation of scientific dossiers proposing occupational exposure limit values for chemicals under the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive and the Chemical Agents Directive is a significant new activity for ECHA. It is part of ECHA’s strategy to provide integrated proposals to the Commission on how to regulate risks posed by chemicals to European citizens, workers and the environment,"* states ECHA’s Executive Director Bjorn Hansen.

*"I am very pleased that we now can rely on ECHA. Having one common source for scientific advice under REACH and the health and safety at work directives will ensure coherence and further transparency,"* confirms Joost Korte, Commission Director-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

This new programme of OEL development will start right away, most likely with lead as the first priority at the request of the Commission’s DG Employment. ECHA’s Secretariat will make proposals for ECHA’s Committee for Risk Assessment (RAC) to review and adopt scientific opinions on. The opinions will be forwarded to the Commission for decision making. There is also the potential for ECHA to further support the Commission by assessing the socio-economic impacts in parallel to developing the OELs.

ECHA ran a pilot project between 2017 and 2018 which delivered five OEL recommendations within one year. These are currently passing through the decision-making process of the Commission. Based on the experience from the pilot, ECHA will ensure an open and transparent process through public consultations. The work on OELs will bring employers and trade unions even closer to ECHA’s operations.

ECHA already has substantial expertise in-house and in the field of occupational safety and health (OSH), and has recently strengthened RAC’s expertise with newly co-opted members as well as through the regular membership.

The agreement with the Commission follows the second REACH Review, in which one of the proposed action points was to improve the interface between REACH and OSH legislation. OELs are at the core of ensuring the protection of workers exposed to hazardous chemicals in the workplace.