



9 October 2018

Dear Commissioner Bienkowska,
Dear Commissioner Vella,
Dear Ms. Evans,
Dear Mr. Calleja Crespo,

cc. First Vice-President Timmermans, Vice-President Katainen

We, the Alliance of PVD Providers (APP), are five SMEs providing Physical Vapour Deposition technology (PVD). PVD is an innovative and sustainable alternative to chromium trioxide (CrVI). CrVI is a chemical used in the automotive industry to make plastic look like metal.

CrVI can cause cancer and damage to the environment. Since 2011 it is therefore classified as a Substance of Very High Concern (SVHC) under REACH and subject to authorisation.

In spite of this and in spite of the fact that sustainable alternative technologies do exist, CrVI is still being used on an industrial scale with no sunset date in sight. No final decisions have been made on the various pending authorisations including on Gerhardi, Lanxess and Hapoc. Moreover, the proposed periods for allowing industry to use CrVI are unnecessarily long (on the Gerhardi application the European Commission recommends the longest possible review period, being 12 years).

It is business as usual for CrVI, which is a lose-lose situation for society as it is a lost opportunity for a more sustainable Europe. Indeed, both businesses and NGOs know that if there ever was a clear case for substitution, this is the one. Inspired by what [Erin Brockovich](#) has achieved in eliminating CrVI in the US, the APP has been established to advocate for a better outcome. Better for workers, better for the environment, better for innovation and better for the long-term competitiveness of EU industry.

To this end, the APP humbly asks the political and bureaucratic leadership of the European Commission to include in their new draft decision to be discussed during the next REACH Committee meeting:

- 1. A recommendation to decide on the pending authorisations by December 2018**
- 2. A shortened review period of maximum 7 years on the Gerhardi application**

To support the above asks the APP has drafted the manifesto "*A sustainable alternative to CrVI*" (please find attached). It aims to demonstrate that the current draft decisions – endorsing the continued use of CrVI – are not based on the latest available information. Rather, they are based on an [opinion](#) submitted to the European Commission by the European Chemical Agency in 2015-2016 (RAC and SEAC). During this period of time PVD technology was still in rapid development and has evolved enormously since then.

Today CrVI can easily be substituted by PVD technologies that provide the same quality, are economically priced, are available to meet market demand and approved by the automotive industry.

To elaborate on this further, the APP has been invited by DG Environment (ENV) and DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW) on 6 September 2018. The APP is very grateful for this and wants to compliment DG GROW's Otto Linher and Jacek Rozwadowski and DG ENV's Jonath Blokker-Rowe, Giuseppina Luvara, Mateo Gallego and Katarina Pirselova for their openness and constructive stance towards our cause and for making the manifesto available to the REACH Committee.

APP has reason to believe that this meeting helped spur positive developments during the last REACH Committee meeting on 27-28 September. It seems that there was agreement to speed-up the decision-



making process on the pending authorisations and that there was a discussion on shortening the 12-year review period for the Gerhardi application to a 7-year review period.

We understand that the European Commission will now discuss internally a new draft decision on Gerhardi, to be discussed during the next REACH Committee meeting on 23-24 October. As mentioned above, we hope the European Commission will consider supporting a decision on the pending authorisations by December 2018 and a shortened review period for Gerhardi to a maximum of 7 years.

The APP asks if not now when will the EU seize the opportunity to make this agenda a reality. Alternatives exist and the continued authorised use of CrVI can only be justified to suit vested interests. It could prove to be the ideal opportunity for the European Commission to demonstrate it can sometimes be more ambitious than ECHA, that market-based solutions like innovative substitution thrive in the EU and that the European Commission acts in line with the REACH objectives *to ensure a high level of protection for human health and the environment [...] and the enhancement of competitiveness and innovation.*

We seek your support in saying yes to investment in a sustainable and recyclable product that befits the EU's ambition to create a non-toxic environment. To say yes to a climate-friendly manufacturing process that is compatible with the Paris goals. And lastly, to say yes to a competitive EU that has the know-how and skills to compete with technological giants in the United States, China and elsewhere, rather than leaving the field to other countries to be the first to develop new, more sustainable technologies.

We would very much appreciate the opportunity to meet with you in person and tell you more about why this is such an important case. We hope that you can make some of your precious time available for this cause and are looking forward to hearing from you.

With kind regards,
Willem Vriesendorp

Partner Fipra International on behalf of **the APP** including: IHI Hauzer Techno Coating B.V., Ionbond Netherlands B.V., Kolzer SRL, Oerlikon Balzers Coating Germany GmbH and Vergason Technology Inc.