

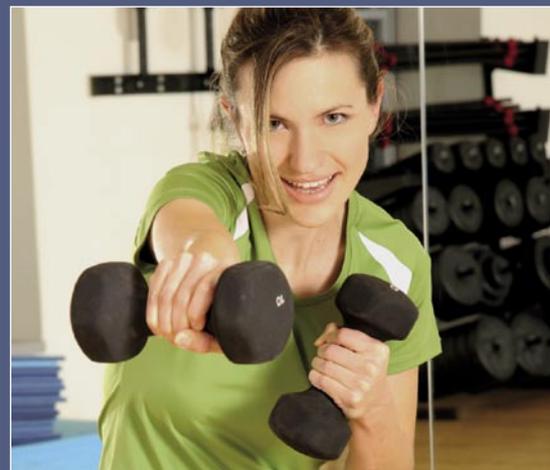


## Retailer outREACH!

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## Retailer outREACH!

The much-awaited European legislation REACH finally entered into force on 1 June. Many questions have been raised and discussions held on REACH within the chemical industry, but for those further removed from the 800+ page chemical regulation, REACH can still seem rather daunting and difficult to comprehend. ECPI has been entering into dialogue with the

retail industry in order to help them navigate the implications of the legislation.

Retailers are affected by the legislation due to new consumer information provisions. As such, they are likely to become a key decision-maker on the effects of REACH on the supply chain. ECPI activities are seeking to build a

dialogue with retailers in order to answer their questions about REACH and what it means for consumer goods containing plasticisers.

The ECPI retailer outreach programme started before REACH's entry into force through targeted media relations to key retailer trade publications. Articles were placed in these publications to explain the impact of REACH on retailers and provide them with the good news that many plasticisers are in a good position for REACH registration. Valuable media coverage was secured in the UK's Retail Bulletin and the German-based DIY Global, both of which have a broad online readership among retailers.

This coverage positioned ECPI as an expert and source of reference regarding chemicals and REACH, and opens the dialogue with

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# Talking to customers about REACH

In the last quarter of 2007, ECPI will hold a series of national workshops to inform customers about REACH implementation and its effects on DEHP. The series of free workshops will provide interested customers with the opportunity to gain an understanding of REACH, and what it means for DEHP in particular. DEHP is likely to have to be authorised for use at some point in the future due to its classification as a CMR substance. The workshops will take place in France, Italy, Germany, Spain and the UK.

The first of the events will be held in Germany at the end of October and will consist of a half-day workshop presenting the key issues surrounding REACH. The position of DEHP and timeline of this plasticiser vis-à-vis REACH implementation will be explained, while discussion of how DEHP users and producers can work together to implement REACH will also be undertaken. The workshops are designed to provide customers with relevant materials and information on the plasticiser and the EU legislation, as well as to offer attendees the opportunity to interact with DEHP users and ask questions to DEHP producers.

Given the importance of sharing the understanding of REACH throughout the supply chain, the seminars will be conducted in conjunction with the European Plastics Converters Association (EuPC)'s REACH expert, Walter Claes.

This initiative is part of ECPI's efforts to clarify the complex European legislation to its stakeholders. Customers as well as other stakeholders who are interested in participating in any of these workshops, receiving more information or engaging ECPI to speak at events, are invited to contact Tim Edgar, Deputy Director of ECPI, at [ted@cefic.be](mailto:ted@cefic.be) or +32 2 676 73 63. ■

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retailers, inviting them to contact ECPI with their questions.

In addition to this overarching tactic aiming at retailers as a broad group, ECPI has also contacted several specific retailers to engage them in a deeper exchange of ideas and views through one-on-one meetings to discuss their questions and concerns. In August, ECPI participated in a workshop attended by representatives of the German retailers association. This was followed by a meeting with the Spanish retailers' association ANGED in September, attended by representatives from Carrefour, Al Campo, El Corte Inglés, and Leroy Merlin.

"Our members were very positive about the session and the presentation, which they found very interesting," said Idoia Marquiegui from ANGED. "It was a really useful presentation, as it specifically targeted retailers' concerns and helped clarify a lot of doubts around REACH, and showed us that phthalates are well prepared for REACH."

ECPI is currently planning additional meetings with retailers across Europe in the coming months. If you would like ECPI to speak to retailers with you or on your behalf, or are interested in obtaining additional information, please contact Tim Edgar, Deputy Director of ECPI, at [ted@cefic.be](mailto:ted@cefic.be) or +32 2 676 73 63. ■

# Educating the advisors

A lack of understanding can be a dangerous thing, especially when it comes to a complex subject such as the regulation of chemicals. With European Parliamentarians having a direct influence on much of the legislation regulating plasticisers and their markets, ECPI has been leading efforts by the wider chemicals industry to educate the political researchers of parliamentarians on key European Parliament committees. Parliamentary staff hold a key role in helping elected members understand and amend legislation affecting plasticisers.

As part of this initiative, the plasticiser industry helped organise a workshop for Parliamentary staff in late June 2007. The workshop was chaired by Tracey Brown of the UK based 'Sense About Science', a government-funded organisation committed to promoting a sound science approach to debates about chemicals.

The event, which was held in the European Parliament in Brussels, was aimed at providing information and stimulating discussion among the key Parliamentary staff who will be working on the Parliament's initiative report on the mid-term review of the Environment & Health Action Plan. Among the information presented were key messages on the results of the EU phthalate risk assessments.

The workshop was sponsored by three MEPs: Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortinez (EPP), Robert Goebbels (SPE), and Holger Krahmer (ALDE), and included guest speakers Erik Lebret from the Netherlands National Institute for Public Health and the Environment; the author and journalist John Emsley; and Michel Catinat from the European Commission. ■



## Spotlight on specialty plasticisers



### BENZYL PHTHALATES

#### Key performance characteristics

The main performance property of this family of specialty plasticisers is its optimum compatibility with a broad spectrum of polymers such as PVC, polyacrylics, polysulfides, polyurethanes, polyvinylacetate, etc. and different kinds of elastomers. This optimal solubility translates into fast fusion, high plasticiser permanence, foamability and high barrier properties.

#### Main application

Benzyl phthalate plasticisers find their main use in building applications such as insulated glass and other elastomeric sealants. They are used in vinyl flooring,

coated textiles and wall covering. Isononyl benzyl phthalate is the main specialty plasticiser for these applications.

Benzyl phthalates are also used in automotive applications as underbody coating sealants, oil resistant cables and extraction resistant hoses.

#### Main benefits of use

In PVC, benzyl phthalates are used for their high fusion speed, allowing lower working temperatures and enabling the addition of more fillers and the production of better foams.

In sealants, benzyl phthalates bring compatibility, the desired rheology

(thixotropy), improved adhesion properties, and faster curing speed, just to name a few advantages.

#### Other applications

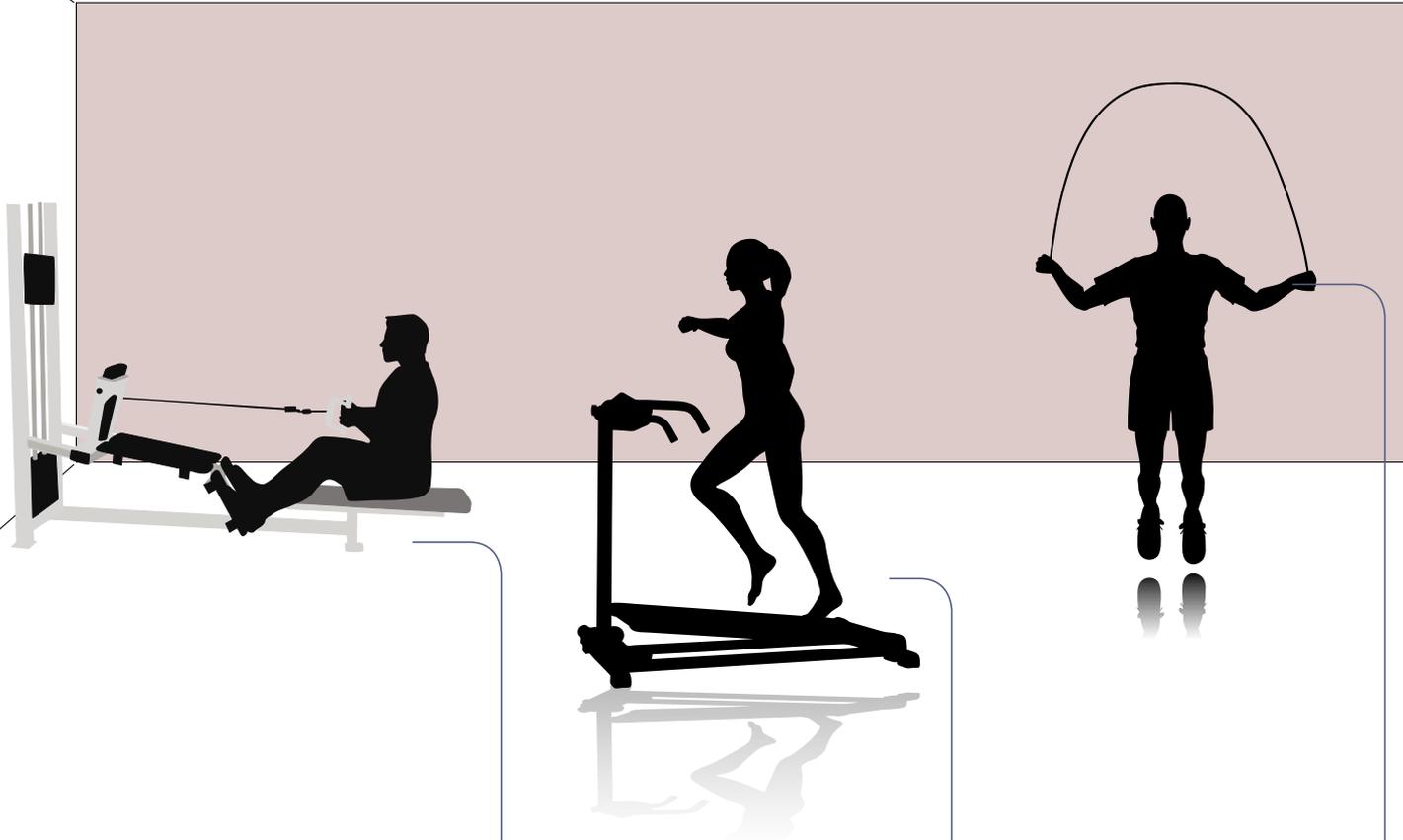
Benzyl phthalates are also used in packaging, adhesives, lubricants, fluids, inks and coatings.

#### Other information

In the context of EU classification and labelling, butyl benzyl phthalate (BBP) is a Cat 2 classified chemical (Cat 2 R61, Cat 3 R62;N,R50/53). Nonyl benzyl phthalate and texanol benzyl phthalate are not classified. ■

# Plasticisers for healthy living

Plasticisers are used in a wide and diverse range of soft vinyl consumer applications. Through their use in sports and leisure facilities and equipment, plasticisers contribute to healthy living by providing some of the durable, comfortable and high-tech equipment to help us keep fit.



**Roofing** – DINP, DIDP, DPHP and linear 911P are plasticisers that make PVC sheaths durable, flexible even at temperatures below 0°C, watertight and resistant to extreme outdoor weathering conditions. PVC roofing helps guarantee a comfortable and pleasant workout environment, and can contribute to energy conservation of the building.

**Wall** – DINP, DIDP, DPHP, DIBP and DEHP are all used to make vinyl wall coverings which create a colourful and relaxing environment. They can be washed so as to keep a healthy atmosphere inside the fitness room.

**Exercise ball** – Exercise balls are used to increase muscle strength, balance and flexibility. Plasticisers DINP, DIDP, DPHP, DEHP, DINCH are what make the ball flexible and resistant to pressure from use.

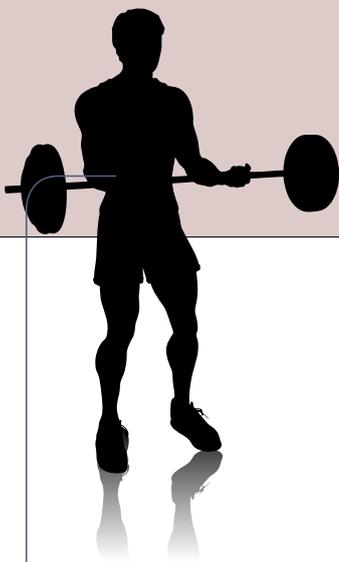


**Exercise benches and machine seats** – Soft PVC is highly resistant to wear and tear and can be easily cleaned, thereby providing a hygienic environment as well as the comfort and smooth feel of leather.

**Handle bars** – Soft PVC provides comfortable cushioning and a firm grip to reduce the strain of weightlifting.

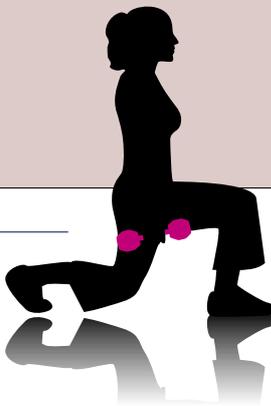
**Running shoes** – Plasticisers are used in various parts of sports shoes, such as the synthetic leather and shoe soles. Soft PVC leather enables easier cleaning and has a high resistance to wear and tear, while remaining flexible and durable.

**Skipping rope** – The soft PVC handles allow for a firm and comfortable grip, even when sweating. The plastic rope made by combining PVC and plasticisers like DEHP, DINP, DIDP or DPHP is robust but flexible and lightweight.



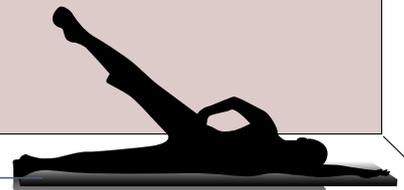
□ **Gloves** – Soft PVC leather gloves used for bodybuilding protect hands when lifting heavy weights and can be washed easily.

**Flip flops** – Even the flip flops used in the shower to protect your feet from possible infections are made with plasticisers. Flip flops owe their flexibility and durability to plasticisers like DIBP, DEHP, DINP, DIDP, DINCH or DPHP.



□ **Padded weights** – The soft PVC cushioning around aerobics weights improves your grip while protecting your hands from developing calluses.

**Yoga mat** – Flexible PVC Yoga mats, produced by combining DEHP, DINP, DIDP, DINCH or DPHP with a blowing agent provide a flexible and soft foamy structure to give adequate comfort while exercising. PVC mats are anti-slip and lightweight making them easy to carry around.



□ **Floor** – DINP, DIDP, DIBP, DPHP and DEHP are commonly used to make gym flooring soft and provide the necessary cushioning and impact absorption to protect your joints while exercising. They offer greater resistance to indentation and increased durability. Soft PVC flooring provides comfort, style, noise reduction (sound dampening), an ideal slip/slide coefficient and is easy to clean, which is critical in environments that need to be kept healthy.

# New scientific advice on the safety of phthalates

In recent months, the European Commission's Scientific Committees have addressed a series of questions relating to phthalates. Three independent non-food Scientific Committees provide the Commission with the scientific advice it needs when preparing policy and proposals relating to consumer safety, public health and the environment. These committees are considered the highest sources of independent scientific advice in the European Union.

## **Cosmetic products: Levels found in Greenpeace report are of no risk to consumers**

In July 2007, the Scientific Committee on Consumer Products (SCCP) stated that the levels of phthalates found in cosmetics by Greenpeace pose no risk to consumers. The Committee also reaffirmed its 2001 scientific opinion that supported the use of DEP in cosmetics.



The Committee answers come in response to a February 2005 Greenpeace Report: *An Investigation of Chemicals in Perfumes* and in light of recent studies on phthalates including those by Swan et al, Duty et al, and Main et al.

Taking into account the new scientific evidence available, the SCCP stated that there was no need to revise its 2001 opinion on DEP. The Committee also reports no quantifiable risk from the levels of DMP, DIBP, DCHP, DINP and DIDP found in the perfumes by Greenpeace. For DEHP, BBP and DBP, which are prohibited from use in cosmetics in the European Union, the SCCP is of the opinion that trace levels found by Greenpeace do not indicate a risk to the health of the consumer.

## **Indoor Air: Phthalates not of high concern according to scientific evidence**

In May 2007, the European Commission's Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks (SCHER) concluded that it did "not find consistent scientific evidence which indicate that phthalates should be high concern chemicals in indoor air." The Scientific Committee remarked that the available margins of safety were high enough to offer a high level of safety for even the most vulnerable groups.

The opinion, which addressed a large range of industrial chemicals including phthalates, confirms the findings of the recent EU risk assessments for the phthalates BBP, DEHP, DIDP and DINP. The assessments, conducted under the Existing Substances Regulation, found no risk to humans from these substances from indoor air exposure via end use applications such as flooring, wall covering and automotive interiors. ■

## Science in numbers

60

Years since the first industrial plasticiser was produced

46

Studies required for REACH registration for high tonnage substances

130

Million Euro of investment by plasticiser industry on data generation

0

Known cases of phthalate plasticisers causing adverse effects on humans or the environment

30,000

Tonnes of plasticiser used for medical devices in Europe per year

3

Million Euro of investment of data generation required under REACH for substances with no data and high tonnage

1,012

Studies cited in the EU Risk Assessment of DEHP

5

Years for a new plasticiser to pass from R&D to market



# Why we have to think globally and act locally

The plasticiser industry is a global one. Many plasticiser producers manufacture and sell their products across continents as well as countries. With many of our challenges being global, the plasticiser industry is taking steps to ensure a coordinated and coherent approach to common issues. A key milestone in this process is the plasticiser industry's regular global meeting, which this year takes place in Boston, USA.

In this era of connectivity, news spreads quickly around the world. Developments that take place in Europe today can be reported in the US press tomorrow and find an echo on an Asian website hours later. As reputation plays an increasingly important role in the success of our products and their applications in the market, reflecting upon communications challenges at a global level but addressing them locally will become ever more important.

The regulatory issues facing our products are also increasingly global. This year sees the

European Union's proposal to implement the United Nations Globally Harmonised System for Classification and Labelling, replacing European legislation with global standards; GHS is also being implemented in countries around the world. The provisions of the new European chemicals legislation (REACH) will set *de facto* standards for producers and importers of both chemicals and finished goods outside the European Union, while legislation in Europe is often used as a rallying call for action in other countries by non-governmental organisations. Equally, a decision on how to deal with an issue related to chemicals by a Walmart or a Dell is likely to have as much impact in Europe as in the US due to these organisations' global supply chain.

For plasticiser producers and our customers, our industry's global presence provides us with the strength to address our challenges wherever they occur. Over recent years, this global industry has collaborated on research worth around 130 million Euro to understand

our products better. The sharing of information has also enabled us to learn from each other. Customer outreach has taken place in parallel in Europe and in the US, with approaches tailored to the respective local audiences. As the world around us becomes more connected, we recognise that to ensure a promising future for plasticisers and soft-PVC in Europe, we need to continue to work with our colleagues in other parts of the world.

**Luca Bielli**  
*Chairman, ECPI*

*Business Line Director  
PA, TMA & Plasticisers  
Polynt S.p.A.*





*European Council for  
Plasticisers and Intermediates*

*COMMITTED TO THE SCIENCE OF SAFETY*

The European Council for Plasticisers and Intermediates (ECPI)

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