

Lower concentration limit proposed for PAHs found in granules and mulches



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ECHA/PR/18/12

The Netherlands has prepared a proposal to support a possible restriction to address the risks from eight polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) found in granules and mulches used in synthetic turf pitches, or in loose forms at playgrounds and other sports facilities.

Helsinki, 16 August 2018 – The proposal, prepared by the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) in cooperation with ECHA, states that the general concentration limits set under REACH for eight carcinogenic PAHs in mixtures are insufficient for protecting those who come into contact with the granules and mulches while playing at sports facilities and playgrounds.

In its assessment, RIVM looks at the human health risk for professional football players (including goalkeepers), children playing on the pitches and on playgrounds, as well as workers installing and maintaining the pitches and playgrounds.

The proposal suggests a combined concentration limit for the eight PAHs of **17 mg/kg** (0.0017 % by weight). The current concentration limits applicable for supply to the general public are set at 100 mg/kg for two of the PAHs and 1 000 mg/kg for the other six.

The proposal of the Netherlands, available on ECHA's website, outlines that the suggested reduction in the concentration limit would:

- ensure the cancer risk from PAH exposure remains very low for those coming into contact with the granules and mulches;
- decrease societal concerns about the negative health impacts caused by the PAHs;
- lead to no major additional administrative burdens on public authorities in terms of costs for implementing the lower concentration limit; and
- cause relatively limited and affordable societal costs.

ECHA's committees will now check whether the restriction dossier conforms to the requirements of REACH. If so, a six-month long consultation will begin in September 2018. ECHA's scientific committees will assess the proposal and formulate their opinions, and these will be submitted to the Commission.

In addition to processing the Netherlands' proposal, ECHA will assess – as requested by the European Commission – the health risks of other substances

that may be contained in granules and mulches used as infill in synthetic sports pitches. It is possible that ECHA will also assess the environmental risks, too.

Background

In 2017, both ECHA and RIVM assessed the health risks associated with playing sports on synthetic turf pitches where rubber granules are used as infill material.

ECHA concluded in 2017 that there was, at most, a very low level of concern due to the PAHs present in those materials. However, ECHA also gave a number of recommendations to be considered for the future – the first of which was to consider a restriction under REACH to ensure that granules for use as infill material in sports fields are only supplied with very low concentrations of PAHs and of any other relevant hazardous substances.

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15/08/2018

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EIOPA publishes updated technical RFR documentation for the Danish krone and

Denmark reflecting adjustments to the representative portfolios as well as the use of an option-adjusted Nykredit index

Today, the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) published an updated [technical documentation for the calculation of the volatility adjustment to risk-free interest rates \(RFR\) for the Danish krone and Denmark](#). The risk-free rate methodology includes [updated representative portfolios](#) for the Danish krone and for the country portfolio of Denmark as well as the inclusion of option-adjustments.

The updates are based on the results of an in-depth analysis of the composition of the average Danish undertakings' portfolio and the average Danish krone denominated (sub-)portfolio. The analysis provided further insight on the legal and economic background of the Danish covered bond market and confirmed that these assets dominate the relevant portfolios. To capture the features of Danish covered bonds in the risk-free rate methodology accordingly, henceforth an improved version ("option-adjusted") of yield and duration data of a dedicated index for these contracts, the "Nykredit realkreditindeks", is used in the production process of the risk-free rate.

In addition, to ensure consistency in the RFR calculation, assets reported by undertakings as being "unrated" were reallocated to the Solvency-II-inherent stepping of credit risk classes (Credit Quality Steps – CQS) by differentiating between financial and non-financial ones.

Furthermore, the technical documentation contains some minor amendments in the use of data fields of certain Markit iBoxx indices for the RFR calculation. These non-material changes for a limited number of corporate bonds were necessary to fully unify the concepts used across currencies and CQS.

The updates will be implemented with the upcoming risk-free rate production cycle for end-August 2018, to be published beginning of September 2018.

Background

Technical information relating to risk-free interest rate (RFR) term structures is used for the calculation of the technical provisions for (re)insurance obligations.

In line with the Solvency II Directive, EIOPA publishes technical information

relating to RFR term structures on a monthly basis via a dedicated section on EIOPA's Website also containing the release calendar for 2018, the RFR Technical Documentation, the RFR coding and Frequently Asked Questions.

By this publication, EIOPA ensures consistent calculation of technical provisions across Europe.

Representative portfolios are used for the calculation of the volatility adjustment to risk-free interest rates.

The information about the update of representative portfolios for the Danish krone and for the country portfolio of Denmark was [published in March 2018](#).

The representative portfolios for all other currencies and countries are applied since end of March 2018 onwards, as [announced in December 2017](#).

The **volatility adjustments** are derived from spreads of representative portfolios of assets. The representative portfolios are derived in accordance with Article 49 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/35.

The volatility adjustment is a measure to ensure the appropriate treatment of insurance products with long-term guarantees under Solvency II. (Re)insurers are allowed to adjust the risk-free interest rates to mitigate the effect of short-term volatility of bond spreads on their solvency position. In that way, the volatility adjustment prevents pro-cyclical investment behaviour of (re)insurers.