

Lower concentration limit proposed for PAHs found in granules and mulches



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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.