

Seilerstrasse 22
Postfach 5853
3001 Bern

T +41 31 310 20 12
F +41 31 310 20 35

info@sso-fsts.ch
www.sso-fsts.ch

To the attention of the members
of the working group REACH SSO

The future of chrome-plating in Switzerland is assured

Wängi, 16.1.2017

Dear Sir or Madam

We are pleased to inform you, that the process of chrome-plating in Switzerland has been safeguarded for the immediate future.

We were informed by the relevant federal authorities (Federal Office for the Environment [FOEN], State Secretariat for Economic Affairs [SECO] and the Federal Office of Public Health [FOPH]), on the 13th December 2016, that the most important hexavalent chromium compounds will be included in Annex 1.17 of the Chemical Risk Reduction Ordinance (ORR-Chem, SR 814.81) on 1. February 2017. This means that the import and the professional or commercial or industrial use of these substances will generally be prohibited. However, in contrast to the EU, which regulates these substances in Annex XIV to REACH and which subjected these substances to authorisation, the Swiss Regulation has adopted an exemption to the prohibition for uses in processes, for which the end products do not contain hexavalent chromium. This exception is valid for an unlimited duration. The federal authorities may revisit this exemption, once real alternatives for the relevant chrome-plating processes have become available.

Therefore, businesses, which operate hard chrome baths or glossy chrome baths on the basis of Chrome(VI), are exempt from the Chrome(VI)-prohibition and needn't apply for a permission for exemption in accordance with Annex 1.17 of ORRChem.

In return, the chrome-plating businesses need to be prepared to implement a new threshold limit value in relation to Chrome(VI) exposure of workers in the work place, and carry out regular inspection. This threshold limit value ensures that the safety standards of workers in Swiss chrome-plating businesses at the very least comply with the safety standards of workers within the EU. This new and additional to the MAK-value (maximum work place concentration) applicable requirement is currently being drawn up by the federal authorities.

We look forward to this forward-looking solution, which represents a negotiation success on part of our working group, and which presents advantages to the chrome-plating businesses as well as its workers. We thank everyone who participated in the solution finding process for their hard work and support.

The present letter is sent exclusively to the members of the working group REACH. We invite you to use this letter to inform your clients. The accuracy of its content was confirmed through proof-reading by representatives of the federal authorities. Further information, in particular to the media, but also to businesses, which do not directly profit from the intended exemptions, will follow in due course.

Kind regards



Roland Ratschiller
President



Dr. Jürg Liechti
Secretary