**Proposed restriction on substances in tattoo inks**

***Why is there a need for action?***

It is estimated that 12% of European citizens are tattooed and that the prevalence in the younger generations (18 - 35 year olds) may be double that. Tattoos may be injected into the dermis or other parts of the body (e.g., submucosal, intraocular, or under the tongue) of consumers. Cosmetic tattoos, also known as PMU, are used to resemble make-up. It is estimated that between 3-20% of the general population, depending on the Member State, may have PMU procedures carried out.

The health effects reported after tattooing are mainly skin problems, 68% of persons being tattooed reported skin issues in one survey. However, the pigments in tattoo inks are known to migrate from the tattoo site. Animal and human studies have shown that colourant particles migrate to regional lymph nodes. Animal studies have shown colourant particles are transported to the liver, suggesting their distribution via the blood system and potentially exposing internal organs to substances with hazardous properties.

The available information for certain hazardous substances in the scope of the proposed restriction indicate that risks for human health cannot be excluded and action is required on Union-wide basis.

The Chemicals Helpdesk of the Health & Safety Authority can answer any questions you may have; please contact the team at [chemicals@hsa.ie](mailto:chemicals@hsa.ie) December 21st 2017

***How can interested parties or the public have their say?***

Interested parties can submit comments to the European Commission during the public consultation until 20th June 2018 at the latest, but preferably by 16th February 2018 using the online submissions form at this link [here](https://comments.echa.europa.eu/comments_cms/AnnexXVRestrictionDossier.aspx?RObjectId=0b0236e1820e01df).

***What will the restriction mean in practice?***

The proposed restriction would create obligations for tattoo ink manufacturers, importers and distributors to ensure that tattoo inks not meeting the requirements of the proposed restriction are not placed on the EU market after its entry into force. It also puts the onus on tattoo artists and PMU practitioners to ensure that noncompliant inks are not used in tattoo or PMU procedures.

The incremental substitution costs estimated to be incurred by downstream users of tattoo ink in the EEA as a result of the proposed restriction are about €4.4 million annually (in 2016 values). Incremental enforcement (analytical testing and administrative) costs are estimated at €235 000 annually for the EEA. The costs of the proposed restriction per one litre of noncompliant tattoo ink removed from the market are estimated at €60. See more information on the proposed restriction [here](https://www.echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/2b217418-1bd9-7e00-7355-a9fb792d68b3).

***What is the proposal?***

The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), at the request of the European Commission, submitted a report proposing a restriction on substances in tattoo inks. The proposal aims to restrict the intentional use of certain substances in tattoo inks or to impose concentration limits for selected substances. These substances include those with harmonised classifications as carcinogenic, mutagenic, reprotoxic, skin sensitising/corrosive/irritant, eye damaging/irritant as well as other substances prohibited in cosmetic products and selected impurities. A number of colourants, which do not currently have alternatives or where information is insufficient to demonstrate a risk are exempted. See the [ECHA website](https://www.echa.europa.eu/web/guest/restrictions-under-consideration/-/substance-rev/18114/term) for more details.