

**Speech for Willem Hofland, REACHforLIFE Spokesperson**

**REACHforLIFE Launch Event**  
**Bibliothèque Solvay, Brussels**  
**10 September 2008**

- On behalf of REACHforLIFE, I would like to welcome everyone to today's panel discussion entitled "Safety, Coherence, Balance – is the EU's chemicals policy living up to these principles?"
- I would also like to thank the panelists and look forward to their contributions. Since this is a debate, we want everyone to be able to speak their minds, without fear or favour.

- In the spirit of transparency, I would like to inform you that REACHforLIFE was initiated by three companies – Albemarle, Chemtura, and my own company ICL-IP.
- REACHforLIFE was formed in response to our concern that safe substances were being banned by decision-makers in the EU. Indeed, everyone should be concerned about this, since these substances provide real benefits to society, and some even protect and save lives.
- Moreover, official EU risk assessments have stated that some of the chemicals under debate are safe, and no restrictions have been imposed.

- As everyone here knows, REACH entered into force on 1<sup>st</sup> June last year, following a long debate between decision-makers, industry, and NGOs. As a result, there is now a general consensus that REACH is the right way forward for the EU's chemicals policy.
  
- The aim of the REACHforLIFE campaign is to ensure that decision-makers play by the rules all parties agreed upon when they formulate chemical policy.
  
- As industry must obey the rules, so should all other parties:
  - Abide by the conclusions of the risk assessment process;

- Work within the framework of REACH and not be side-tracked by headline-grabbing organisations calling for unjust bans; and
  - Listen to both sides of the story before taking decisions.
  - In short, we insist on fair play.
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- The REACHforLIFE campaign is not just about brominated flame retardants or other flame retardants; this is about all chemicals that are being unjustly targeted for bans or restrictions which go contrary to the conclusions of official EU risk assessments.
  - In your welcome packs you will find a petition calling for science-based policymaking based on the

conclusions of the risk assessments. If you agree with the petition please do sign it and hand it to one of the REACHforLIFE spokespeople. The petition is also available on our website – [www.reachforlife.eu](http://www.reachforlife.eu).

- I don't want to pre-empt the debate, but I would like you to reflect on the two following statements.
  - First – that decision-makers are putting consumers and environment at more risk by banning safe chemicals rather than keeping them on the market;
  - And second - REACH is the most comprehensive legislative framework in the world governing chemicals. Yet if we continue to ban chemicals outside of the risk assessment context, we may as well throw REACH in the bin right now.

- On that note I would like to hand back to Frédéric so we may begin the debate. Thank you.

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