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E-003562/2025

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Séjourné
on behalf of the European Commission
(31.10.2025)

The Commission takes note of the United Kingdom government proposal for a restriction of lead ammunition. However, the Commission bases its proposals under the Regulation on the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH)¹ on the evidence and recommendations provided by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) and its scientific committees, the Committee for Risks assessment (RAC) and the Committee for Socio-Economic Analysis (SEAC).

In its Annex XV restriction report², ECHA proposed to restrict the use of large calibre (≥ 5.6 mm) centrefire lead bullets because they found evidence that alternative non-lead bullets of those calibres (1) are readily available on the market and widely used in practice in some Member States, and (2) can be as effective as lead bullets (studies found no statistical difference in the performance of lead and non-lead ammunition of 5.56 mm calibre and higher).

ECHA proposed a transitional period of 18 months for the application of the use ban of large calibre bullets because (1) it contributes to a rapid reduction of human health impacts (IQ loss and chronic kidney disease) linked to the consumption of lead-contaminated game meat, estimated at EUR 77.5-145 million per year; and (2) it is feasible for industry, as most ammunition manufacturers are already producing and marketing alternative ammunitions in those calibres.

In their opinion³, RAC and SEAC supported ECHA's analysis and conclusions concerning the proposed restriction measures and transitional period for large calibre bullets.

The draft proposal, including transitional periods, is currently being discussed with the Member States in comitology and their suggestions for changes will be given due consideration.

¹<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2006/1907/2025-09-01>.

² <https://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/da9bf395-e6c3-b48e-396f-afc8dcef0b21>;
<https://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/1a42c9e1-e36a-65b0-da45-bc1ca093b632>.

³ <https://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/2c82ef18-ce5d-4b4f-8ff0-002932154acc>;
<https://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/48f14c85-b0ca-874e-9c88-ee386f251b06>.