

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003959/25
to the Commission
Riho Terras (PPE)
(8 October 2025)**

Subject: REACH restriction on lead in rimfire ammunition

The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) has confirmed that lead-free alternatives for rimfire bullets are either not available or unsuitable for hunting, and that manufacturers face technical barriers to developing functional alternatives ⁽¹⁾. The Committee for Socio-Economic Analysis (SEAC) has also recognised these limitations ⁽²⁾.

In the proposed restriction under Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 on the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals ⁽³⁾ (REACH Regulation), the Commission foresees prohibiting the use of rimfire bullets of any calibre for hunting, with a 10-year transitional period and no review clause.

Can the Commission clarify:

1. How it considers that this proposed restriction complies with Article 68(1) of the REACH Regulation, in particular the requirement for technically feasible alternatives?
2. How the socioeconomic impacts have been assessed, given that, at the end of the transitional period, hunters using rimfire rifles would effectively be unable to continue their activity?

Submitted: 8.10.2025

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Séjourné on behalf of the European Commission
(21 November 2025)**

The Commission bases its proposals for restrictions 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 restriction report ⁽²⁾, ECHA proposed to restrict the use of lead rimfire bullets for hunting after 5 years, which is a longer transitional period than for other bullet types, due to the limited availability of alternatives. In its Opinion ⁽³⁾, SEAC agrees with ECHA that a longer transition period is required for rimfire cartridges as alternatives exist but need to be further developed.

In line with Article 68(1) of REACH, the Commission has taken into account the current limited availability of alternatives for lead rimfire bullets and therefore is proposing to double the transitional time recommended by ECHA and SEAC before the restriction starts applying to those bullets. This is intended to provide sufficient time for the development of new and scaling-up of existing non-lead alternatives.

The draft proposal is currently being discussed with the Member States and must receive a positive vote in comitology and subsequently pass the scrutiny of both the European Parliament and the Council in order to be adopted. A committee vote is not expected before 2026.

¹ ECHA, Background Document, 2.12.2022, p. 312; and ECHA, Annex to the Background Document, 2.12.2022, p. 428.

² Committee for Risk Assessment (RAC) and SEAC, Opinion on an Annex XV dossier proposing restrictions on lead and its compounds, 2.12.2022, p. 60.

³ OJ L 396, 30.12.2006, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2006/1907/oj> (<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2006/1907/oj>).

⁽¹⁾ <http://data.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>.