

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-001531/24
to the Commission
Anthony Smith (The Left)
(20 August 2024)**

Subject: Lobby groups influencing the Commission to the detriment of citizens' health and the environment

Investigative journalism has revealed that the Commissioner for Internal Market, Thierry Breton, and by extension the Commission, has buried a ban on calcium cyanamide, a chemical fertiliser used in agriculture.

Indeed, following an intense lobbying campaign by the chemical industries, the vote on this ban by the Member State representatives in the REACH Committee, which was scheduled for 14 December 2022, ended up not taking place.

However, back in 2017, Ms von der Leyen's Commission had asked for the European Chemicals Agency to prepare a dossier restricting the use of this substance due to the risks it poses to living organisms. This led, in 2021, to a proposal to ban the production of this substance within the EU.

This case illustrates the power of lobby groups within the EU and how dangerous they can be — in this instance, both for the environment and the health of EU citizens.

Could the Commission demonstrate that its actions are not subject to the wishes of chemical industry lobbyists by putting the ban on calcium cyanamide back on the REACH Committee's agenda?

Submitted: 20.8.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Vestager on behalf of the European Commission
(25 September 2024)**

The Commission is committed to protect human health and the environment while managing the socioeconomic consequences associated with restriction decisions.

Restrictions under the regulation concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) ⁽¹⁾ are based on evidence from the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) and its scientific committees concerning the risks for human health or the environment posed by a substance, and the socioeconomic impacts of restricting that substance.

As for all restriction dossiers, before deciding whether a legal restriction is warranted, the Commission assesses the evidence provided by ECHA, taking into account stakeholders' comments.

In this specific case, the Commission has considered, on the one hand, the risk posed by calcium cyanamide when used as a fertiliser, as confirmed by the Agency's Committee for Risk Assessment, and, on the other hand, (i) the lack of conclusions of the Agency's Committee for Socio-Economic Assessment on the proportionality of a restriction, due mainly to the uncertainties on the risk posed by the possible alternatives, and (ii) the possible socioeconomic consequences of a restriction on broader priorities of the EU.

Following this assessment, the Commission services now intend to present a draft proposal for a restriction of calcium cyanamide as fertiliser for a first discussion with the Member States in the REACH ⁽²⁾ Committee by the end of 2024.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH), OJ L 396, 30.12.2006, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ Committee established by Article 133 of REACH.