

To customers, business partners and users of PTFE and PTFE-containing sealing materials and other interested parties (stakeholders)

AK Dichtungen, March 2026

Why users of fluoropolymers such as PTFE or FKM should definitely participate in the SEAC consultation

Fluoropolymers are also covered by the definition of PFAS subject to regulation.

Participation by fluoropolymer users in the SEAC consultation process is therefore a crucial step in actively shaping future regulation and ensuring that subsequent restrictions under REACH remain well-founded, proportionate, and practical. The BAuA and ECHA expressly emphasize that only contributions from industry can provide a complete picture of technical realities, alternatives, costs, and impacts.

The consultation process offers the only official opportunity to correct or clarify the assumptions made by ECHA and dossier compilers – for example, regarding the availability of alternatives, emission levels, tonnages, or socioeconomic impacts. Many of these assumptions may differ significantly from the actual conditions in specialized industrial applications. The comments from users are incorporated directly into the finalization of the SEAC (Committee for the Analysis of Social and Economic Impacts) opinion, meaning that they have a significant influence on how strict the future regulation will be, which exemptions will remain in place, and how long the transition periods will last.

This is particularly important because the revised background document covers numerous new sectors in detail for the first time, including sealing applications, mechanical engineering, and technical textiles. For some areas, only limited or incomplete data is available so far, and the scientific evaluation has not yet been fully completed. In the worst case, missing or incorrectly assessed information could lead to disproportionate restrictions that could impair the functionality of industrial plants, safety in critical applications, or entire supply chains. Through well-founded contributions from the field, companies can help to justify necessary exemptions or options such as RO3 (Restriction Option 3 = continued use under controlled conditions) in a comprehensible manner.

In addition, the SEAC assesses the socioeconomic impact of the restriction, including production losses, cost increases, availability of substitutes, and potential impacts on employment and security of supply. These impacts can only be properly considered if companies provide concrete data, for example on PFAS usage quantities, possible alternatives, technical constraints, or necessary transition periods. Each submission increases the likelihood that the final restriction will not lead to unexpected or safety-critical problems.

Legally, participation in the public consultation is based on Article 71(1) of the REACH Regulation, which expressly provides for the involvement of interested parties in the procedure.



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ECHA is obliged to conduct the consultation and to take the contributions into account in a transparent manner.

This makes it clear that user participation is not only possible but also a central part of the restriction process—even those who have already participated in the first public consultation should definitely reassess and present the impact of a restriction on their operational processes.

Overall, participation is therefore essential both in the interests of the companies themselves and for a balanced, scientifically sound, and economically viable PFAS regulation.

Note:

The information provided in this article is based exclusively on publicly available sources from the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA) and the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA).

Despite careful research, changes or updates may have been made by the aforementioned institutions in the meantime, so all information is provided without guarantee and subject to future adjustments.

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