

European agency calls for limiting use of eight chemicals

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The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) logo. ECHA recommended Monday limiting access to eight harmful but widely-used industrial substances.

The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) recommended Monday limiting access to eight harmful but widely-used industrial substances.

"These substances are in wide dispersive use, which means that not only are they used everywhere, but there is also a risk of exposure to humans and the environment," the head of ECHA's risk management unit Remi Lefevre told AFP.

The agency is calling for the chemicals, which are either cancer-causing or harmful to [reproduction](#), to be used only with express permission from the European Commission.

All but one of the chemicals are used in large volumes in Europe, including chemicals found in various [pigments](#) and plasticisers, and one substance used in explosives.

This is the second time the ECHA has submitted a so-called "authorisation list" to the European Commission.

The first list of permit-only chemicals was submitted in June 2009, and is expected to be formally approved in January.

The ECHA is in the process of listing and categorising every substance used or imported into the [European Union](#) in order to make recommendations for their safe and lawful use.

This process has already prompted many industrial companies to re-evaluate their chemical processes, said Lefevre.

"Simply being on the identified substances list has already changed the image of these substances, forcing companies to consider their use and look at alternatives," he said.

On Monday the agency also announced that it had signed a co-operation agreement with the US [Environmental Protection Agency](#) to boost scientific collaboration and share information.

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