



NEWS



EU: “Forever Chemicals” in a Conflict of Interests

On 14 July 2026, the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) published a comprehensive briefing on PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), also known as ‘forever chemicals’. The document is intended to serve as a technical basis for MEPs in their upcoming political decisions on PFAS regulation and summarises the current state of scientific knowledge, regulation and procedures.

What is the problem?

Due to their favourable physico-chemical properties, PFAS are valuable for countless applications and products – including in the pharmaceutical sector. On the other hand, they pose an enormous challenge to the environment and human health: PFAS are persistent and have been detected worldwide in soil, water, food, wildlife and humans. Given the extent of contamination and the limitations of technically complex and costly remediation, scientists and regulatory authorities regard preventing further environmental pollution – i.e. regulating PFAS at source – as the most sustainable option.

What solutions are being discussed?

Due to the vast number of PFAS, regulating each individual compound is not feasible. The EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability therefore proposes regulating PFAS as a group. The European Chemicals Agency is currently reviewing a draft restriction under the EU Regulation on the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH), which covers around 10,000 compounds.

This would, in principle, prohibit the manufacture, placing on the market and use of PFAS, but provides for transition periods and sector-specific exemptions for applications where no suitable alternatives are currently available.

What happens next?

The European Chemicals Agency is expected to submit its final opinion to the European Commission by the end of 2026. The European Parliament will examine the Commission’s draft restriction. The European Commission will then present a concrete regulatory proposal for further deliberation. The EPRS briefing highlights the key conflict of objectives:

Reducing risks to the environment and health through far-reaching restrictions

Whilst safeguarding critical applications and taking strategic industrial sectors into account

Reference:

<https://www.gmp-publishing.com/blog/eu-forever-chemicals-in-a-conflict-of-interests>