



Turkish Plastics Industry Foundation

Chemicals in Plastics

▪ **Man-made chemistry deserves a better debate**

Man-made chemicals are often perceived as harmful and have become a cause for concerns. Such concerns must by all means be addressed as they touch upon the most precious: our health and our environment. They must also be confronted with reality. The hazardousness of a chemical does not depend on its origin, whether natural or synthetic. Man-made chemicals - including those used to produce plastics - bring numerous benefits to society while being used safely. Food preservation, hygiene, modern health care, etc.; none of it could happen without plastics materials.

▪ **Evidence-based policy brings safety**

Scientific debates are frequent and often rewarding. Controversial debates however, can make good policy decisions difficult. The plastics industry attaches a vital importance to scientific data and their use in policy making. We therefore work together with all stakeholders to use world-wide accepted scientific, transparent and harmonised procedures to distinguish non-conclusive evidence from evidence regulators can use.

▪ **Chemical risk is not to be feared but to be managed**

In the chemical area, a growing 'zero-risk approach' has led to discriminating against chemicals because of their hazardous properties or mere presence - rather than for the risk they actually pose to people or the environment. At first glance, it seems to make sense. Why be exposed to hazard if one can avoid it? In fact though, such an approach ignores that human activity always bears an element of risk and it is this element of risk that ensures our actions are rewarded. Our country must therefore not become a victim of fear-mongering but instead develop and apply the best tools to identify and control risks when necessary.

▪ **Risk management & informed precaution bring chemical safety**

Risk assessments are the best way to know if and how exposure to a chemical and its uses are cause for concern. If it is, one can define and apply appropriate risk management measures. But what to do when we are not sure? The precautionary principle can then apply. However, uncertainty must not be mistaken with the unknown, mere speculation or controversy. Uncertainty means that while evidence is not 100% conclusive, it is solid enough to consider regulatory action. Such action which varies from one case to another should be the result of a balanced analysis of available evidence and the cost of regulation for society. It also should be open for review when new robust data contribute to reduce uncertainties.

Key recommendations:

1. Bring safety and innovation back together

Despite appearances, it is possible to ensure safety and create conditions for innovation in our country. It requires making the best combined use of conclusive science and risk management.

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Plast Eurasia
Istanbul 2015

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2. Seek for conclusive scientific results

Science is by definition progressive and can be controversial. Nothing is ever for sure. However, in science like in any other discipline, results can be more or less conclusive. When regulation is at stake, one should rely on most conclusive science.

3. Apply risk management and informed precaution

Addressing risk as opposed to a mere hazard approach leads to superior chemicals regulation because it does not only ensures safety but avoids compromising progress thanks to an informed management of uncertainty.



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