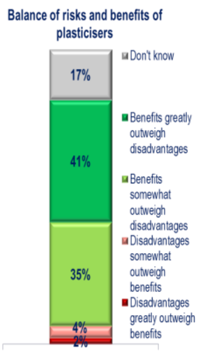
The state of European debate around plasticisers and phthalates

The results of research conducted by international research consultancy ComRes on behalf of CEFIC ECPI.

Views of plasticisers

Many stakeholders tend to be **familiar with plasticisers**, which are widely seen as useful and important.

Although a high proportion of stakeholders say that, on the whole, the benefits of plasticisers outweigh the disadvantages, stakeholders tend to be quick to **differentiate** – saying that the balance depends on the specific plasticiser in question. **Phthalates** are **front-of-mind** when stakeholders talk about plasticisers and considered a key challenge currently facing the industry.



Overall, would you say that the benefits of plasticisers outweigh the disadvantages, or that the disadvantages outweigh the benefits? Base: all stakeholders (n=46)

Familiarity with phthalates

Although many stakeholders say that they are **familiar with phthalates** due to recent high-profile debate around these chemicals, detailed understanding of their benefits, safety and regulatory status varies between audiences.

Among stakeholders with a detailed knowledge of phthalates, there tends to be a good understanding of the differences between classified and non-classified phthalates. Among stakeholders with a less detailed knowledge, there is often a low understanding.

Views of phthalates

Despite recent announcements by ECHA on the safety of high phthalates and the authorisation of low phthalates, the **perceived health risks** associated with some phthalates are an area of concern for numerous stakeholders.

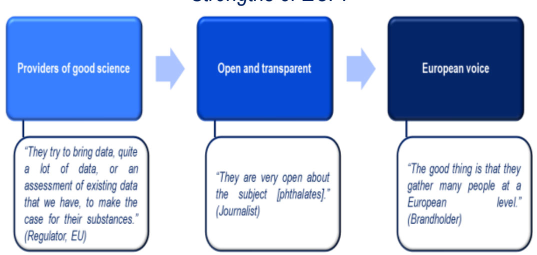
There is generally only a **vague understanding** of the **low availability of viable alternatives** to phthalates.

The plasticisers industry

Stakeholders tend to be relatively **familiar with the plasticisers industry** in Europe, and have broadly favourable impressions of it, often because of a perception that it is **important and collaborates well**.

ECPI's scientific information and input are often seen as a strength. While many stakeholders believe that ECPI's communications are **effective**, some express concerns that they can be repetitive.

Strengths of ECPI



EU and national regulation

EU-level regulation and classification around phthalates is **well-known** among stakeholders – although it is widely seen to function well, many stakeholders highlight a **loophole relating to importing finished articles into the EU**.

Although some stakeholders are **aware of ECHA's verdict that no further risk management measures** are needed to reduce the exposure of children to certain high phthalates and see this announcement as **important**, it is not seen to have ended the debate around phthalates.

Knowledge of national-level regulation is lower, although many stakeholders are **aware of the current situation in Denmark**.

Methodology and next steps

ComRes conducted **46 depth interviews** with the ECPI's stakeholders between 18th November 2013 and 10th February 2014. ComRes interviewed 4 PVC producers, 5 article producers, 6 brandholders, 11 EU and national trade associations, 7 EU regulators, 7 national regulators, 5 journalists and 1 NGO.

Based on this input, ECPI is updating its strategy and will continue to focus on providing solid scientific evidence relating to plasticisers in an open, transparent manner. Greater emphasis will be placed on providing information on all relevant plasticisers through face-to-face meetings.

For further information about the research, please contact Tom Clarkson, Senior Research Analyst at ComRes, via tom.clarkson@comres.co.uk. ECPI Manager Stéphane Content (sco@cefic.be) is also happy to answer any questions.

European Council for Plasticisers and Intermediates

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