

EU tightens rules for chemical industry

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The European Union plans to tighten environmental regulations for the bloc's \$680 billion chemical industry, setting the stage for a bitter fight.

The new regulations were approved Tuesday by the European Parliament's powerful environmental committee. The industry asserts the new rules would hurt its business as well as global trade, reports the International Herald Tribune.

The new legislation called Reach would affect up to 30,000 commonly used chemicals. It would put the onus on the industry to prove these chemicals are safe instead of making regulators to show cause for their ban.

The U.S. chemical industry estimates the new rule could cost its companies \$8 billion during the next decade and affect exports.

EU lawmakers say the new rule will affect all chemical companies and failure to comply would remove them from a market of 470 million consumers. They say the rules will prevent as many as 4,500 deaths a year.

Major EU members, including Germany, Britain and France, also have expressed concerns that Reach could adversely impact the bloc's competitiveness.

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