

## Regulating chemicals and polymers of concern in plastics - perspectives of the Czech Republic

Head of the National Centre for Toxic Compounds and of the Stockholm Convention Regional Centre in the Czech Republic (SCRC) RECETOX, Faculty of Science, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

Kateřina Šebková, Ph.D

[katerina.sebkova@recetox.muni.cz](mailto:katerina.sebkova@recetox.muni.cz)



# Available information - strategies and frameworks

need to pay attention to all three levels - global/international, EU internal and national

## Global/international

**MEAs - limited in scope, but rich in expertise and available materials**

Stockholm Convention on POPs and work of **POP RC** (as mentioned already by BRS secretariat presentation)

Rotterdam Convention network of national authorities and sharing decisions/final regulatory actions

Basel Convention - technical documents with solutions/harmonized approaches: i.e. Technical guidelines on **environmentally sound management (ESM) of plastic wastes** (updated and adopted COP16 May 2023), **and Partnership on Plastic Waste as well as Partnership for Action on Challenges relating to E-waste**

and also

**SAICM** (emerging issues) and beyond 2020 framework and upcoming ICCM5 - looking for sustainable solutions for sound chemicals management

Further - need to look beyond global level to the regional agreements such as:

The North-East Atlantic ([OSPAR](#)) and Baltic ([HELCOM](#)) regional action plans to reduce marine litter

# Available information - strategies, frameworks, measures

## European level

advanced - overall strategies and legislation are available for selected issues in relation to plastics, but update of the legal framework and research is ongoing now as part of priority strategies:

since 2018 - [Strategy for plastics in a Circular Economy](#)

in December 2019 - [EU Green Deal](#) - tackling triple planetary crisis, including pollution, chemicals and plastics

in October 2020 - [EU strategy for sustainability of chemicals](#)

in the meantime existing measures in legislation were put in place since 2015 (continuously)

[Directive amendment regarding lightweight plastics carrier bags](#)

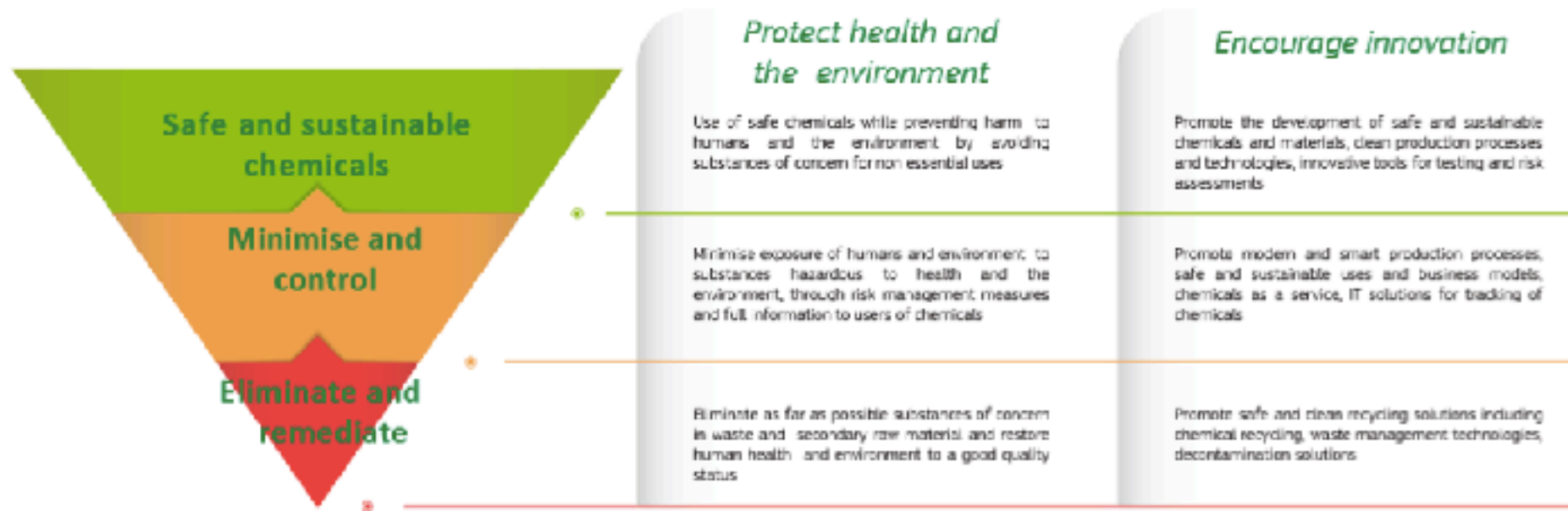
[Single Use Plastics Directive](#)

[EU Waste Shipment Regulation through Delegated Regulation \(EU\) 2020/2174.](#)

And, recently (in 2022) European Chemical Agency's (ECHA) [proposal on the restriction of intentionally added microplastics](#) - this proposal was voted positively in April 2023 by EU member states and related legal text will be published soon.



# Towards Toxic free environment - vision for EU for Chemical strategy



*Figure: The toxic-free hierarchy – a new hierarchy in chemicals management*

EU Chemical Strategy calls also for **intensified research and stakeholder collaboration**. The current EU research and development framework, Horizon Europe, focuses on enhanced collaboration between science and policy makers, support co-creation and aim at accelerated transfer of information from science to policy and vice versa including response to regulatory needs and priorities. Collaboration is to be strengthened via [Partnerships in a number of fields](#).

The one looking at chemicals is the first of those considered.

# Science to policy partnership - chemical risk assessment - plastics/microplastics is one of the priority topics

Horizon Europe research project coordinated by ANSES, France  
7 years (2022-2028)  
400 mil EUR (national co-funding: 55%)

2 years of preparation (09/2019-09/2021)

RECETOX coordinates CZ involvement and is also WP9 co-leader and WP5 and WP7 task leader



## WHAT WE DO



[Partnership for the Assessment of Risks from Chemicals, PARC](https://www.eu-parc.eu/) is a co-funded Horizon Europe partnership with a total budget of 400M€ for 7 years starting in May 2022. The aim of the partnership is to establish an EU-wide research and innovation programme supporting the EU and national chemical risk assessment/management authorities and processes with new data, knowledge, methods and skills to address current, emerging and novel chemical safety challenges.

28 countries: 23 EU MS + Iceland, Israel, Norway, UK and Switzerland

200 partners

➤ <https://www.eu-parc.eu/>

# Specific challenges and opportunities managing plastics



## **Opportunity:** Horizon Europe

**A partnership to boost research and innovation in support of chemical risk assessment**

## **Response to policy priorities:**

SDGs, 2019 Council Conclusions, Green Deal, Towards a Sustainable Chemicals Policy Strategy ...

## **Requirement:**

**A joint research and innovation roadmap set by risk assessors & managers in consultation with academia, association, industry and other stakeholders**

**Challenges:** RA agencies and regulatory bodies and associated research community in the EU are confronted with:

- persistent science-regulatory gap
  - gaps in knowledge of and information on hazards,
  - occurrence and exposures to chemicals and mixtures
  - scattered and non-accessible evidence
  - screening, testing and assessment methods to be developed, validated and taken-up
  - duplication of efforts and inefficient use of resources
- **Website:** <https://www.eu-parc.eu/>

# Available information - strategies and frameworks

## National level

legal framework for chemicals (including plastics) is in place - national and EU legislation, but what is also crucial is **national coordination of implementation**

- in CZ done via a PERMANENT INTERMINISTERIAL BODY
- includes National Focal Point for the Stockholm Convention and other MEAs for chemicals
- sufficiently “high-policy-level” : decision making body
- **all stakeholders:** ministries, national authorities including enforcement authorities (inspectors, customs), industry, civil society and academia
- complements overall chemicals management and legal framework at global and EU level
- supports to implementation chemicals-waste MEAs - Stockholm Convention (+ *other chemicals-waste Conventions*) and SAICM nationally
- international cooperation including development assistance, technical assistance and investments.



## Scientific support to national chemicals management

- **National Centre for Toxic Compounds in the Environment at RECETOX** – in place for almost 20 years: main role – transfer of science into policy and to stakeholders
- **its role - also acts as “Czech Chemical Agency”** and risk assessment body
- **Main focus:** international chemical agreements on chemical exposures + environment and health protection - horizontal, overarching coordination
- **NC:** governed by inter-ministerial Council : communicating to and from sectoral ministries
- **wider scope of work: SCRC** – MONET networks and information systems: GENASIS and Global Monitoring Plan Data Repository (GMP DWH), research infrastructures, networks, cohort studies
- **Specific outcomes:** contributions to EU Partnerships, EIRENE, Roundtable on CSS, Zero pollution action plan etc.



# Sharing our experience in the EU: science-to-policy

## High-level Round Table (HLRT) on EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability and Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform

- High-level and stakeholder engagement of RECETOX in EU policies and strategies - since May 2021, 2x year/ meeting
- Members: industry, academia, civil society
- Role: ambassadors for CSS, provide recommendations to Commission and EU agencies on policies and strategies

### Shaping discussion on relevant topics:

- Compliance and enforcement
- Research infrastructures and innovation and Safe and Sustainable by Design (SSbD)
- Transition pathways and how do they provide support in implementing the CSS



**Kateřina  
Šebková**



**Lukáš  
Pokorný**

# Thank you for your kind attention!

FYI:

The RECETOX is a leading Czech research institute covering a broad range of basic and applied research on toxic compounds in the environment and their effect on human health.

**RECETOX**  
**Faculty of Science**  
**Masaryk University**  
**Brno, Czech Republic**



Functions of the RECETOX:

- **RESEARCH** activities
- **EDUCATION** programmes
- Open-Access Research Infrastructure
- **Science to Policy and Society** platforms (National Centre for Toxic Compounds, Stockholm Convention Regional Centre for Capacity Building and the Transfer of Technology)
- Application of research results

[www.recetox.muni.cz](http://www.recetox.muni.cz)

**MUNI | RECETOX**