



Brussels, 12 March 2009

**Meglana Kuneva**  
EU Consumer Commissioner  
Rue de la Loi 200  
BERL 8/218  
Brussels 1049

Open Letter

Dear **Commissioner Kuneva**,

On this Friday 13 March 2009 policy makers, stakeholders, companies and, most importantly, citizens of the European Union are going to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Consumers Day. We, the representatives of environmental, health, women and consumers groups would like to seize this opportunity to inform you about our joint activities with respect to consumer information on harmful chemicals.

As you know, the REACH regulation has given Europeans the **“right to know” about the most harmful chemicals in consumer products** by obliging companies to give information at no charge when asked. This can help consumers make better informed choices about their purchases and their safe use.

Under the coordination of the **Health and Environment Alliance** we have jointly developed a leaflet entitled **“Dangerous chemicals in products you buy? Your right to know.”** This leaflet, which will eventually be available in more than 10 languages, briefly describes some harmful chemicals used to make a wide range of consumer products and how these contaminate our daily indoor and outdoor environment. It explains the new “right to know”: how consumers can use it to make better choices, to influence companies to make safer products, and to encourage regulators to improve REACH. The leaflet gives a model letter that can be used, and offers resources for further reading and for taking action. This

leaflet, model letter as well as information about our organisations can be found at: <http://chemicalshealthmonitor.org/>.

European environmental, women's, health and consumer groups therefore hope that you, as the Commissioner for Consumers Affairs, will support:

- Adding more harmful chemicals to the REACH list of 'substances of very high concern'.
- Informing European consumers in their native language about their "right to know" via a European campaign or another EU-wide activity e.g. website, printed materials etc.
- Encouraging national governments' representatives for consumer affairs to provide the necessary tools and information to citizens on their rights with respect to harmful chemicals in consumer products.

We will continue our work with European consumers at national level to ensure that they can use their REACH-related "right to know". We hope that the Commission will take the lead in educating the public about its right to demand safer consumer products, so as to stop unnecessary contamination of wildlife, our homes and our bodies by harmful chemicals.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts on this important topic.

On behalf of the above organisations,  
With kind regards,



**Genon K. Jensen**  
HEAL Executive Director  
Belgium

Enclosure:

1. Chemicals Health Monitor bookmark
2. Leaflet: *Dangerous chemicals in products you buy? Your right to know.*