

Understanding PIC

The Prior Informed Consent Regulation (PIC, Regulation (EU) 649/2012) administers the import and export of certain hazardous chemicals and places obligations on companies who wish to export these chemicals to non-EU countries. It aims to promote shared responsibility and cooperation in the international trade of hazardous chemicals, and to protect human health and the environment by providing developing countries with information on how to store, transport, use and dispose of hazardous chemicals safely.

This Regulation implements, within the European Union, the Rotterdam Convention on the prior informed consent procedure for certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides in international trade.

The PIC Regulation applies to banned or severely restricted chemicals listed in Annex I, containing industrial chemicals, pesticides and biocides, for example, benzene, chloroform, atrazine and permethrin. The export of these chemicals is subject to two types of requirement: export notification and explicit consent.

The PIC Regulation also applies to chemicals that are banned for export as listed in Annex V and to all chemicals when exported regarding their packaging and labelling, which must comply with relevant EU legislation.

Chemicals found in drugs, radioactive materials, wastes, chemical weapons, food and food additives, feeding stuffs, genetically modified organisms, and pharmaceuticals (except disinfectants, insecticides and parasiticides) are regulated by other EU legislation and therefore do not fall under the remit of the PIC Regulation.

Furthermore, the Regulation does not apply to chemicals exported or imported for research or analysis provided that the quantities are unlikely to affect human health or the environment and do not exceed ten kilograms from each exporter to each importing country per calendar year.

The PIC Regulation entered into operation on 1 March 2014. From this date, ECHA is responsible for the administrative and technical tasks related to the new Regulation. The Agency's main task is to process and send export notifications to the importing countries outside the EU, and keep a database of the notifications and the explicit consents given by the importing countries.

ECHA also provides assistance as well as technical and scientific guidance to industry, the designated national authorities both from the EU and from third countries and the European Commission.