

CE-marked fertilising products

In March 2016, the European Commission put forward a proposal on fertilising products, which would extend the scope of existing legislation and set limits on contaminants in fertilising products. The European Parliament is expected to adopt its position on the proposal at its October II part-session.

Background

Fertilising products are used to improve plant growth, mainly in agriculture. European Commission [estimates](#) indicate that, among fertilising products, inorganic fertilisers (synthetic chemicals and/or minerals) account for 80 % of market value, and that the fertilising products sector has an annual turnover ranging from €20 to €25 billion and accounts for about 100 000 jobs. As world population continues to increase, fertilisers deliver key benefits thanks, in particular, to increased crop yields. However, challenges are associated with fertiliser use, for instance nutrient loss (with adverse impacts on the climate, human health and biodiversity as well as air, water and soil quality), security of supply (over 90 % of phosphate fertilisers used in the EU are imported), and in some cases, the presence of harmful chemicals, such as cadmium in phosphate fertilisers.

European Commission proposal

In March 2016, the Commission put forward, as announced in its 2015 [circular economy action plan](#), a [proposal](#) aimed at incentivising large-scale fertiliser production from domestic sources (thereby transforming waste into nutrients for crops) and introducing harmonised cadmium limits for phosphate fertilisers. The proposal would apply to a wide range of fertilising products. It introduces the use of CE marking for fertilising products, along the lines of the 'new legislative framework' for products on the internal market. It also introduces specific requirements regarding quality (for instance on minimum nutrient content or organic matter content), safety (for instance maximum limits for heavy metals, contaminants and impurities) and labelling. According to the Commission, the proposal would deliver a range of benefits, including: creation of about 120 000 jobs; reduced dependency on non-domestic raw materials; reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and pollution; and an overall reduction in compliance costs for economic operators. The Commission indicates that costs are 'proportionate to the expected benefits for businesses and the society', although SME competitiveness may be particularly affected.

European Parliament position

In its [report](#) of 13 July 2017, the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) proposed a number of changes to the Commission proposal, including: reducing the administrative burden and liability for economic operators; raising requirements related to nutrient content in fertilising products, with a view to ensuring quality; and modifying contaminant limits for fertilisers, in particular bringing forward the implementation of the 20 mg/kg cadmium limit in phosphate fertilisers (from 12 to 9 years after the date of application). It would also require the Commission to report, three and a half years after the regulation's date of application, on the functioning of the internal market for fertilising products, on the implications of limits for contaminants, on the state of decadmiation technologies and on the impacts on trade; and to consider, one year after entry into force, criteria related to the use of processed livestock manure in fertilising products. The report is scheduled to be the subject of a plenary vote in October 2017.

First reading: [2016/0084\(COD\)](#); Committee responsible: IMCO; Rapporteur: Mihai Țurcanu (EPP, Romania) (formerly Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz, EPP, Hungary). For further information, see our '[EU Legislation in progress briefing](#)'.

