

**Press Contacts:
Anthony Gooch
(202) 862-9523
Maeve O'Beirne
(202) 862-9549**

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EU SPOKESMAN ANTHONY GOOCH'S ON THE WAXMAN REPORT: 'A SPECIAL INTEREST CASE STUDY --THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY, THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION, AND EUROPEAN EFFORTS TO REGULATE CHEMICALS'

EU Commission Delegation Spokesman Anthony Gooch made the following statement concerning a US House of Representatives report about US chemical industry and Bush Administration's lobbying tactics against the EU Commission's proposals for a regulatory framework on Chemicals (REACH).

"This report has the ingredients of a film script 'a la Erin Brockovich'. Clearly we'll have to look into it and its ramifications in great detail because it raises very serious issues about the degree of balance on the part of the United States in putting together its policy stances on EU legislation. Whilst it's the prerogative of any third country to make its concerns known to the European Union and to press its case, and such input is important for our decision making process, this report reveals inordinate weight has been given to only side of a highly complex argument on the US side.

Important and legitimate public interest concerns about the impact of chemicals on the environment, public health, and whether the industry conforms to acceptable levels of sustainable development, are key elements in bringing forward our proposals. But they just don't seem to have been part of the US policy formulation mix on this one.

The Commission conducted an unprecedented broad and detailed consultation exercise over a four-year period before issuing its proposals on such a complex issue, last October. We sought and took account of the views of all interested parties and stakeholders, including legitimate industry concerns; to ensure what we finally put forward struck the right balance.

Whilst we are committed to continuing this dialogue with our partners in governments, industry and NGOs, on the potential impact of the draft legislation on industry, on the European side we certainly not prepared to give special attention to the demands of the US chemical industry at the expense of sustainable development, the quality of the environment, our duty to protect public health or indeed other industry sectors such as downstream chemicals users whose concerns are sometimes very different."

Full details on the European Commission's proposal on Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals can be found on our website at:

<http://www.eurunion.org/news/press/2003/2003067A.htm>

EU Environment Commissioner Margot Wallstrom has a long-standing engagement to visit the US from 26-28 April to address the issues raised by REACH among other matters. More details on the visit will follow.

The House of Representatives Report is available at:

http://www.house.gov/reform/min/inves_admin/admin_reach.htm