



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Ursula von der Leyen
The President

Brussels, 04. 01. 2024
Ares (2023) 8792089 - Ares (2024) 51592

Dear Honourable Member,

Thank you for your query regarding the status of the file regarding lead ammunition in sports shooting.

On 27 February 2023, the Commission received the proposal from the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) as well as the related opinions of the Agency's Scientific Committees. The Agency prepares its recommendations independently.

The proposal of the Chemicals Agency is still being examined and evaluated extensively. But I can already reassure you that the Commission is aware of the importance of cultural heritage and that it is committed to promoting and protecting it across Europe. My Cabinet, the Cabinet of Commissioner Breton and the relevant services have had a highly informative exchange with associations representing the various sports stakeholders. They discussed the practical conditions under which these cultural sporting events such as 'koningvogelschieten' take place. Everything suggests that the risk of significant amounts of lead being dispersed in the environment is extremely low. Of course, the question of the cost of the possible changes was also examined.

Although the Commission has not yet taken a final position on the restriction proposed by ECHA – in terms of its overall proportionality, scope, conditions and timing – we are convinced that it would be disproportionate to apply future restrictions to traditional shooting events in controlled environments or shooting with historical weapons. The impact of this exemption on the benefits of a possible restriction (reduction of lead emissions) is expected to be negligible. My services will continue to work with stakeholders to clearly define such traditional shooting practices in law in order to ensure clarity and predictability and avoid any abuse.

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Any proposal by the Commission to restrict lead ammunition would still have to be supported by the Member States in the REACH Committee and be subject to a three-month scrutiny by the European Parliament and the Council before the Commission can adopt it. Nevertheless, I am confident that the arguments of proportionality of costs and benefits and the persistence of culturally important sports practices with limited environmental impact will also be duly taken into account by the other institutional actors.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ursula von der Leyen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ursula von der Leyen