

Helpdesk report 2017 (art. 24 REACH)



Activities 2015, 2016 & 2017

FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy

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In Belgium, the national helpdesk REACH, as foreseen in article 124 of Regulation 1907/2006, has been located at the Federal Public Service Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy (« *FPS Economy* »). Its role as 'national helpdesk' was confirmed by the Prime Minister in November 2006, however this helpdesk was already set up in March 2005.

Herewith you will find a rapport describing the activities of our REACH helpdesk.

1. *Pro-active activities*

➤ Website

Since long, there is a special section on REACH on the website of the FPS Economy :

<https://economie.fgov.be/fr/themes/entreprises/secteurs-specifiques/industries-chimiques-et>

In this section, one can find information on REACH, documents, an inventory tool, links and the contact details of our helpdesk. The entire website was rewritten and the publication of the new version is planned for 2018.

➤ Regular meetings with industry representatives

We have long had a very good cooperation with Essenscia and other sectoral federations such as the VBO-FEB and Agoria. This cooperation has resulted for instance in an inventory tool to assess the impact of REACH in a company and to point out critical substances. This tool is freely available on our website in Dutch and French and on request also in English.

Over the years, we have had regular meetings with the federations, we communicated our plans and asked for feedback and ideas. During these meetings, they also informed us about their activities, problems with implementation, etc.

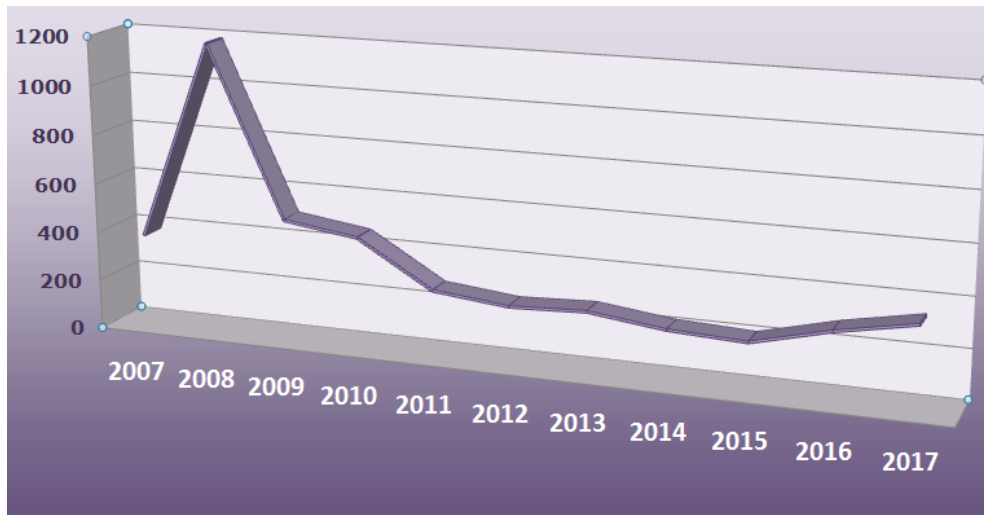
As they are the representatives of our target audience, their feedback is highly appreciated. Therefore, this exchange of information and ideas has received a formal, permanent character in the form of a mixed committee FPS Economy – industry

The FPS Economy was in the organising committee of the "NeRSAP" : Network of REACH SEA and Analysis of Alternatives practitioners. The NeRSAP meeting objective is to exchange on advances and review of concepts, methods and experiences focused on (real) SEA and AofA concepts and practical case for EU or national chemicals management implementation. It participated also in private initiatives to raise awareness on authorisations. Due to lack of resources we only follow this network passively since 2016.

2. Reactive activities

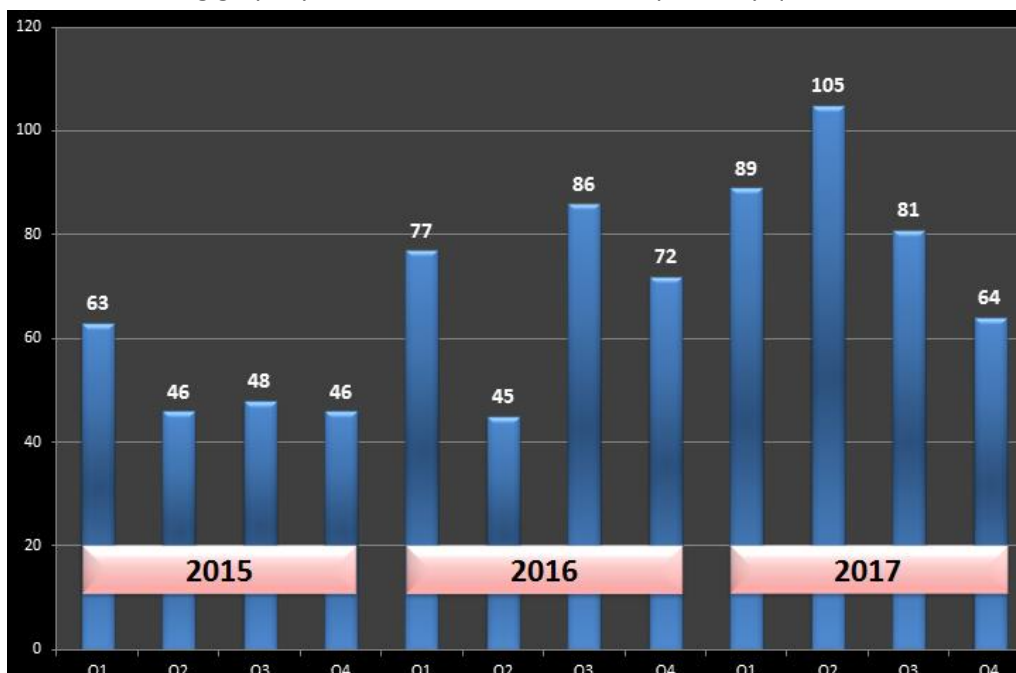
➤ Answering questions¹

Since the adoption of REACH (1st June 2007), the number of questions has been rising every month and the maximum was reached in 2008 (pre-registration period). After this date, the number of messages decreased rapidly (2008 to 2009) and since the number of inquiries remains relatively constant as described by the graph below :



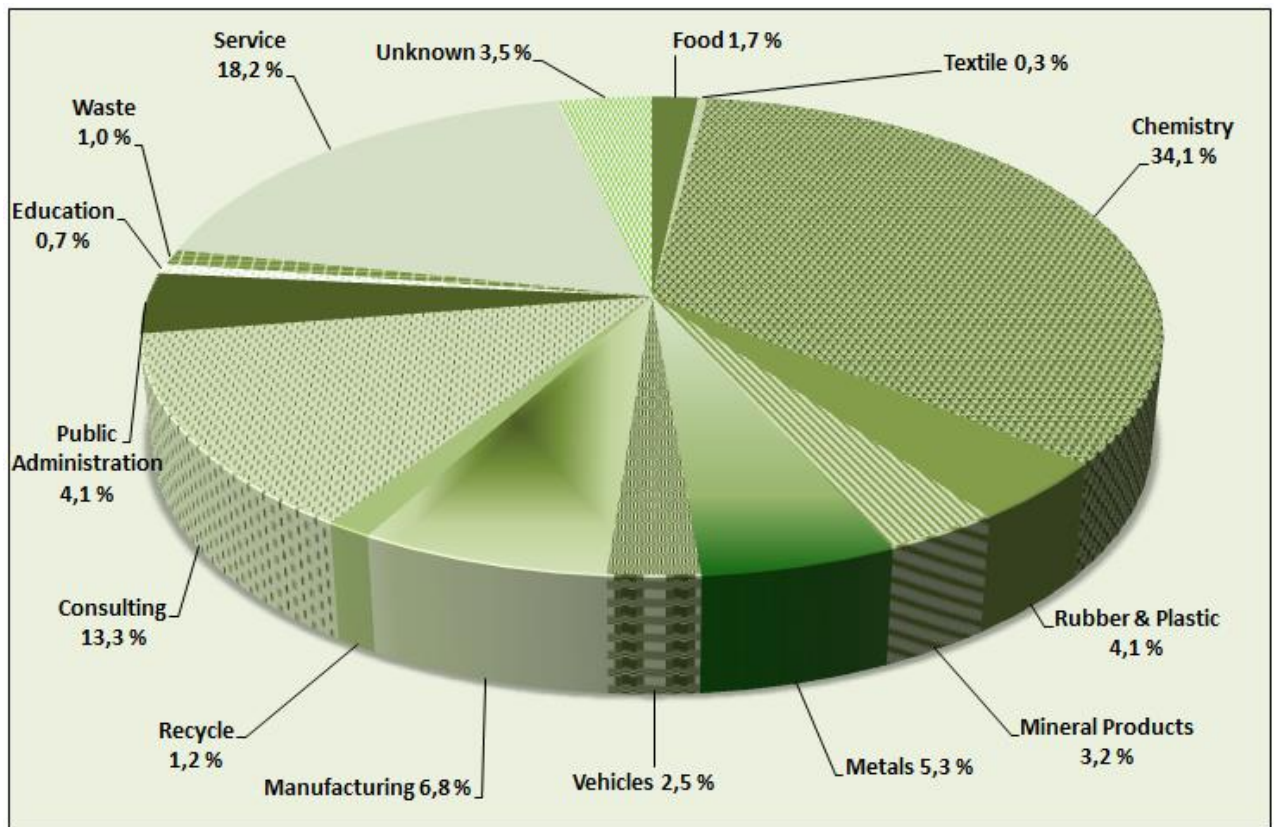
In 2015, we received 203 messages, in 2016, 280 messages and in 2017, 339 messages. One message usually contains several questions. Since the beginning of this year, the number of messages per month has become constant.

On the following graph, you can see the number of inquiries by quarter :

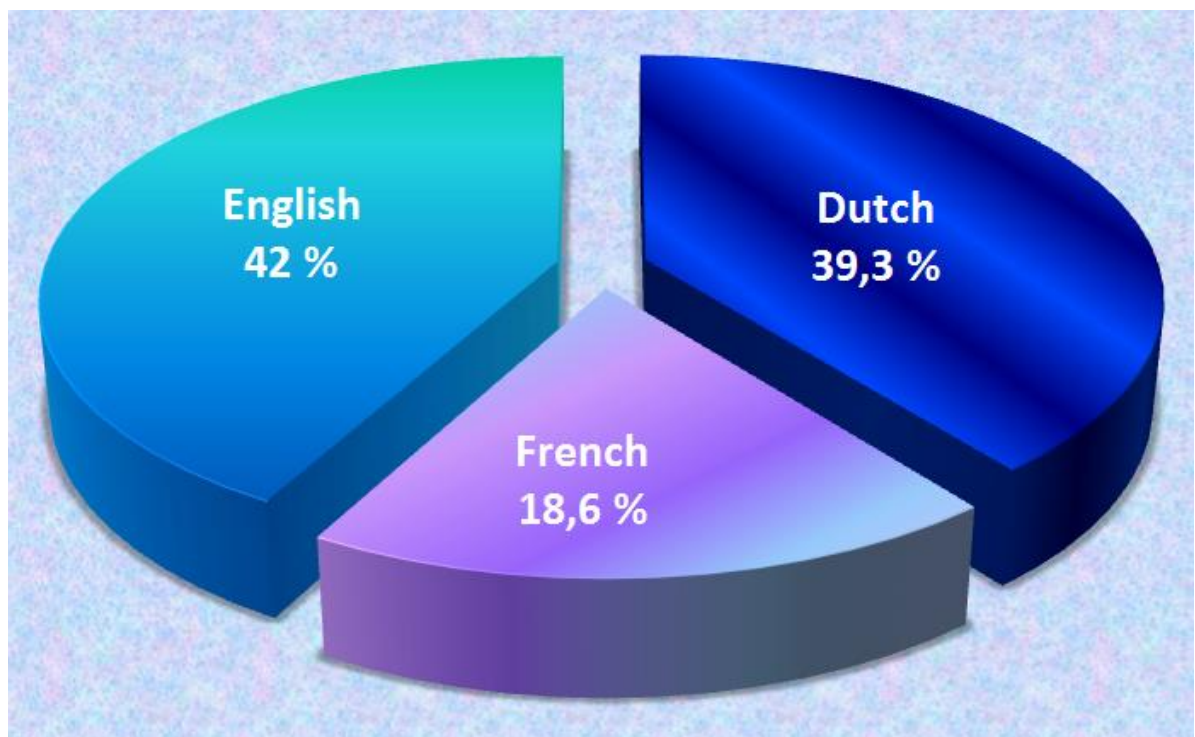


¹ When answering our questions we mostly work on our own. If a question becomes more difficult/ ambiguous it is escalated to the European level (Helpnet) where discussion takes place between member states to arrive at a common answer. The other national or regional authorities are asked for advice when a question is of a more political nature.

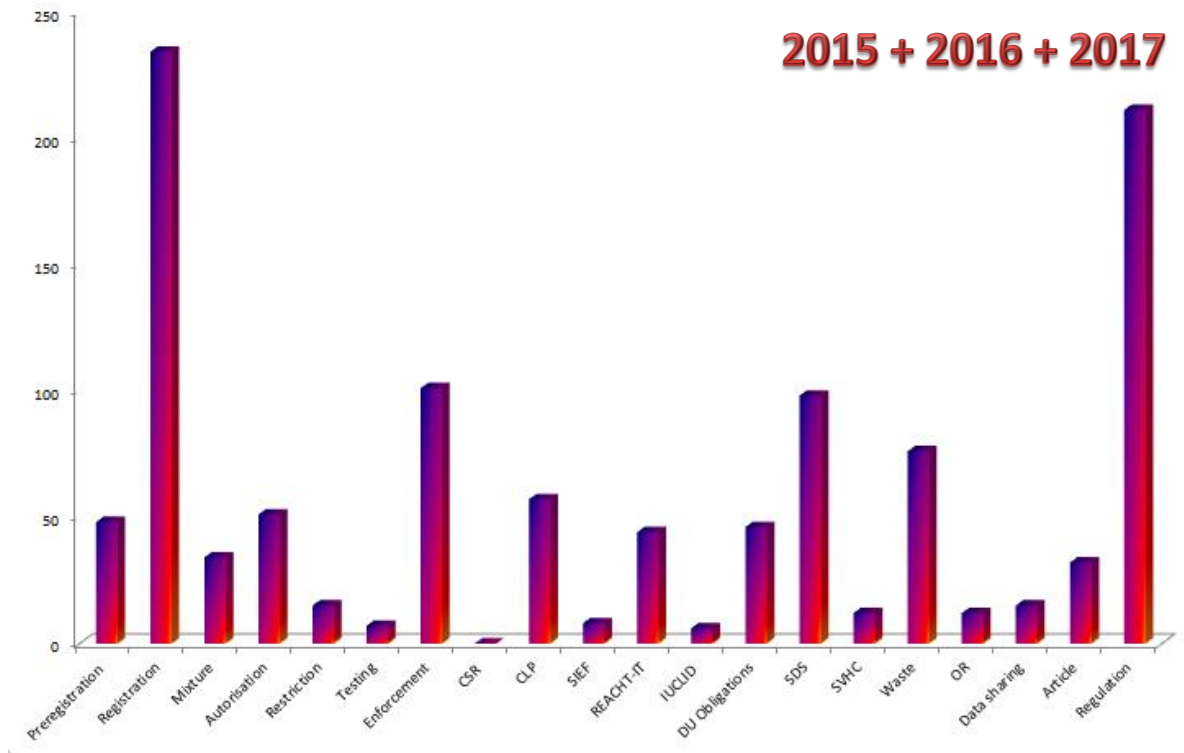
The distribution of messages by sector for 2015, 2016 & 2017 is represented by the graph below :



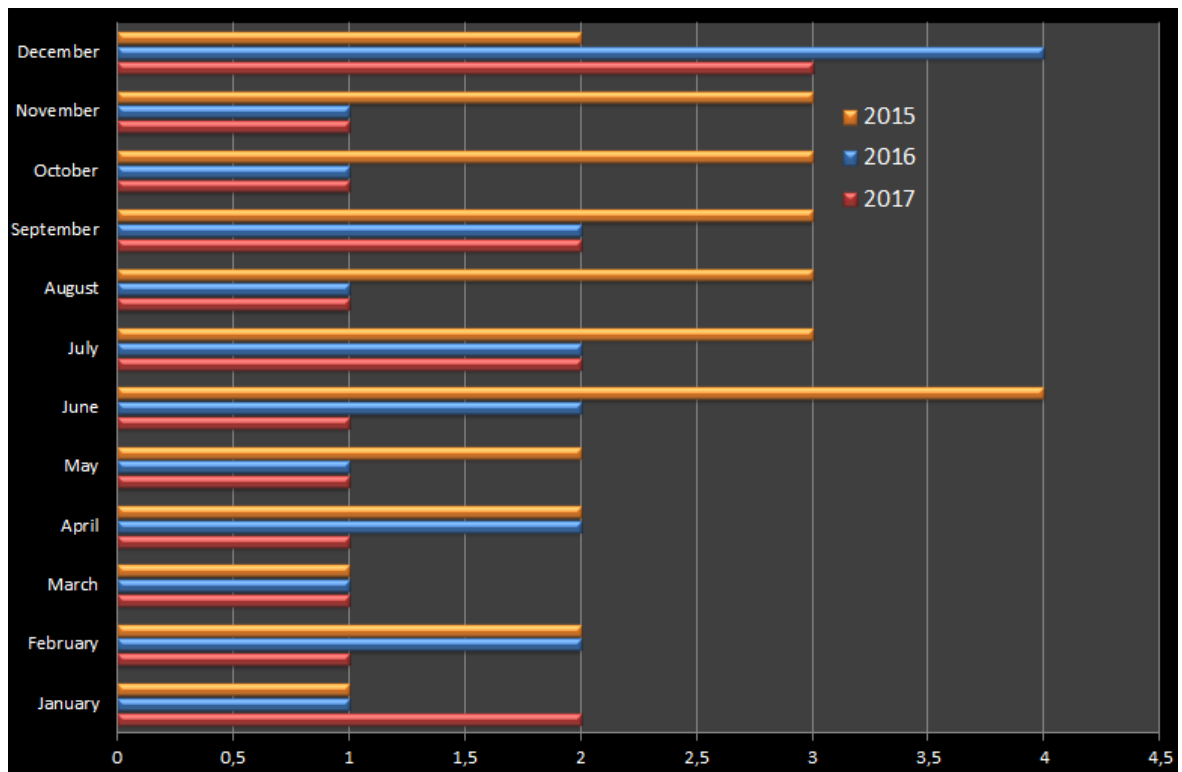
The following graph takes again the distribution of the messages received according to the language in which they are sent during the 2015, 2016 & 2017 year :



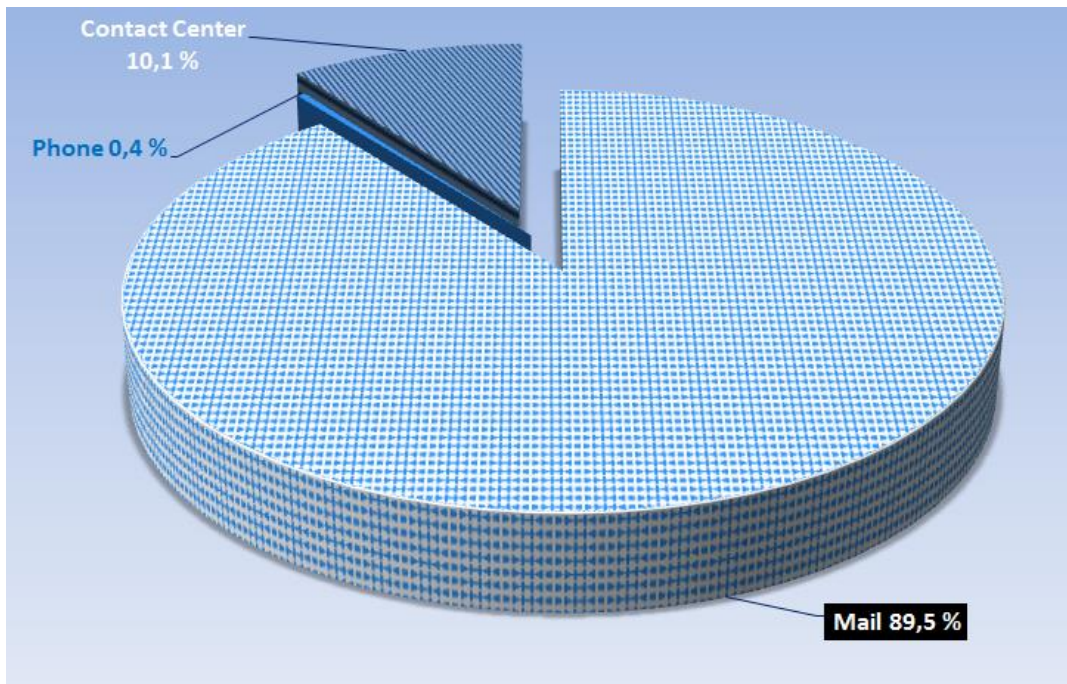
The following graph shows the distribution of requests according to the main keywords :



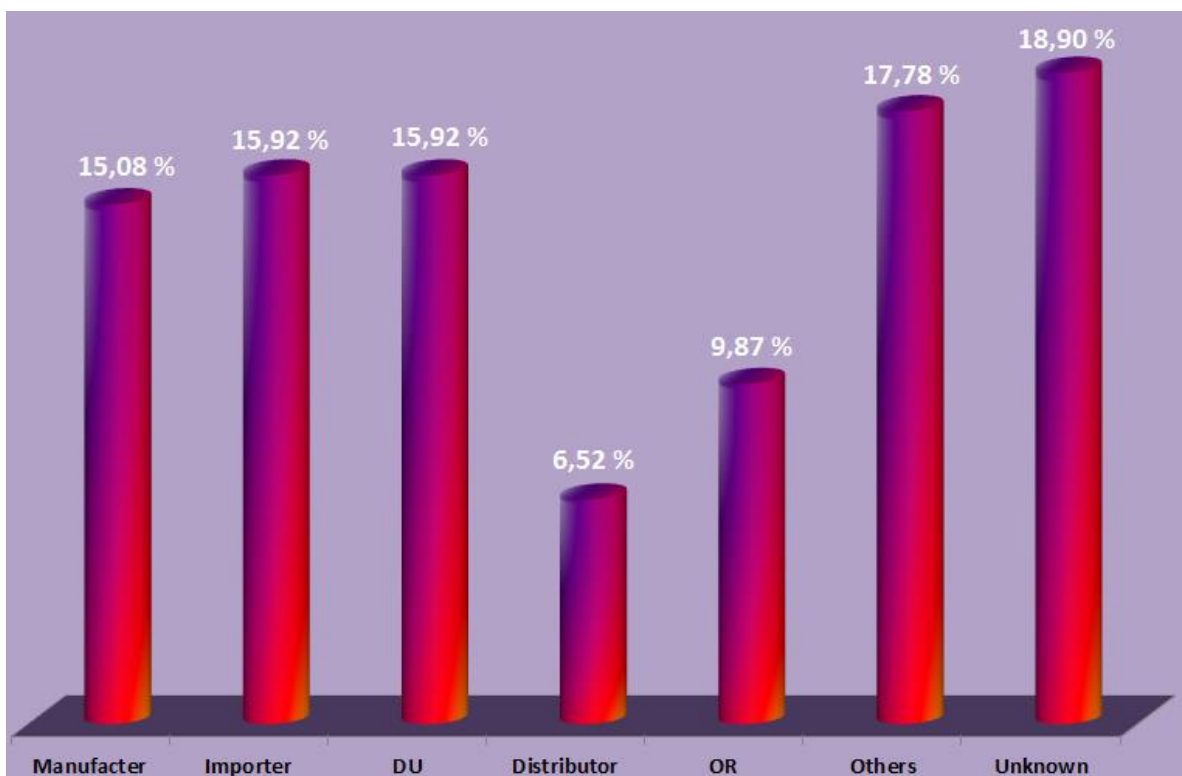
Regarding the number of working days (WD), the chart below shows the number of days allocated per inquiry. At the beginning of the helpdesk, the number of WD was very high. But with time and experience, it has been reduced and now we are 1.4 WD per request in 2017.



As recommended by Sherper, it is being stimulated to use written communication. In the graph below, you see that the inquiries arrive by mail essentially in 2015, 2016 & 2017.



To finish, the last graph is the distribution of message by role defined under REACH for 2015, 2016 & 2017. It is not always possible to determine the role with the content of message and one company can have many roles. The category "others" includes questions from universities, lawyers, school offices, institutions that help companies, pharmacies ...



➤ **HelpNet Meeting**

Two times per year, there are a meeting for the all delegates of REACH, CLP and Biocide Helpdesk (called HelpNet meeting). HelpNet is a network made up of ECHA and the national BPR, CLP and REACH helpdesks. The network was created to improve cooperation on issues of common interest. The benefits of this cooperation are the achievement of a common understanding on the legal requirements under the BPR, CLP and REACH regulations and the provision of consistent and harmonised advice to stakeholders.

➤ **Individual consultations**

If companies or organizations request an individual meeting and if we judge that it is justified, we will meet them, but this is not encouraged. Therefore, these kind of meetings have been very limited until now.

➤ **Events**

In 2017 we organized the following event together with the FPS Public Health: *“Sustainable substitution of SVHCs: How to move forward?”*².

² <https://economie.fgov.be/nl/evenementen/sustainable-substitution-svhcs>