

Persistent organic pollutants (POP)

Persistent organic pollutants (POP) are substances that possess toxic properties, resist degradation, bioaccumulate, and are transported through air, water and migratory species across international boundaries and deposited far from their place of release, where they accumulate in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Due to these health and environmental concerns, the United Nations enacted the Stockholm Convention on persistent organic pollutants on 22 May 2001. On 20 June 2019 the European Union transposed the Convention together with the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution on Persistent Organic Pollutants into Regulation (EU) No 2019/1021. The current Regulation repealed the former Regulation (EC) No 850/2004 on POP.

The main provisions of the Regulation are:

- Prohibition and/ or elimination of the production and use of intentionally produced POPs that are listed in Annex I to IV.
- Reduce releases from unintentionally produced POPs.
- Ensure that stockpiles and waste of restricted POPs are managed safely and in an environmentally conscious manner.

The relevant substances are listed in the following Annexes of the POP Regulation:

- Annex I: Prohibitions with exemptions on manufacturing, placing on the market and use;
- Annex II: Restrictions on manufacturing, placing on the market and use;
- Annex III: Release reductions provisions; and
- Annex IV: Waste management provisions.

Substances regulated under POP:

- Industrial chemicals
e.g. Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA);
- Unintentional by-products formed
e.g. Dioxins, Furans; and
- Pesticides
e.g. DDT