

PRESS RELEASE

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Informal EU summit

The single market is not negotiable

- The UK should move towards Europe
- Keep the UK involved in ECHA for the chemicals legislation
- Survey shows much concern about Brexit in the chemical industry

In the run-up to the Brexit talks at the informal EU summit in Salzburg, Utz Tillmann (director-general of the German chemical industry association VCI) emphasises the urgency of finding a negotiation solution soon. In particular, he calls for movement by the United Kingdom: “The Chequers white paper is still a long way from the position of the European Union. The British government should show much more willingness to compromise in the further negotiations, while the EU cannot put at risk the single market.”

Tillmann explains why a negotiation result is so important to the chemical sector: “For the chemical-pharmaceutical industry and our customer industries, a UK involvement in the European chemicals agency ECHA is of enormous significance also after Brexit. Already now, relevant rules should be included in the guidelines for the future relationship.”

A no-deal Brexit would have direct and serious consequences for the chemical-pharmaceutical industry. Tillmann gives the example of the EU chemicals regulation REACH: “With a hard Brexit, all chemical substances that are registered in the UK for distribution in the EU could be no longer simply placed on the market in the European Union. That would have major impacts on the supply chains.” In this connection, Tillmann points to a survey that was held at the VCI expert event on “Brexit and REACH”. Almost all company delegates (95 percent of respondents) think that their business activities would be adversely affected in a no-deal scenario.

The VCI represents the politico-economic interests of around 1,700 German chemical companies and German subsidiaries of foreign businesses. For this purpose, the VCI is in contact with politicians, public authorities, other industries, science and media. The VCI stands for more than 90 percent of the chemical industry in Germany. In 2017 the German chemical industry realised sales of over 195 billion euros and employed ca. 453,000 staff.

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