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**73<sup>rd</sup> Management Board meeting, 21 March 2024**

21 March 2024

## Annual report from the Committees 2023

Action requested of the Management Board	
Take note of this cover document:	MB/05/2024
<b>Discuss</b>	Annual report from the Committees 2023

### Issues for consideration

#### **RAC (Committee for Risk Assessment) and SEAC (Committee for Socio-Economic Analysis)**

- RAC and SEAC continued to deliver a high number of opinions in 2023 (RAC adopted 113 opinions and SEAC 64). Furthermore, the total number of meetings and the complexity of the dossiers has increased (e.g. restrictions with broader scope, working groups etc.). This results in an unsustainable workload for the committees and their members.
- RAC and SEAC held four plenary meetings in 2023 (a combination of fully online and in-person). Additionally, 12 RAC working group meetings on AfA, Restrictions, CLH and Drinking Water Directive have been held in 2023.
- The secretariat notes with appreciation the start of the activities of the new standing working group of RAC on the Drinking Water Directive.
- RAC and SEAC are facing a historical low level of membership that risks to jeopardise the good functioning of the Committees. Currently, the number of regular members in RAC is at its lowest level of the last 11 years (43 members versus 52 members in 2018). The situation is similar for SEAC, where currently there are 31 regular members, down from 40 in 2015.
- Member States (MS) with vacant places on the committees are urgently requested to provide further resources to increase the RAC and SEAC membership, by encouraging their MS to nominate members to meet the expected number of members (two per country).
- Management Board members are also invited to raise this issue in their MS and to drive home the importance of having these committees fully resourced by members from each MS. The RAC and SEAC Chairs are at your disposal to facilitate discussion at national level on this matter.
- Ideally RAC and SEAC should have full membership and, as a minimum they should, respectively, have at least 50 and 40 regular members to be able to deliver in a sustainable way the current workload (about 100 RAC and 55 SEAC opinions per year); this includes acquiring new competencies.
- New tasks have been already assigned to the committees (Drinking Water Directive, Batteries Regulation). The RAC and SEAC workload is expected to further grow in the next years. New competences will also need to be established (to cover aspects related to e.g. new hazard classes under CLP, waste, batteries).
- In order to be able to deal with the expanding mandate, the committees will also need to be able to recruit more co-opted members. This needs to be urgently addressed in the ECHA basic regulation to be proposed by the Commission. Such regulation will then also need to provide fair payment for the members acting as rapporteurs preparing committee opinions for all tasks involved.

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**MSC (Member State Committee)**

- MSC efforts to transparently agree on general approaches needs to continue to ensure alignment and for MSC to remain able to take broadly supported effective and efficient decisions.
- For MSC to maintain its cohesion, commitment, and inclusive cooperation, and to be able to effectively resolve difficult dossiers where divergences exists also for future emerging hazards it is vital that its capacity is maintained and further expanded by engaging with emerging risks early in the process and developing agreed approaches early on.
- The efforts made to keep decision making at MSC transparent, including the update of the Manual of Decisions, should be continued to ensure Member State and stakeholder buy in.

**BPC**

- Membership of the BPC and its Working Groups remains at a high level. A concern is the high turnover rate, which may influence the level of involvement in the discussions and retention of knowledge.
- Despite several initiatives to obtain more information on the progress of the evaluations, the predictability of the submissions by MSCAs (Member State Competent Authorities) of evaluations for peer review remains low.
- We see a clear increase in MSCA requests for pre-discussion on specific issues (so-called e-consultations) before submission of their dossiers to ECHA for opinion making. The expectation is that these will reduce the extent of discussions needed at BPC and its working groups, and thus facilitate the opinion making process.

**Note**

A retrospective evaluation of MSC, RAC and SEAC was undertaken in 2023, and more statistics regarding the activities of these three Committees can be found in the [final report](#).

**Attachment**

- Annex 1: Annual report from the Committees 2023

## Annex 1: Annual report from the Committees 2023

### PART I RAC and SEAC

#### Opinions adopted in RAC and SEAC in 2023

In 2023 RAC and SEAC successfully continued to deliver a high number of regulatory opinions. In 2023 RAC issued 113 opinions (well above the average of last 10 years of about 99 opinions per year) and SEAC 64 opinions (including a higher-than-average number of complex restriction opinions).

In SEAC, the total number of opinions is mostly led by the numbers for AfAs, while in RAC, the numbers of CLH opinions also have a significant impact. The number of CLH opinions in 2023 was aligned with the output recorded in the last 10 years (42 opinions); however, some dossiers resulted in a complex and time demanding assessment (e.g. Tea Tree oil).

The high number of AfA opinions adopted reflects the peak in authorisation evaluations (due mostly to the chromates applications). RAC activities on Restrictions and OEL were also well above average. Only one Art. 77(3)c request was processed.

It should be noted that the complexity of the dossiers and the related level of scrutiny has also increased. For instance, the ongoing U-PFAS restriction resulted in the highest ever number of comments in a consultation and related workload to assess them, and the implications of the Judgment in the Court of Justice of the EU in case C144/21 on applications for authorisation leads to an increase in the granularity of information required, and thus to more work assessing it by the Committees.

**Table 1. Opinions adopted in SEAC and RAC during 2008-2023. Including co-opted members from December 2015.**

	SEAC				RAC					
	AfAs	Rest	Art 77(3)c	Total	AfAs	Rest	CLH	OEL	Art 77(3)c	Total
2008	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2009	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
2010	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	1	17
2011	0	4	0	4	0	4	32	0	2	38
2012	0	1	0	1	0	2	31	0	1	34
2013	1	2	0	3	1	2	34	0	3	40
2014	30	4	0	34	30	5	51	0	2	88
2015	25	6	0	31	25	5	38	0	0	68
2016	63	2	0	65	63	2	35	0	1	101
2017	58	2	0	60	58	2	33	0	4	97
2018	26	4	1	31	26	4	61	0	5	96
2019	14	3	0	17	14	3	51	0	1	69
2020	96	7	1	104	96	7	50	2	4	159
2021	47	2	12	61	47	2	54	2	3	108
2022	36	4	0	40	36	4	41	4	2	87
<b>2023</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>515</b>						<b>1 116</b>

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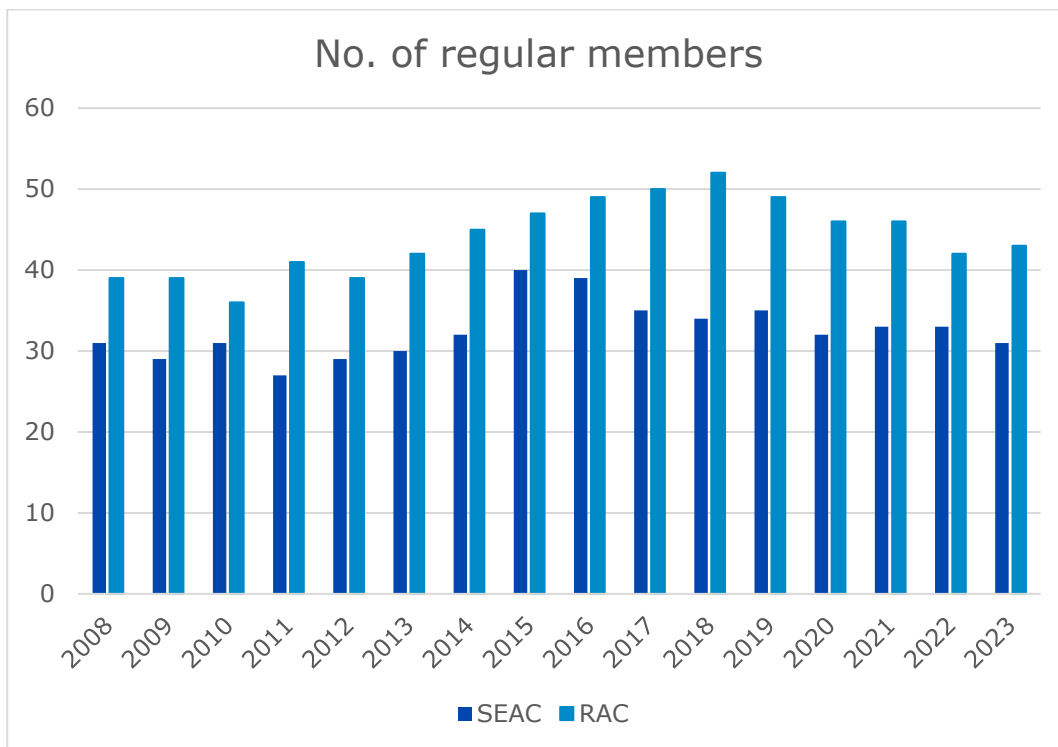
## Numbers, turnover of members, renewals and new nominations

As the graph below shows, membership in RAC is concerningly low: 43 regular members at the time of writing compared to average of 47 regular members recorded in the last 10 years. This is also worrying in term of trend since the current number of regular RAC members went down from 45 in 2021 and from 52 in 2018.

SEAC currently has a total of 31 EU/EEA members, and the trend has been in decline since 2015, which is also concerning.

Figure 1 shows the downward trends in numbers of members in recent years.

**Figure 1: Number of RAC and SEAC regular members from 2008 to 2023**



New tasks have already been assigned to the committees (Drinking Water Directive, Batteries Regulation), with more being expected, and the RAC and SEAC workload is expected to further grow in the next years. New competences will also need to be established (new hazard classes under CLP, waste, batteries).

Ideally RAC and SEAC should have full membership and, as a minimum they should, respectively have at least 50 and 40 regular members to be able to deliver in a sustainable way the current workload (about 100 RAC and 55 SEAC opinions per year); this includes acquiring new competencies.

During 2024 RAC and SEAC will undertake a recruitment round for co-opted members (members co-opted by the committees on the basis of their specific competences), and will aim to fill all five slots allowed by REACH per Committee. However, at best this will only slightly increase the current capability, as RAC and SEAC currently already have 4 co-opted members per committee.

Competent rapporteurs are essential to RAC and SEAC's output, and this urgently needs the attention of the Member States to increase membership and for the Commission to address the membership and payment of rapporteurs work in the ECHA basic regulation.

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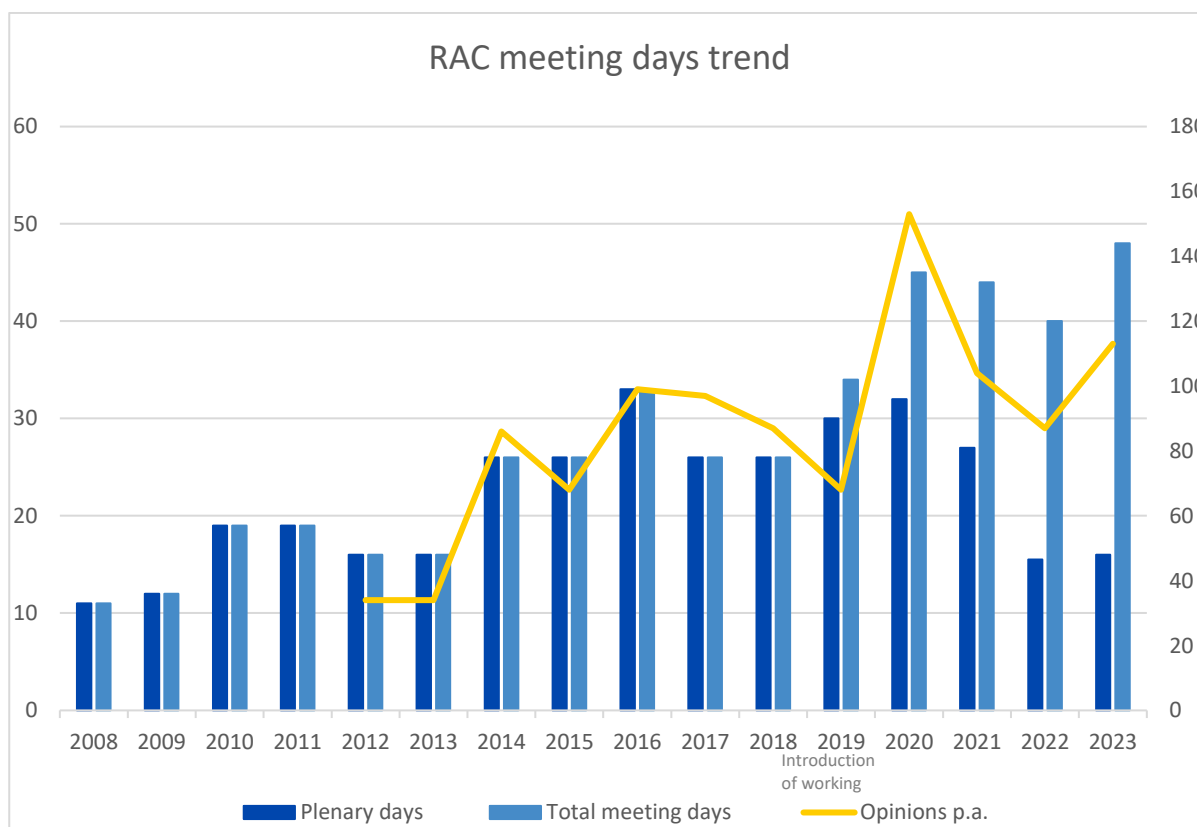
## Meetings held in RAC and SEAC in 2023

RAC held three in-person and one on-line meetings in 2023, while SEAC held two and two. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, restoring the face-to face meeting helped in team building across committees; it was also instrumental in accelerating the onboarding of new members that was significantly disrupted by the absence of face-to-face interactions.

Additionally, 12 RAC working group meetings on AfA, Restrictions, CLH and Drinking Water Directive have been held in 2023 (most of the meetings held online). The extensive use of working groups by RAC, allowed to pre-assess the dossiers and reach a preliminary agreement before the plenary; this process, called A-listing, increases efficiency and allowed to limit the plenary to the most difficult cases.

On the other hand, this increased significantly workload since the number of meeting days doubled and total number of RAC meetings increased by 4 times; additionally, it reduced the time left to members for comments and preparatory work needed for the opinion making (See Figure below).

**Figure 2: Number of RAC meeting days and opinions delivered from 2008 to 2023**



It should also be noted that RAC and SEAC meetings involve the participation of a high number of people (Dossier submitters, interested stakeholders, external experts, Commission observers etc.); therefore, the meeting management is a complex matter that involves several tasks including screening and authorization of participants, reimbursement, document management, access rights etc. In the course of 2023, a total of about 1500 people attended a RAC or a SEAC meeting.

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**Table 2. Number of meetings, meeting days (plenaries + working groups) and stakeholders overall attending**

2023	Meeting management						Total
	SEAC plenary	RAC Plenary	RAC AfA WG	RAC Rest WG	RAC CLH WG	RAC DWD WG	
<b>Number of meetings</b>	4	4	4	2	4	2	<b>20</b>
<b>Online</b>	2	1	4	2	4	1	<b>14</b>
<b>In person</b>	2	3	0	0	0	1	<b>6</b>
<b>Number of meeting days</b>	18	14	8	5	17	2,5	<b>64,5</b>
<b>Number of stakeholders attending</b>	125	142	6	49	40	9	<b>371</b>
<b>Number of other participants attending</b>	284	377	109	135	224	53	<b>1182</b>

## New tasks and expected workload

New tasks have been assigned to the committees (opinions on the update of positive list of substances according to the Drinking Water Directive, restriction under the Batteries Regulation). The Revision of CLP has also introduced new hazard classes that will have to be assessed by RAC making the overall CLH assessment more complex and time consuming; furthermore, additional CLH dossiers requested by the European Commission will have to be prepared by ECHA and assessed by RAC.

Existing new tasks are requiring expanding the current portfolio of competencies of both Committees such as batteries, waste, recycling etc.

Further tasks to be assigned to ECHA and Committees are also under consideration (RoHs, Toys, Cosmetics, POPs, LEV, EQS, groundwater directive etc.). However, there is no certainty on their finalization.

Looking ahead to 2024 and 2025, the workload projections for RAC and SEAC continue to be challenging. The main drivers for SEAC and RAC opinions (both AfAs and CLH opinions) are expected to remain sustained:

- For applications for authorisation, the current peak, including chromates, is expected to last for some years.
- For CLH new CLP hazard classes will result in more complex dossiers

In addition, the scope of many recent restrictions of groups of substances is much larger, requiring longer opinion-making (such as U-PFAS) so that rapporteurs are tied up with a single case for a longer period of time and reducing the pool of available Rapporteurs for new cases.

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### **Payments to rapporteurs**

The Chairs of RAC and SEAC identified inconsistencies in the level and type of payments to rapporteurs in Restrictions and brought this to the attention of the MB. We appreciate that during MB-72 the Management Board adopted a revised decision on the remuneration of the co-opted members and experts invited by the ECHA Committees or the Forum, as well as a draft revised decision on the financial arrangements for the transfer of a proportion of fees to the Member States, as proposed. Once these have entered into force (the latter requires a favourable opinion from the European Commission) the Chairs expect that this will improve the situation and improve the incentives for members volunteering for Restriction rapporteurships.

However, some inconsistencies remain for other tasks. For instance, the lack of any payment for rapporteurships under CLH has also been identified as an issue that needs addressing, and establishing a reasonable level of payments for rapporteurs under any new tasks will be crucial to make them sustainable (currently not foreseen in the Drinking Water Directive).

### **Drinking Water Directive**

The new standing working group of RAC on Drinking Water Directive started its activity in June 2023, the group has now 21 Members (2 out of 21 are also RAC Members) and 17 Accredited Stakeholders contributing to the work of the WG. ECHA is greatly appreciating the nominations by EU/EEA member States of a sufficient number of members that allowed to start the activities. The working group is now focusing in drafting guidance and establishing new procedures for the future RAC assessment. The start of evaluations is expected in 2026-2027.

### **RAC Chair and deputy Chair**

The new Chair of the RAC took up his position in June 2023. A new RAC Deputy Chair was also appointed in November 2023.

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## PART II - MSC

### Numbers, turnover of members, renewals and new nominations

In 2023 MSC held four plenary meetings (two on ECHA premises and two virtually) to deal with its five MSC-decision-making rounds and other tasks of 2023 in 10 meeting days.

The number of MSC members fluctuated somewhat during last year, in January there were 25 MSC members and 24 alternate members and in December 2023 MSC had 27 voting members with their 24 alternate members (the Norwegian members are excluded in these figures as they do not have voting rights). What contributed to these numbers was that for a short period Latvia did not have a member or alternate member and there was a transition period for Greece prior to appointing new member. The quorum that needs to be reached for voting, 60%, was never in jeopardy. Otherwise all Member States were represented via either a member or an alternate member or both. NO was represented by its member and alternate member. Membership of MSC developed as follows for 2023: BG, GR, IE, LV and NL appointed a new member to MSC. New alternate members were appointed for ES, IE, GR, LU and NL and for a further 12 MSC members and 11 alternate members (including NO alternate member) their mandates were renewed.

On average meeting participation rate of MSC members was high at 96% and these members were accompanied by experts 63% of the time. For written procedures (WP) the voting rate was high (93.5 %).

### Main achievements and challenges

#### Decisions at MSC

##### Substance of very high concern (SVHC) identification:

For the substance of very high concern (SVHC) identification process only those dossiers that receive comments during consultation are referred to MSC. In 2023 6 out of 8 dossiers were referred to MSC, of which 4 were agreed in written procedure. Two cases needed further discussion and were agreed in plenary. The 6 SVHCs handled by MSC are four very Persistent and very Bioaccumulative (vPvB) substances, furthermore one phthalate identified as endocrine disruptor (ED) for the environment, and one phenol as Persistent, Bioaccumulative and Toxic (PBT) and Reproductive toxicant.

Over the last 5 years 43 SVHC cases have been agreed, of which 63% required MSC intervention. In general, MSC agrees the majority of its SVHC cases in written procedure (60% average over the last 5 years), indicative of the collaborative *modus operandi* of the Committee. This is also the case for substance evaluation (SEv). As for SVHC identification, also for the dossier and substance evaluation cases, only those that receive comments, and some disagreement exists are referred to MSC for further decision making.

With the addition of ED criteria to the CLP Regulation and the current REACH legal text including equivalent level of concern as well as the potential for new hazards such as immunotoxicity or neurotoxicity it is not yet clear what role SVHC will play in future MSC decision making.

##### Further reduction in Substance evaluation (SEv) cases at MSC:

The number of SEv dossiers at MSC reduced even further from previously 5 (2022) to 2 cases in 2023, notably below the 12 cases for 2020 and 2021. Several reasons may clarify the why of this sizable reduction. Firstly, the number of substances placed on the Community Rolling Action Plan (CoRAP) for further evaluation by Member States has reduced over the years. Consequently,

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the number of new draft decisions in need of MSC agreement has also reduced. When placed on the CoRAP list Member States have one year to evaluate the dossier. To illustrate see figure 1.

In 2013, there were 50 substances evaluated, which resulted in 27 new draft decisions entering the decision-making stage. In 2023, there were 4 substances evaluated, which resulted in 2 new draft decisions entering the decision-making stage.

Furthermore, fewer draft decisions receive proposals for amendments (when draft decisions are referred to MSC for further agreement) which may be attributed to improvements in the clarity and consistency of draft decisions due to experience gained over the years and standardised templates and instructions. Also, the development of agreed approaches and testing strategies at MSC may have contributed to this reduction. In 2023 the only 2 cases referred to MSC were agreed in written procedure.

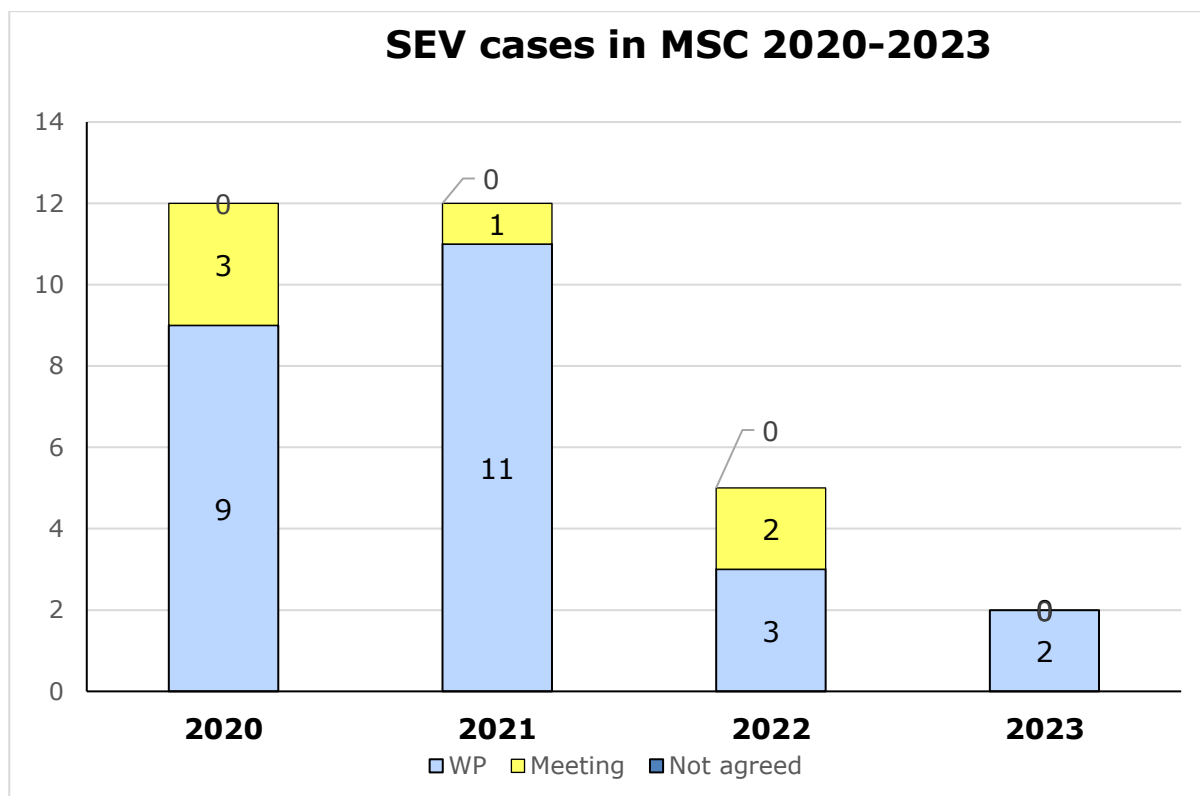


Figure 1. MSC cases 2020-2023

Fewer substance evaluation (SEv) dossiers:

As mentioned, in 2023 four SEv decisions were notified to our MSCAs, of which 2 were referred to MSC for agreement. Although there was no need to discuss these SEv cases at an MSC meeting, a scientific discussion relevant to one of the dossiers was held at MSC to take learning and contribute to capacity building.

Developments in Dossier evaluation (DEv):

For DEv the approach is that the MSC focusses on the development of generic approaches, which ECHA can apply while drafting decisions. This makes the work consistent, robust and efficient. A measure of success is the relatively low number of proposals for amendment (PfAs) from MSCA and that the PfAs proposed are indeed focussed on areas which need alignment and the development of the approach to take more generically.

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Figures 2 and 3 provide some insights in the efficiency developed also at MSC on DEv over the years, notably 2021 – 2023.

In 2023 MSC was involved in 9% of all draft dossier evaluation decisions notified to MSCAs (34 cases out of 373). Four written procedures were launched to reach an agreement for a total of 21 draft decisions of which one case was stopped (2%) to allow for a meeting discussion. Written procedures are normally only launched for cases where no discussion on the proposals for amendment are expected. Circa 60 % of all DEv cases referred to MSC are agreed in written procedure (WP), considered indicative of good cohesion and consistency in decision drafting and decision making at the Committee.

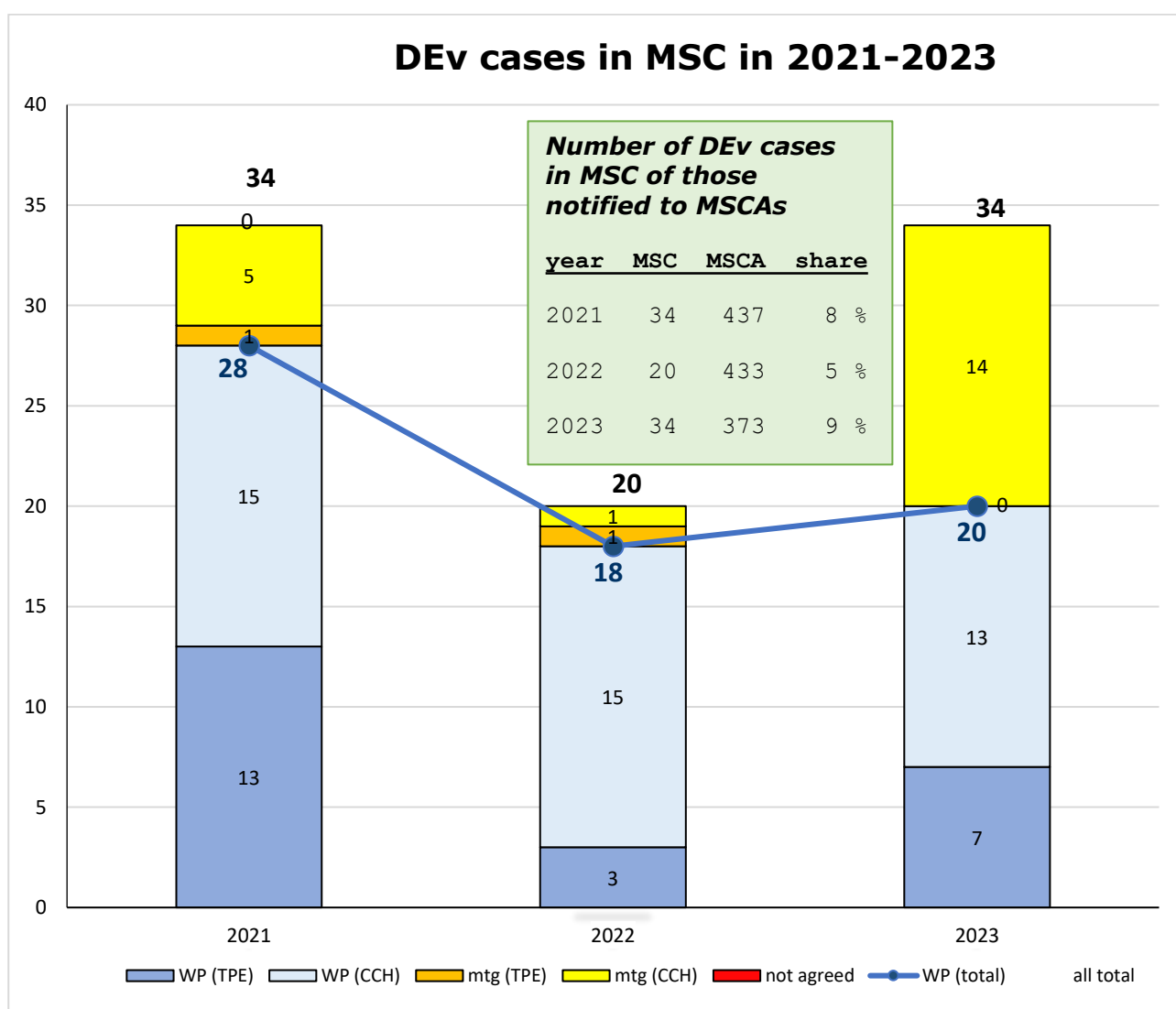


Figure 2 Dev cases in MSC 2021-2021

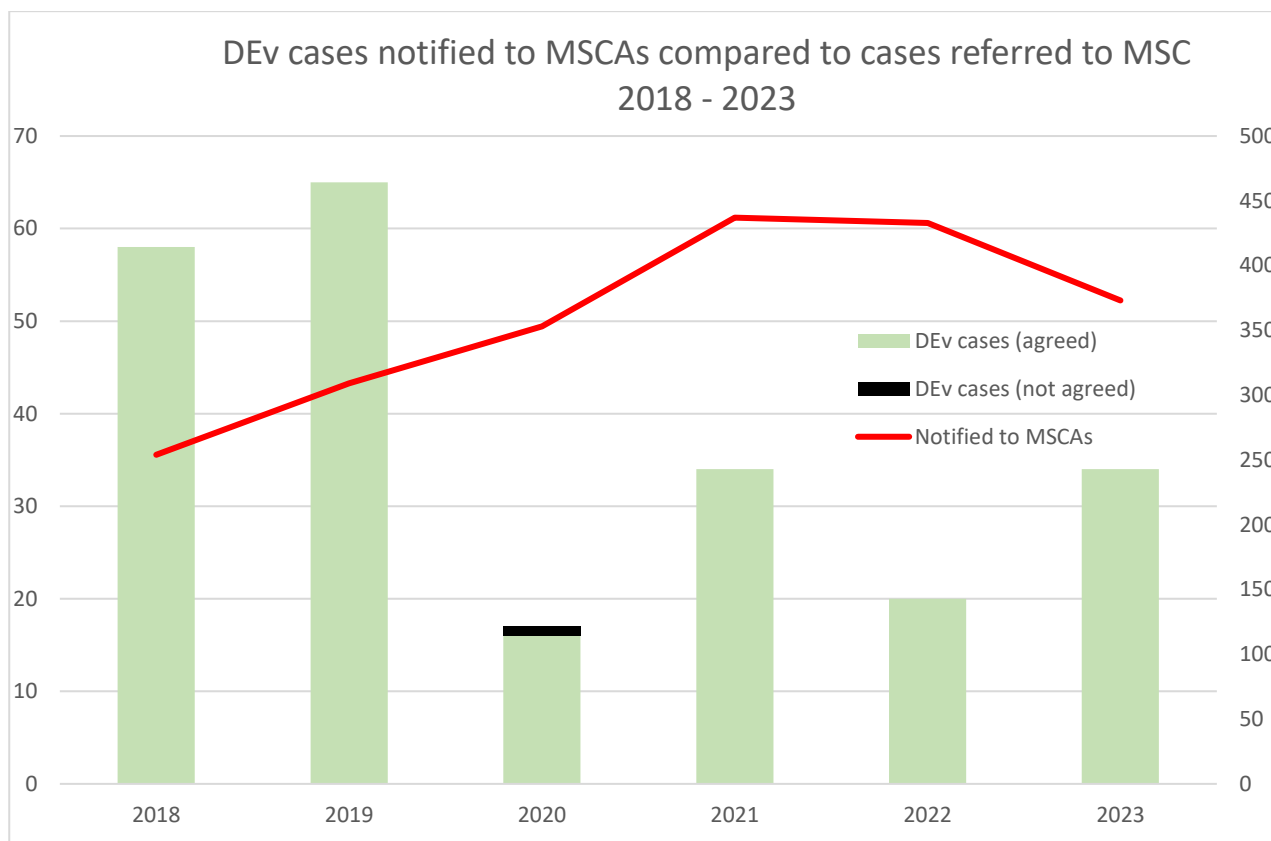


Figure 3: DEv process and MSC agreement 2018-2023 trend

To achieve and maintain this good practice, a number of generic policy discussions and agreed working procedures as listed below were discussed and agreed at MSC in 2023:

*a. Nano compliance challenges*

MSC discussed about the specific nanoform information requirements and adopted several decisions focused on reported boundary composition(s) (e.g. characterisation parameters) and justification for joint hazard, exposure and risk assessment of the set of nanoforms.

*b. Learning and memory investigations in extended one generation studies (EOGRTS)*

After a decision by the Board of Appeal, the secretariat and MSC clarified the conditions for requesting learning and memory investigations in related compliance check decisions.

*c. Quantification of non-extractable residues (NERs) was further clarified.*

*d. Germ cell mutagenicity requests at Annex IX and X of REACH*

MSC decided to change its policy to include a conditional request that allowed a one decision approach instead of requiring a second, separate decision.

*e. Endocrine Disruption testing required at Annex VIII of REACH*

MSC concluded that a Fish Sexual Development Test (FSDT) may be requested at Annex VIII in cases where a particular data gap for chronic toxicity exists.

We foresee more discussions to be had on Endocrine Disruptor testing with the update of CLP as a driver.

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For all these 2023 cases where there was disagreement<sup>1</sup> for Dossier Evaluation (DEv), Substance evaluation (SEv) and Substance of Very High Concern (SVHC) identification MSC agreed unanimously within the legal deadlines of respectively 60 days and 30 days after referral to MSC during a total of 10 meeting days. No cases were referred to the Commission.

Table: overall MSC cases in 2023

<b><u>Process</u></b>	<b><u>Referred cases</u></b>	<b><u>Agreed cases</u></b>	<b><u>Agreed in written procedure</u></b>	<b><u>Agreed in Meeting</u></b>	<b><u>Referred to Commission</u></b>
DEv	34	34	20	14	0
SEV	2	2	2	0	0
SVHC	6	6	4	2	0
<i>Sum</i>		42	26	16	0

## Opinions at MSC

### Community Rolling Action Plan

In 2023, MSC adopted two opinions by consensus with no minority views – a) the opinion on draft Community Rolling Action Plan (CoRAP) update for 2023-2025 and appointed the Rapporteur (NL) and co-rapporteur (new member from EL) for the CoRAP update for 2024 - 2026.

Furthermore, the opinion on ECHA's draft 11<sup>th</sup> recommendation for inclusion of priority substances in Annex XIV was adopted.

In these processes five Rapporteurs and co-rapporteurs contributed to the work and held some smaller meetings preparing for MSC draft opinions.

## Other aspects

### Forward looking

To retain the efficiency gains at MSC it is vital that effective collaboration, strong cohesion, members' commitment, as well as its competencies are maintained and/or expanded to safe guard alignment and inclusion of member states in decision making, in line with the ECHA strategic goals for 2024 - 2028<sup>2</sup>. To this effect the relatively new offering of capacity building trainings to MSC members will be continued, including on New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) and further actions will be considered.

<sup>1</sup> Only cases where there is *disagreement* are referred to the MSC

<sup>2</sup> ECHA – Strategy Statement 2024 - 2028

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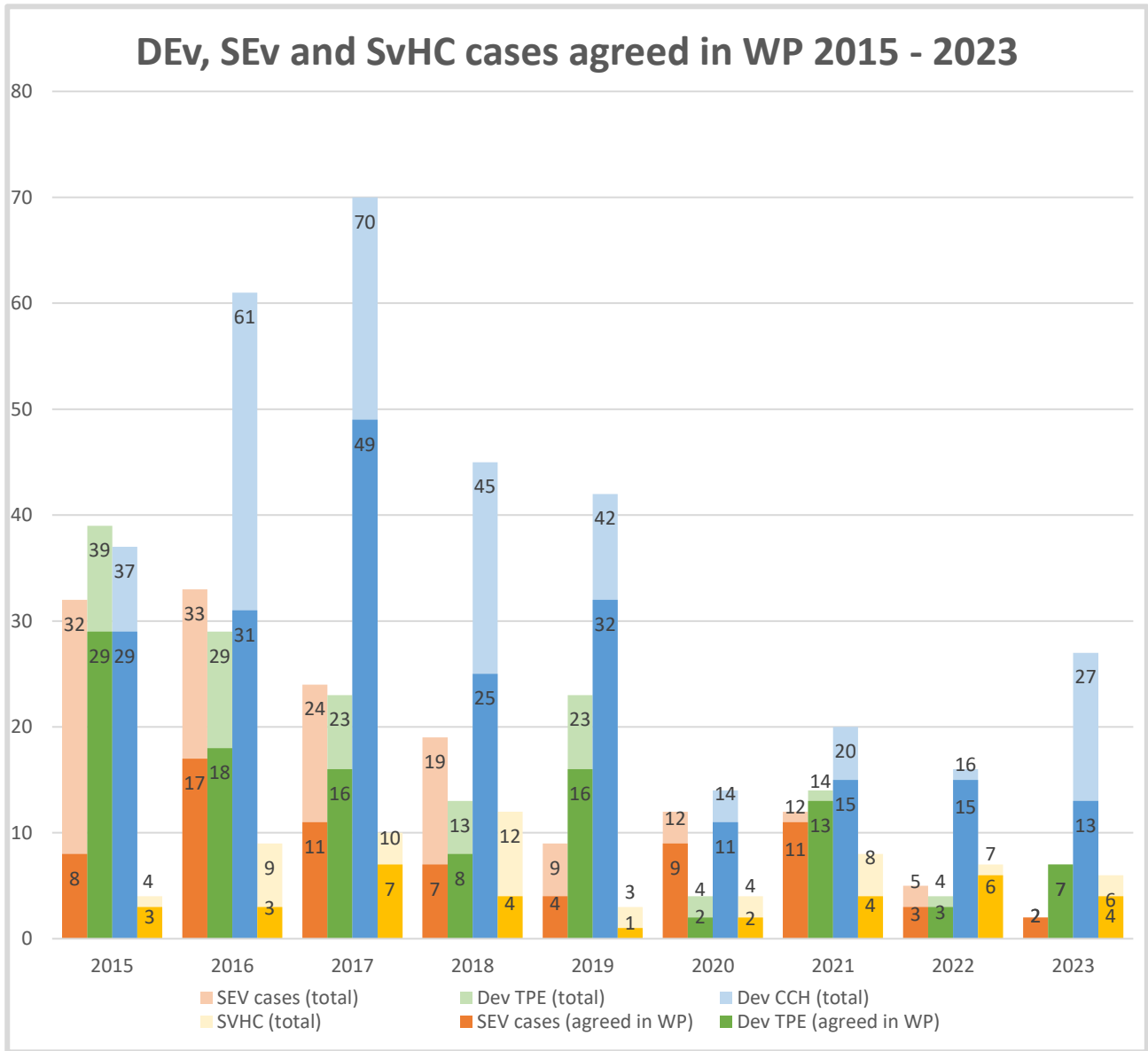


Figure 5: DEv, SEv and SVHC trends 2015-2023 trend

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## PART III - BPC

### Numbers, turnover of members, renewals and new nominations

The number of BPC members is 28 where 27 members have appointed an alternate member. Currently all MSCAs except Bulgaria are represented in the BPC. In addition, Switzerland and Norway are represented in the BPC.

Turnover of members was relatively big in 2023 as five Member States (Malta, Estonia, Switzerland, Hungary & Spain) nominated both a new BPC member and an alternate member (in majority of the cases the previous alternate was appointed as the member). In addition, Latvia appointed a new alternate member and Italy and Cyprus renewed their expiring memberships both for the member and the alternate.

For the Working Groups the number of core members has remained the same in 2023 with a total of 32 core members. The number of flexible members has slightly increased compared to 2022 with a total of 293 flexible members<sup>3</sup>. In 2023, there were no WG members from Bulgaria, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta and Portugal. Due to the large number of experts, the turnover of flexible members is relatively high. The WG members are nominated until further notice.

Four BPC and four Working Group meetings were organised in 2023. BPC-47 in June, BPC-49 in November and WG-II-2023 were organised as hybrid meetings with most of the members physically attending in Helsinki. The rest of the meetings (BPC-46 and BPC-48 and WG-I, WG-III and WG-IV-2023 meetings) were organised as fully virtual meetings.

The BPC saw a replacement of the chair in 2023, due to the retirement of the previous chair that had led the BPC since its inception in 2013. The hand-over to the new chair was successful, so that the committee could continue its work as usual.

### Performance in 2023

The total number of opinions adopted by the BPC decreased from 57 in 2022 to 38 in 2023, of which six opinions on Minor Changes of Union Authorisation were adopted by the BPC via written vote.

The BPC adopted:

- 11 opinions (down from 18 in 2022) on an application for approval of an active substance, of which 9 were part of the Review Programme. In four opinions a non-approval was proposed: Willaertia magna C2c Maky for Product type (PT) 11, Bronopol for PT 2, 11 and 12;
- One opinion on an application for inclusion of an active substance in Annex I;
- Two opinions on the renewal of the approval of an active substance. In both opinions non-renewal was proposed: Sulfuryl fluoride for PT 8 and 18
- 10 opinions (down from 21 in 2022) on an application for Union authorisation, where for

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<sup>3</sup> There are 6 core members in the Efficacy Working Group (WG) representing FR, DE, EL, NL, RO and SI; 4 alternate members representing FR, DE, EL and NL and 79 flexible members. The Analytical methods and Physico-Chemical Properties WG is composed of 6 core members representing FR, DE, EL, NL, PL and SI; 5 alternate members representing FR, DE, EL and NL and 50 flexible members. In the Human Health WG, there are 11 core members representing AT, CZ, FR, DE, EL, IE, NL and SI; 7 alternate members representing FR, DE, EL, IE, NL and SI and 92 flexible members. The Environment WG includes 9 core members representing AT, FR, DE, EL, IE, NL and SI; 5 alternate members representing FR, DE, EL and NL as well as 72 flexible members. The total number of flexible members is 293.

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- all opinions the BPC proposed to grant the authorisation<sup>4</sup>;
- Three opinions following an Article 38 request from the Commission related to a dispute in a mutual recognition process for a biocidal product, where in all cases the BPC was able to solve the dispute by coming to a consensus agreement;
  - Four opinions following an Article 75(1)(g) request from the Commission: i) questions regarding the comparative assessment of anticoagulant rodenticides, ii) re-assessing the risk on the environment (soil compartment) posed by ADBAC/BKC from use in biocidal products of PT 2; iii) Evaluation of the availability and suitability of alternatives to RP 1:1 (PT 2, 6, 11, 13) and RP 3:2 (PT 2, 6, 11, 12, 13); iv) Methodology to assess the risk to bees and other non-target arthropod pollinators from the use of biocides.
  - Two opinions on post-authorisation conditions included in an adopted opinion for Union authorisation: In one case the existing Union authorisation needed to be amended.

In addition, the BPC agreed on several procedural documents related to active substance approval and Union authorisation.

The activities of the Working Groups in the opinion-forming process remained relatively stable in 2023 compared to 2022. A rapidly increasing number of evaluating Competent Authorities used early WG discussions (32 discussions, compared to 7 in 2022) to receive guidance on their assessment. The early WG discussions are an important tool to facilitate the opinion-forming process, as issues are solved up-front instead of during this process.

The Working Groups addressed also many guidance related issues, such as: i) several new emission scenarios; ii) several revisions of existing emission scenarios (PT 11, PT 18, PT 19); iii) a complete review of the document containing the technical agreements on Analytical Methods and Physico-chemical Properties and Physical hazards (APCP); iv) the PT11 and 12 updated efficacy guidance was published; v) discussions on a new draft guidance on resistance; vi) discussions on recommendations for *in situ* generated active substances and biocidal products; vii) finalization of the pollinator guidance (Methodology to assess the risk to bees and other non-target arthropod pollinators from the use of biocides); viii) discussions on the revision of guidance for human health risk assessment; ix) several topics related to risk from dietary exposure; ix) further development and testing of the Chesar platform, including an emission scenario repository covering all existing emission scenarios.

## Prognosis and workload management

Looking ahead to 2024 the following developments can be highlighted:

- For active substance approval, based on the planning of submissions of assessment reports provided by the MSCAs, it is foreseen that the number of opinions will be around the same number as in 2023.
- For Union authorisation, based on the planning of submissions of product assessment reports provided by the MSCAs, it is foreseen that the number of opinions will be higher compared to 2023.
- In conclusion, the overall workload for the BPC and the Working Groups will be at a similar level as in 2023 and is – related to the opinion-forming process - expected to be manageable for 2024 for the secretariat and the members.
- This forecast is based on the planning of submissions of evaluations received by ECHA from the MSCAs. The predictability of the submissions by MSCAs of evaluations for the opinion-forming process remains low. ECHA will continue to be in contact with MSCAs in 2024 to get a better insight in their planning.

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<sup>4</sup> It is noted that the 'actual' proposal for authorisation may differ from the authorisation applied for by an applicant: sometimes restrictions are proposed or certain uses within an application are proposed not to be authorised.