

Press release

Potential short supply of photoinitiators used in printing inks

Brussels, 2018-05-04 - As has been the case during the past few years, the consistent supply of raw materials remains a concern for ink manufacturers. The latest issue relates to a potential shortage of photoinitiators.

What is behind this issue?

EuPIA, the European Printing Ink Association, sees two main causes:

- Governmental activities;
- REACH-related issues.

Over the last few years the global geo-political situation has undergone a number of changes, including a shift from attempts to reduce trade barriers to ideas about increasing trade barriers. In China, where the majority of photoinitiators and their precursors are manufactured, governmental initiatives for environmental protection have prompted many suppliers to either cease or reduce production for limited periods of time. Holistically, these initiatives are to be welcomed, but they undeniably influence the availability of materials, oftentimes resulting in price increases.

The supply of photoinitiators has been further impacted by major incidents; a factory fire, unforeseeable events (force majeure) at chemical plants, low stocks, unplanned maintenance and production outages – all recent examples.

As the deadline for registration under the REACH regulation approaches, some raw material suppliers have chosen either not to register some raw materials or to register them only for low volume usage. This has the potential to narrow the choice that ink manufacturers have when substituting photoinitiators for materials that can also suffer short term supply issues or limited applicability due to re-classification under the CLP regulation (classification, labelling and packaging), in accordance with the EuPIA Exclusion Policy.

EuPIA sees all its member companies highly engaged to safeguard supply for their customer bases, searching for alternatives whilst encouraging their suppliers to develop as broad and diverse a supply base as possible. Despite all of this good work there may be occasions when shortages will occur and, in such circumstances, EuPIA would ask for understanding from its members' customer base while the ink industry is working to rectify the situation as quickly as possible.

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