

New Formaldehyde Limits for Industry.

This document summarizes which limit values, deadlines, and test standards will apply from 2026 and how to verify REACH compliance in your production.

BINDING FROM **August 6, 2026**

AFFECTED INDUSTRIES

- Wood-based materials & furniture industry
- Construction & building materials industry
- Textile & leather industry

REACH Compliance in the Wood-Based Materials and Furniture Industry

New formaldehyde limits from 2026: Fagus-GreCon delivers the measurement solution

From August 2026, binding EU-wide limits for formaldehyde emissions from furniture and wood-based materials will apply for the first time, and the timeline is tight. Fagus-GreCon helps companies reach REACH compliance with validated test systems, hands-on knowledge of the standards, and a complete solution for both the lab and the production line.

Formaldehyde in the Focus of EU Legislation

Formaldehyde (HCHO) has been a mainstay of the wood-based materials industry for decades. Urea-formaldehyde resins are used as binders in particleboard, MDF, and plywood, and therefore in much of the world's furniture and interior fit-out. But the substance is under growing regulatory pressure. The EU has classified formaldehyde as a category 1B carcinogen since 2014, and even low concentrations can irritate the mucous membranes and cause lasting harm to indoor air quality.

The EU has responded with Regulation **(EU) 2023/1464**, which updates Annex XVII of the REACH Regulation. From August 2026, uniform EU-wide emission limits will apply for the first time to nearly every article that can release formaldehyde, a shift that reaches far beyond any national regulation seen so far.

REACH shifts the focus from controlling the substance to controlling emissions from the finished product. It is a fundamental change for the entire supply chain.

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What REACH Specifically Requires

The new regulation takes a strictly product-focused approach: what counts is not the raw material used, but the actual measured emission of the finished article under defined test conditions. That puts quality assurance, measurement technology, and documentation at the heart of any compliance strategy.

LIMIT VALUES AT A GLANCE · VALID FROM AUGUST 2026

Wood-based materials & furniture	$\leq 0.062 \text{ mg/m}^3$
Vehicle interiors (from August 2027)	$\leq 0.062 \text{ mg/m}^3$
All other articles	$\leq 0.080 \text{ mg/m}^3$

For manufacturers, this means being able to show reliable measurement data, building testing into day-to-day quality assurance, and keeping seamless documentation across the supply chain. Companies that put these processes in place early gain not just regulatory certainty, but a clear competitive edge.

Test Methods: Reference and Production Control

REACH sets its limits on the basis of reference chamber tests under tightly specified climate conditions (23 °C, 45 % r.h., air-exchange rate 1 h^{-1}). The relevant standards are **EN 717-1** and **EN 16516**, with EN 717-1 treated as the most direct reference. These chamber tests can take up to 28 days, which makes them unsuitable for ongoing production control.

In practice, a two-stage approach has become the norm. Reference measurements provide the legal basis, while faster, correlated methods handle day-to-day production monitoring:

ISO 12460-3:2023 Gas analysis method, 4 h test time, proven in the European wood-based materials industry

ISO 12460-2:2025 Small-chamber test method, measuring time approx. 15 minutes, laser-based

Correlation is what makes this work: a rapid method can only be trusted to assess REACH compliance once its results have been systematically matched against reference values. That process also yields the **QCL** (Quality Control Limit), the threshold below which the REACH limit is safely met.

Fagus-GreCon: Expertise and Future-Proof Solutions

Fagus-GreCon has been a global leader in formaldehyde emission measurement systems for decades. Hundreds are in use around the world, in wood-based materials plants, furniture factories, testing laboratories, and research institutes. As an active member of international standardization committees, Fagus-GreCon also helps write the very standards the industry tests against.

The current generation of GASANALYSER systems is fully compliant with ISO 12460-3:2023 and ISO 12460-2:2025, and is

READY4REACH for factory production control.

The GASANALYSER Family

GASANALYSER / GASANALYSER SL

LABORATORY STANDARD

Works to ISO 12460-3:2023 and is recognized internationally (CARB, EPA TSCA Title VI). The SL variant replaces conventional wet chemistry with a fully automatic laser absorption analyzer, with no chemical reagents and no manual analysis steps. The result: better measurement quality, less lab work, and maximum reproducibility.

GASANALYSER MC

15 MINUTES

Works to ISO 12460-2:2025, using laser spectroscopy in an electropolished micro-emission chamber, completely chemical-free, with automatic humidity control and a cycle time of just 15 minutes per sample. Ideal for high-throughput laboratories, and CARB-recognized.

GASANALYSER IL

INLINE REAL-TIME

Adds continuous inline monitoring to your lab analysis, typically mounted on the extraction of a diagonal saw. It tracks formaldehyde trends in real time straight from the process air, catching fluctuations before they turn into faulty batches, cutting waste and keeping production stable.

Whether it is lab measurement to ISO 12460-3 or inline monitoring on the production line, the **GASANALYSER** family has the right solution for every need.

Four Building Blocks of a REACH-Compliant Test Strategy

Meeting the new REACH limits is not a one-off exercise. It is an ongoing, structured process. Fagus-GreCon recommends four building blocks for manufacturers:

1 Establish a reference basis

Set up reference chamber tests to EN 717-1 as your legally binding basis, either in your own lab or through accredited testing institutes.

2 Correlate rapid methods

Match your production-floor methods (ISO 12460-3 or ISO 12460-2) against reference values and set the QCL you will use for ongoing monitoring.

3 Define test routines

Lock in fixed test intervals, consistent sampling, and uniform conditioning, and schedule regular reference tests to validate them.

4 Ensure documentation

Log every measurement systematically, store it so it stays traceable, and keep it ready to show customers and authorities at any time.

Conclusion

REACH is more than a regulatory box to tick. The new formaldehyde limits create a level playing field across Europe, make supply chains more transparent, and build trust with end customers and trading partners alike. Manufacturers in the wood-based materials and furniture industry who put their test strategy in place now will be in a strong position: technically, legally, and commercially.

The GASANALYSER family gives them the measurement foundation to do it: standard-compliant, field-proven, and ready for REACH.

Interested? Let's talk.

Our measurement experts will help you find the right test strategy for your plant, from a first assessment to ongoing production control. Fagus-GreCon Greten GmbH & Co. KG · www.fagus-grecon.com · Measurement Technology & REACH Solutions