

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 5 October 2010

Brominated Flame Retardant Industry urges caution against a categorisation of Deca-BDE as a substance of equivalent concern under REACH

The UK's Advisory Committee on Hazardous Substances (ACHS) presented its review of the potential categorisation of Deca-BDE as a substance of equivalent concern under the EU's REACH Regulation on chemicals at a meeting in London on 14 September. Deca-BDE is a brominated flame retardant used in plastics and textiles.

The ACHS's conclusions did not lead to a regulatory decision on Deca-BDE. In the absence of quantitative evidence denoting a risk from Deca-BDE or its degradation products to the environment, the ACHS has nevertheless left it open to the UK regulatory agencies to consider whether Deca-BDE can legally and scientifically be put forward as a candidate substance of equivalent concern under REACH.

The European Brominated Flame Retardant Industry Panel (EBFRIP) agrees with many of the ACHS's findings, but disagrees with conclusions related to Deca-BDE's potential to degrade and evidence of significant degradation in the environment. The most recent reports on this widely studied chemical support the scientific conclusions that Deca-BDE is not bioaccumulative, is found in the environment at low levels and that those levels are not increasing. Further, where Deca-BDE has been found in air, water, or soil, there has been no evidence of substantial transformation via natural processes into the lower brominated POP like PBDEs.

In response to the ACHS statement, EBFRIP Chairman Willem Hofland regretted that the ACHS were not more supportive of existing environmental monitoring and emission reduction programmes which have been instigated at the request of EU regulators.

"EBFRIP has always supported an approach whereby scientific assessment levels of risk to the environment is the basis for policy on chemicals. Should environmental trends indicate the potential for serious effects on the environment", Hofland added, "EBFRIP would be supportive of further action to reduce Deca-BDE emissions to the environment. So far this is not the case".

EBFRIP looks forward to continue the cooperation with ACHS and to working with regulators and interested stakeholders so that scientific evidence and risk assessment remains at the cornerstone of regulation on chemicals such as Deca-BDE.

EBFRIP is a European trade association, representing the common interests of the major manufacturers of brominated flame retardants, and is a sector group of Cefic, the European Chemical Industry Council, based in Brussels.

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