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Clarification on new WWF report on fish

- **no currently commercial brominated flame retardants found**
 - **levels found do not present health risk**

On 28 August, WWF issued a press release entitled “Mediterranean swordfish under fire?” referring to its study entitled “Chemical Contamination in the Mediterranean: the case of swordfish”¹. From a review of this study, EBFRIIP would like to make the following points:

- **no currently commercial brominated flame retardants were found** - the findings only concern the constituents of the Penta-BDE flame retardant and some of its lower constituents. The use of Penta-BDE is banned in the EU since 2004 and Penta-BDE is not produced and marketed any longer.
- **levels of the constituents of Penta-BDE found do not present a risk to health** - a recent UK Food Safety Authority study² on the presence of selected BFRs in farmed and wild fish, including swordfish, showed that “(such) fish consumption was unlikely to represent a health risk”. The levels found in the WWF study were even lower than those used by the UK FSA assessment, indicating an even higher margin of safety. Moreover, scientific evidence³ demonstrates that levels of Penta-BDE’s components are decreasing in the European environment.
- **the press release and report incorrectly suggests that little is known about the effects of brominated flame retardants** whereas all the commercial PBDEs (Penta-BDE, Octa-BDE and Deca-BDE) were thoroughly researched and completed full EU risk assessments analysing potential effects on health and the environment. EU risk assessments on TBBPA and HBCD are ongoing. TBBPA risk assessment has already concluded no risk for health.

EBFRIP recognises the importance of reducing the levels of industrial chemicals in the environment and has launched a voluntary emissions control programme (VECAP) for commercially available brominated flame retardants with the support of European regulatory authorities.

Brominated flame retardants enable a wide range of materials to meet fire safety standards in the home and public places across the European Union.

¹ WWF, Chemical contamination in the Mediterranean : the case of swordfish”, http://detox.panda.org/news_publications/news.cfm?uxNewsID=79420

² www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/fsis0406.pdf

³ “Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) in Swedish human milk. The follow-up study.”, D. Meironyte Guvenius and K. NOren, BFR 2001 proceedings (2001) 303-305