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Norwegian proposal on Deca-BDE contradicts scientific risk assessment and European law

The Norwegian government has published on 15 April a proposal for a partial¹ ban on Deca-BDE².

In so doing, the government and the national pollution control authority (SFT) has launched a 3-month national stakeholder consultation. The government will base its final decision on the treatment of Deca-BDE on the results of this consultation. The national consultation period will run until 1 August 2005.

EBFRIP challenges Norway's proposal for a partial ban on Deca-BDE, in that it goes against a 10-year EU scientific assessment concluded last May, which did not identify any risk for the environment or human health from this substance.

This proposed partial ban not only ignores the EU scientific conclusions but it would also conflict against internal market rules established with the EU and the other European Free Trade Area (EFTA) countries.

Restricting the mentioned flame retardant chemical would undermine the proposed EU chemicals legislation REACH whose fundamental purpose is to ensure that scientific testing is the basis for chemicals policy.

EBFRIP has sought a meeting with the Norwegian Environment Minister to discuss this issue and will contribute to the stakeholder consultation.

EBFRIP shares Norway's objective to reduce Deca-BDE emissions to the environment and is already working to achieve this in a voluntary emission monitoring and reduction programme, on which the Norwegian government has been consulted. This programme has been authorised by the European Authorities. In this context, EBFRIP is willing to work with the Norwegian authorities by contributing to the stakeholder consultation.

¹ Under the current plan, transport applications of Deca-BDE would be excluded from the restriction.

² Deca-BDE is one of the major brominated flame retardants used in plastics for electrical and electronic equipment, in construction materials and textiles to prevent deaths and injuries from fire in public places (e.g. cinema, theatre, hospital, train, bus), cars and houses.