

8 February 2010

## **Update on scientific and regulatory status of DecaBDE in Europe**

The European Brominated Flame Retardant Industry Panel (EBFRIP) takes note of the outcome of the CARACAL (Competent Authorities for REACH & Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Substances) meeting on DecaBDE which took place on the 3rd February in Brussels. The results and data from the ongoing scientific studies on DecaBDE were discussed, including a neurotoxicity study, a 10 year environmental monitoring programme and a 10 year bio-monitoring programme. The findings of the Voluntary Emissions Control Action Program (VECAP) were also presented, with respect to DecaBDE emissions.

The developmental neurotoxicity study required under the previous regulations, has now been completed and concludes that DecaBDE does not display neurotoxicity effects even at elevated levels. The study examined potential effects of DecaBDE on rats and will be published later this year, following peer review.

Regarding the environmental programme, levels of DecaBDE in sediment, sewage sludge and bird's eggs in several countries in Europe were monitored. Sampling & analyses for the first four years have been completed and levels have not changed significantly. Trace amounts of a marker congener were found for the first time in a few samples, with several samples being below the level of quantification. As such, the fraction of DecaBDE considered to be transformed to lower BDEs is extremely low and the significance of this finding needs to be assessed in future studies.

On biomonitoring, levels of DecaBDE in blood were analysed in 145 European females. A detailed epidemiological analysis of the findings is underway. Levels of DecaBDE in breast milk will be included in the next biomonitoring studies.

Finally, VECAP released its latest report on 27 January 2010. Findings show visible reductions in potential emissions to air, land and water between 2008 and 2009. Emissions of DecaBDE reduced from 3,432kg to 1,220kg per year (more information on [www.vecap.info](http://www.vecap.info)).

As a next step, the UK is consulting its scientific committee, the Advisory Committee on Hazardous Substances (ACHS), to consider whether DecaBDE meets the criteria for classification as a Substance of Equivalent Concern (SEC) to SVHCs under REACH. If this is confirmed, the UK in conjunction with the French Rapporteur will draft a proposal for review by the EU's Member State Committee for potential inclusion on the EU candidate list. Willem Hofland, Chair of EBFRIIP said: "We are pleased that the emerging science on DecaBDE again shows no evidence of significant risks. We continue to maintain the safety of the substance for human health and the environment".

#### **About EBFRIIP and Brominated Flame Retardants**

*The European Brominated Flame Retardant Industry Panel represents the three main producers of brominated flame retardants, who are also major producers of alternative flame retardants based on phosphorus and mineral chemistry. Flame retardant manufacturing sites of EBFRIIP member companies include those based in 5 EU Member States (France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom).*

*Brominated flame retardants are chemicals commonly used in the manufacture of many domestic and industrial appliances, for instance in 70% of electrical and electronic appliances for the purpose of fire safety. Flame retardants provide people with up to 15 times more escape time when there is a fire.*