

Brussels, 13 May 2008

## **SWEDEN REVERSES DECA BAN**

On 8 May 2008, faced with a legal challenge from the European Union, the Swedish government decided to lift its national ban on the use of the flame retardant Deca-BDE in textiles, furniture and some electronic cables.

In doing so, the Swedish government eliminated the inconsistency between its restriction and a positive 10-year EU risk assessment of Deca-BDE<sup>1</sup>, which did not identify any significant risks justifying restrictions on the flame retardant. Swedish Government's unilateral imposition of a limited ban in late 2006 had no scientific basis and was subject to a legal challenge by the EU authorities.

The official 10-year EU risk assessment for Deca-BDE, conducted by the European Commission and representatives of the EU member states – including Sweden – has been completed and its conclusions are to be published in the Official Journal of the European Union.

Following a European Court of Justice ruling on the Deca-BDE exemption on 1 April 2008, the European Commission is now evaluating how to resolve the resulting contradiction between the RoHS Directive's restriction on Deca-BDE and the positive outcome of the scientific assessment of Deca-BDE.

“The EU has established that Deca-BDE is safe for continued use in all its applications, so there is no scientific basis whatsoever for any national or EU-wide restriction on Deca-BDE” said Veronique Steukers, chair of the European Brominated Flame Retardant Industry Panel (EBFRIP).

“EBFRIP firmly believes that Deca-BDE meets the criteria for an exemption from RoHS and that it should therefore either be exempted or deleted from the RoHS Directive. We are working with the European Commission to ensure that this restriction is lifted.”

Link to Swedish Government's press release: <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/10626/a/104665>

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<sup>1</sup> In 2004, the European Union Competent Authorities closed, after 10 years of research, the scientific assessment of commercial Deca-BDE concluding no significant risk for the environment or human health and that therefore no additional risk reduction measures were necessary beyond those already being applied. Since 2004, the risk assessment has been updated twice and the new environmental and human health data was found to support the conclusions of the EU risk assessment adopted in 2004. The Competent Authorities responsible for the EU's existing chemicals policy confirmed these conclusions in their meeting in December 2007. The EU risk assessment of Deca-BDE has looked into over 1.100 studies on Deca-BDE.