
EU decision on Deca-BDE comes closer
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The bromine industry will learn within three months whether the EU will allow continued use in electronics of one of its key products, the flame retardant deca-BDE. The European Commission this week asked the council of ministers to decide whether the substance should be exempt from a ban on various hazardous substances in electronics manufacture from July 2006.

"Deca" was given a cautious all-clear by a panel of risk assessors last year (ED 28/05/04 <http://www.environmentdaily.com/articles/index.cfm?action=article&ref=16762>), but the EU's environmental science review committee has since strongly advised a more precautionary approach (ED 01/04/05 <http://www.environmentdaily.com/articles/index.cfm?action=article&ref=18502>). This difference of opinion has sown doubt in regulators' minds. In April a committee of member state representatives failed to back or reject the exemption (ED 20/04/05 <http://www.environmentdaily.com/articles/index.cfm?action=article&ref=18632>).

Now the proposal goes to the next diplomatic rung and potentially to ministers. However, if they fail to reach a qualified majority either for or against within three months, the Commission will approve the exemption unilaterally.

* In a related development, the University of Wageningen has announced the launch of a biomonitoring programme to track levels of deca-BDE in the environment. Funded by industry body the Bromine science and environment forum (Bsef), the programme was agreed last year under the terms of the EU risk assessment (ED 28/05/05 <http://www.environmentdaily.com/articles/index.cfm?action=article&ref=16762>).

Follow-up: European Commission <http://europa.eu.int/comm>, tel: +32 2 299 1111,
plus RoHS pages

http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/waste/weee_index.htm

and the draft council decision

<http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/05/st09/st09932.en05.pdf>.

See also deca biomonitoring press release

<http://www.environmentdaily.com/docs/50609a.doc>

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