

22 September 2006

European monitoring study indicates falling levels of penta-BDE

Results of a study by the Norwegian Institute of Public Health¹ recently announced by the CREDO research cluster has shown that brominated diphenyl ethers (BDE) levels in breast milk are decreasing in Europe since the late 1990s. The BDEs identified in the samples are all related to the commercial flame retardant penta-BDE, which use is restricted.

The decrease follows a voluntary industry action phasing out the use of Penta-BDE at global level and an EU regulatory restriction which came into effect in 2004.

The human exposure study analysed serum and breast milk collected from volunteers in Czech Republic, the Netherlands, and Norway in 2003- 2004. The research was conducted under the FIRE project umbrella, part of a European research project on potential endocrine disruptors.

This study confirms previous findings in Sweden², and suggests that Penta-BDE is not as persistent as it was first thought.

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

¹ Georg Becher and Cathrine Thomsen, Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Oslo, Norway, *Brominated diphenyl ethers appear in people at increasing concentrations*, <http://www.credocluster.info/docs/newsletter/credonews6.pdf>

² Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) in Swedish human milk. The follow-up study.", D. Meironyte Guvenius and K. NOren, BFR 2001 proceedings (2001) 303-305