

## EU toy safety committee agrees migration limit for BPA

Adopts restrictions for three flame retardants

25 February 2014 / Europe, Toys

The EU committee responsible for the toy safety Directive has agreed limits for bisphenol A (BPA) and three flame retardants.

The Safety of Toys Committee agreed a migration limit of 0.1mg/l for BPA in toys. The level is the same as that specified for BPA in the EU safety standard EN71-9, which sets requirements for organic substances in toys sold in the region. The committee has been discussing the amendment since last year (CW 16 May 2013).

BPA is widely used in the manufacture of polycarbonate plastics, which are used in a range of consumer products, including toys. The substance is classified as toxic for reproduction category 2 under the CLP Regulation.

The NGO Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF) says banning the substance in toys completely would be more appropriate than a migration limit. "If we are aware that children's behaviour implies sucking toys, a ban in toys seems the best choice in terms of public health," says Elisabeth Ruffinengo, project and advocacy officer at the NGO. "BPA is an endocrine disruptor for which so far it is still not clear what is a no-effect level for its most sensitive endpoints, therefore a migration limit seems inadequate," she continues. The EU banned BPA use in baby bottles in 2011 (CW 1 June 2011).

Other potential sources of exposure to the substance have been in the spotlight recently, as the European Food Safety Authority (Efsa) has suggested temporarily lowering the tolerable daily intake (TDI) of BPA, following a draft assessment of the risks to human health posed by the substance (CW 17 January 2014). France has also submitted a proposal to restrict the use of BPA in thermal paper under REACH.

The substance, which is also known as 4,4'-isopropylidenediphenol, is being evaluated by Germany under the Community Rolling Action Plan (Corap) to review potential health risks associated with its use in toys and large PVC articles (CW 14 November 2013).

The Toy Industries of Europe (TIE) trade group supports the proposed migration limit. It notes that the Swedish Chemicals Agency (Kemi) concluded in a scientific review that the presence of traces of BPA in toys is no cause for concern (CW 13 September 2012). "Industry takes toy safety very seriously and was already adhering to [the migration limit in the EN 71-9 standard] for ten years prior to it being officially introduced," says TIE director general, Catherine Van Reeth.

The toy safety committee also agreed to introduce a limit value of 5mg/kg for the flame retardants tris(2-chloroethyl) phosphate (TCEP), TCPP and TDCP (CW 22 February 2012). The value set is the detection level for the substances.

"The three flame retardants should not be used in toys and the restriction aims to ensure this," says Ms Van Reeth. "However, we would have preferred that the restriction was based on migration limits rather than total content as this would have been more scientifically sound and would have considered real exposure."

TCEP is a phosphate ester used as a flame-retardant in polymers and is classified as toxic to reproduction and carcinogenic. While the toy industry says that manufacturers in Europe are not using the substance any more, exposure of children may continue through toys that are imported into the EU.

"It seems that the industry has moved away from the use of TCEP, replacing it with alternatives," says Ms Ruffinengo, "but it may still be used in articles imported from outside the EU. Only if sufficient controls on the presence of these three compounds in toys placed on the EU market are performed will the ban be fully efficient."

The committee also agreed an exception on the use of nickel in toys (CW 18 February 2014).

The Commission confirms that all three proposals received a favourable opinion from the committee on 18 February. All amendments will come into force when they have been formally adopted by the European Council and Parliament. If cleared, member states will need to apply the requirements 18 months after publication of the amendment in the *Official Journal*.

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