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EU Wants to Allow Banned Chemicals in Household Products

Loophole will give banned flame retardants a second life in consumers' homes

Geneva/Brussels – Public interest groups are calling on the European Commission to ban the recycling of materials containing toxic flame retardants. In a [letter](#) delivered this morning, the Centre for International Environmental Law, the European Environmental Bureau, Women in Europe for Common Future and IPEN, supported by a host of NGOs worldwide, highlighted the need to stop DecaBDE [1] reappearing in recycled products. The issue will be addressed by both the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) in September and the Stockholm Convention POPs Review committee in October.

“Recycling DecaBDE products would offer a second-life to toxic substance exposure in new goods and create an endless hazardous legacy loop” said David Azoulay, Senior attorney with the Center for International Environmental Law (Ciel). “These chemicals would be almost impossible to track and their inclusion in recycled products would exponentially increase toxins released into the environment and wildlife, and endanger human health.”

Mr Azoulay said it was “common sense” not to allow these chemicals to be recycled. “If the EU is serious about eliminating the toxic threats posed by POPs, it must not seek a recycling exemption to the Stockholm Convention for flame retardants.”

Tatiana Santos, Senior Policy Officer on Chemicals and Nanotechnology from the EEB added: “Toxic recycling is the main obstacle to the Circular Economy. The Circular Economy can contribute both to safer waste management operations and to higher quality and more competitive material outputs. However, by promoting a toxic circular economy, the EU is undermining the goals set down in the 7th Environmental Action

Programme of a non-toxic environment and non-toxic material cycles.”

“When it comes to toxic chemicals, we need a red line, not a circle,” said Joe DiGangi, IPEN Senior Science and Technical Advisor. “Toxic recycling means poisoned products for EU consumers and increased waste dumping in developing countries.”

ECHA’s Committee for Social Economic Analysis (SEAC) will meet on 8-10 September to decide on its recommendation.

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Notes for editors:

[1] DecaBDE is a toxic flame retardant mainly used in plastics for electronic and electrical equipment and in textiles. The substance is bioaccumulative, meaning it accumulates in living organisms and persistent, thereby staying in the environment for years. It also has potential adverse effects on human and animal hormone, reproductive, and nervous systems.

[Center for International Environmental Law \(CIEL\)](http://www.ciel.org) - Founded in 1989, the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) uses the power of law to protect the environment, promote human rights, and ensure a just and sustainable society. CIEL is dedicated to advocacy in the global public interest through legal counsel, policy research, analysis, education, training, and capacity building.

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[IPEN’s](http://www.ipen.org) mission is a toxics-free future for all. The IPEN network is comprised of more than 700 public-interest organizations in 116 countries. IPEN leaders include grassroots activists and nationally and internationally recognized experts in the fields of science, health, environment and public policy.

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The [European Environmental Bureau](http://www.eeb.org) is Europe's largest federation of environmental organisations with more than 140 members who gain their membership from the general public. Because of this, we are guided by the voices of 15 million European citizens, and act as the ears and voice of its members towards EU decision makers.

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Founded in 1994, Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF) is an international network of over 150 women's, environmental and health organisations implementing projects in 50 countries and advocating globally for a healthy environment for all.

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