



Press release

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i2a argues against a wider RoHS ban that includes antimony trioxide

i2a has followed with great interest the ongoing discussions at EU level on which substances to include in the RoHS directive (Restrictions of Hazardous Substances in electrical and electronic equipment). In the recently released document from UK MEP Mrs Jill Evans of the Green/EFA group, the Commission is asked to amend the RoHS Directive with seventy-four (74) amendments.

Amendment 69 requests the inclusion of antimony trioxide in the next review of the RoHS Directive, based on the fact that the Öko-institute concluded in October 2008 that 'currently no further action is needed' on antimony trioxide. However the Öko-institute based its decision on the fact that at that time, the EU Risk Assessment Report on Antimony Trioxide (ATO), which was carried out under existing Substance Regulation 793/93 with Sweden as Rapporteur, was not yet finalized. The Öko-Institute therefore considered it impossible to give the Commission a justified recommendation on including antimony trioxide in the RoHS Directive.

In fact, the EU Risk Assessment Report on ATO is now finalized and publicly available¹. Furthermore, the same data was submitted at international level, and in October 2008 these same scientific results were approved at OECD level². The uniform conclusion of all the international and independent experts was that there is no risk for consumers if ATO is used in consumer goods such as mobile phones or in any other E&E application.

Antimony Trioxide (ATO) provides unique properties not easily obtained from other products when used in industrial processes, the main benefit being increased fire safety. Use of ATO as flame retardant synergist results in higher levels of fire safety in the home, as well as in public places like cinemas, trains, metro carriages and aircrafts. Use of ATO makes the choice of certain plastics in consumer products possible such as computer casings and TV sets that might otherwise pose a significant fire hazard (international fire regulations require inherently flammable materials to be treated with flame retardant chemicals). ATO greatly increases flame retardant effectiveness when used as a synergist in combination with halogenated flame retardants in plastics, paints, adhesives, sealants, rubber and textile back coatings.

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¹ EU Risk Assessment on ATO, 2008: http://ecb.jrc.ec.europa.eu/DOCUMENTS/Existing-Chemicals/RISK_ASSESSMENT/REPORT/datreport415.pdf

² Document approved by OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) on ATO, 2008: <http://cs3-hq.oecd.org/scripts/hpv/Status/DownloadFile.ASP?CASNUM=1309644&StatusCode=SIARC&DataNo=1>



The International Antimony Association (i2a) is a non-profit association with a mission to conduct studies and disseminate information concerning the safety and benefits of antimony compounds. It does so by providing access, for producers and importers of antimony compounds worldwide, to the data on the environmental, health and safety regulations of these antimony compounds, and sharing and providing information on the content of that data.

i2a trusts that technical performance information and scientifically based risk assessments (including future REACH Dossiers) will continue to be the basis of future decisions on which substances to use in what applications. The advantage of REACH is that finally all chemicals, including the potential alternatives if they exist, have to come up with good scientific data to prove that they can be safely used by man and do not harm the environment when used in the proper way.

Sincerely Yours,

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