



EU Environment Report

April 2012

CHEMICALS

New ban on cadmium in batteries proposed by EC

The European Commission has proposed a ban on cadmium in batteries for cordless power tools (CPT), one of the last remaining uses of the substance permitted under the Batteries Directive. The proposed ban would take effect from 1 January 2016. The Batteries Directive bans the sale of batteries containing more than 0.002% cadmium by weight, and currently exempts CPT, alarm systems, and medical equipment.

The proposed Directive is available here:

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/12/st08/st08245.en12.pdf>

Commission review of nanosilver

The European Commission's committee on emerging and newly-identified health risks (SCENIHR) is currently collecting information on the health and environmental effects of nanosilver used in various medical and consumer products. The consultation was prompted by MEPs who called for a nanosilver ban in electrical and electronic products under the RoHS directive, and some NGOs which have advocated for restricting its use in consumer goods until a more thorough risk assessment has been carried out. Nanosilver, which is antimicrobial in nature, has caused some concern due to its effects on bacteria in sewage works and rivers, and due to the possibility that its continued use could lead to antibiotic resistance. The consultation runs until 4 June 2012. The information received by SCENIHR will then be incorporated into a commission review expected to be completed by early 2013.

The consultation on nanosilver is available here:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consultations/calls/scenih_r_call_info_12_en.htm

Sweden considers new BPA ban for children's food packaging

Sweden has notified the European Commission and other member states of its proposal to ban bisphenol A (BPA) from packaging for food and drink products aimed at children under the age of three. The ban would mainly affect jar lids for baby food, as most children's food sold in Sweden already comes in BPA-free packaging. The Swedish government is considering restrictions in other product areas and has asked Kemi, Sweden's chemical agency, to investigate BPA in products such as thermal paper used for tickets and till receipts, and also its use in epoxies used to relined old water pipes. Kemi's final recommendations are expected in December 2013.

The press release is available here:

<http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/15926/a/190565>

In this issue...

Chemicals

New ban on cadmium in batteries proposed by EC

Commission review of nanosilver

Sweden considers new BPA ban for children's food packaging

Dry cleaning activities to be restricted in France

New lead ban proposed in Sweden under REACH

New ECHA Guidance on data sharing under REACH

Climate Change

EU Parliament says "no" to new Commission fuel tax proposal

Waste

ECJ rules on disclosure requirements on waste shipment documents

Other

MEPs and EU member states agree on Seveso II revisions

The Month Ahead

Workshops & Conferences

This newsletter briefly describes EU environment developments.

Due to the general nature of its content, this newsletter is not and should not be regarded as legal advice.

Dry cleaning activities to be restricted in France

France is tightening its regulations on dry cleaning machines which use the solvent perchloroethylene, seeking to ban new machines from being located too close to homes and ban existing machines without the French NF quality certificate from 2018. The use of machines bearing the label is allowed until 2022. From 2014, machines that are 15+ years old will be banned, and dry cleaning activities must halt in areas where perchloroethylene surpasses the recommended threshold. According to environment commissioner Janez Potocnik, perchloroethylene could face tighter restrictions under REACH regulations following a substance review next year.

New lead ban proposed in Sweden under REACH

Sweden plans to further restrict the use of lead and lead compounds in consumer products next year. According to Swedish chemicals agency Kemi, the restrictions will likely cover furnishings, clothes, and other children's items. This initiative is intended mainly to protect children, in light of recent research suggesting that in childhood there are no safe limits for lead exposure.

The REACH registry of intentions is available here:

<http://echa.europa.eu/web/guest/addressing-chemicals-of-concern/registry-of-intentions>

New ECHA Guidance on data sharing under REACH

On 3 April 2012, the European Chemicals Agency published an update to the Guidance on data sharing with the intent to improve the overall coherence of the text and to narrow the Guidance's focus to Title III of the REACH Regulation on data sharing and avoidance of unnecessary testing. The update includes new sections regarding a comprehensive set of information on the data sharing process for phase-in and non-phase-in substances. Additional new sections include: data sharing dispute processes, new and/or improved examples, and post-registration data sharing obligations.

The press release is available here:

http://www.echa.europa.eu/en/web/guest/view-article/-/journal_content/9fe416a2-1f85-4ec2-a98b-e298f421c87b

CLIMATE CHANGE

EU Parliament says "no" to new Commission fuel tax proposal

On Thursday 19 April 2012, the European Parliament rejected the recommendations of its economic and monetary affairs committee and voted against a proposal by the European Commission that would require member states to tax fuels based on their energy content and carbon emissions. Adoption of the proposal would have eliminated the tax advantage diesel has over petrol, causing widespread concern that this would penalise those who have invested in more fuel-efficient diesel-running vehicles. The Parliament's vote, however, is unlikely to have a significant impact on the direction of the proposal, given that it is ultimately up to the member states to decide whether or not it becomes law. Other notable outcomes of the plenary session include the removal of a sunset date for an existing provision setting a lower tax on diesel for commercial use, and a widening of the definition of commercial diesel, which now consists of its use in goods vehicles (and not only in vehicles heavier than 7.5 tonnes).

The press release is available here:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/pressroom/content/20120419IPR43406/html/Parliament-opposes-phase-out-of-diesel-tax-advantage>

WASTE

ECJ rules on disclosure requirements on waste shipment documents

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled in late March 2012 that waste shipment documents must disclose the name of the producer or collector even if there is a risk of damaging the business's interests. The ECJ maintained that protecting business secrets is a general principle of EU law, but said that the disclosure of and access to shipment documents is the "inevitable consequence" of the tracking procedure established in the EU. The ECJ's ruling comes from a case initially brought to a German court by scrap metal dealer Interseroh, who claimed that its business had suffered after having been obliged to disclose the names of its suppliers.

The judgment is available here:

<http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?jsessionid=9ea7d2dc30db0d6ced7e6864c25b3cef00c648c7d94.e34Kaxilc3qMb40Rch0SaxuKaNf0?text=&docid=121166&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=doc&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=82951>

OTHER

MEPs and EU member states agree on Seveso II revisions

EU member states and MEPs have agreed on revisions to the Seveso II Directive on major accident hazards, following discussions which mainly focused on the scope of the 1996 directive and rules on public access to information and justice. These changes were required to ensure Seveso's compliance with new rules on chemical classification, labelling, and packaging (CLP). The changes also extend disclosure rules to lower-tier sites, and require more information following recent inspections and major accidents. Additionally, other non-Seveso sites are accounted for in the final revisions. A full vote in Parliament is to take place in June this year, followed by ministers' approval sometime in the second half of the year.

The press release is available here: <http://eu2012.dk/en/NewsList/Marts/Uge-13/Seveso>

The Month Ahead

8 May

CLUES Conference, Energy in the Locality: A day-conference to explore local energy case studies in urban and rural locations, London, UK

<http://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/planning/events/clues-conference-2012>

8 May

Air Quality in Europe: State of Play and Policy Outlook, Brussels, Belgium

<http://lapaz.dnn-box.eu/iframes/registration.asp?EventID=1538>

13-18 May

World Congress on Water, Climate & Energy 2012, Dublin, Ireland

<http://iwa-wcedublin.org/>

14-17 May

7th Annual International Symposium on Environment, Athens, Greece

<http://www.atiner.gr/environment.htm>

14-18 May

E-MRS 2012 Spring Meeting, Strasbourg, France

http://www.emrs-strasbourg.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=428&Itemid=160

15 May

3rd Annual Brussels Carbon & Storage Summit, Brussels, Belgium

<http://www.environmental-expert.com/downloads/3rd-annual-brussels-carbon-storage-summit-2012-brochure-285973>

15-16 May

Second WTO meeting on renewable energy disputes opened to the public, Geneva, Switzerland

http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news12_e/hear_ds412_426_26apr12_e.htm

16-18 May

IX International conference "CIS Fertilizers 2012", Odessa, Ukraine

www.cisfert.com

21-24 May

Alternative+G2600 Futures — The Alternative Futures Conference 2012, Newcastle, NSW, Australia

<http://www.alternativefutures.com.au>

21-27 May

12th World Congress on Environmental Health: New Technologies, Healthy Human Beings and Environment, Vilnius, Lithuania

<http://www.ifeh2012.org/welcome>

23 May

Water security policies for better access, Brussels, Belgium

<http://www.friendsofeurope.org/Contentnavigation/Events/Eventsoverview/tabid/1187/EventType/EventView/EventId/1124/WatersecurityPoliciesforbetteraccess.aspx>

24-25 May

Gas Infrastructure Europe (GIE) Annual Conference, Krakow, Poland

<http://www.gie.eu/index.php/annual-conference-2012-home>

28 May – 2 June

BALWOIS 2012 — Fifth International Scientific Conference on Water, Climate and Environment, Ohrid, Macedonia

<http://www.balwois.com/2012>

29-31 May

7th ITU Symposium on ICTs, the Environment and Climate Change, Geneva, Switzerland

<http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/worksem/climatechange/201205/index.html>

30-31 May

Strategic Risk in the Oil & Gas Industry, London, UK

<http://www.informaglobalevents.com/appdata/downloads/strategic-risk-oil-gas-industry//PK1171StrategicRiskOilandGas.pdf>

30 May – 1 June

Carbon Expo 2012, Cologne, Germany

<http://www.carbonexpo.com>

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