

FoE calls for EU action on bisphenol-A



Push for ban on BPA, inclusion on REACH candidate list

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Friends of the Earth Europe has accused European regulators of shirking their responsibility to recognise the risks of bisphenol-A (BPA) even after Canadian legislators have proposed bans of the substances in certain applications that would expose infants ([*CW 22 April 2008*](#)).

A new report - 'Blissfully unaware of BPA' - accuses the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), the European Commission and EU Member States of overlooking what it describes as the now "overwhelming evidence" on the possible endocrine disrupting effects of BPA at low doses.

The report, published today, was timed to coincide with a meeting of EFSA's scientific panel on food additives, flavourings, processing aids and materials in contact with food (AFC), which ended yesterday. The panel was due to discuss a request from the European Commission for it to review its January 2007 report in which it concluded that infants' and children's exposure to BPA was well below its recommended tolerable daily intake level of 0.05 milligram/kg body weight.

While EFSA has promised another statement on BPA in July, coordinator of FoE's safer chemicals campaign David Azoulay says he has little faith in the panel revising its opinion because it was not using new methodology to review the evidence that would allow acceptance of the low-dose effects characteristic of endocrine disrupting chemicals. He says this has been confirmed to him by regulatory sources.

FoE also alleges that the former AFC panel, which from today is replaced by two new panels – was biased towards industry. In its report, it points to potential conflicts of interest for each member.

Another of FoE's demands is for BPA to be put on the REACH candidate list as a substance requiring authorisation for its continued use. Mr Azoulay said he was worried that Member States would put off consideration of endocrine disrupting substances until after 2013 when they are due to review how to apply authorisation procedures to such substances.

However, it seems the risks of BPA may be reviewed sooner. A spokesperson for the UK government, which is rapporteur for the EU risk assessment of BPA, said the dossier would be “under active consideration within the early months of specific substance assessment under REACH.” They pointed out that dossier is categorised as “unfinished business” under the EU existing substances Regulation, which was repealed on 31 May 2008 as REACH took effect. A number of such dossiers will continue to be examined under transitional arrangements.

The UK's Environment Agency and Health and Safety Executive, in their joint role as UK REACH competent authority, are now putting together a proposed strategy for BPA. “In this context, the UK will put to ECHA in autumn 2008 a proposed position on BPA for consideration by all EU Member States”, the spokesperson said.

The Canadian government's announcement has triggered a number of regulatory reactions in North America and has prompted many retailers to withdraw BPA-containing polycarbonate products from the shelves in advance of any legal decisions (*CW European Business Briefing June 2008*).

- [Blissfully unaware of BPA](#)
- [CW Article 22 April 2008](#)
- [CW European Business Briefing June 2008](#)