

EU SCIENTIFIC EXPERTS ENDORSE KEY CONCLUSIONS FOR PROPOSED EU DIRECTIVE ON NICKEL-CADMIUM BATTERIES

The EU's scientific experts (the CSTEE¹) have issued their opinion on the EU Risk Assessment for Cadmium and a Targeted Risk Assessment Report (TRAR) on the use of cadmium in nickel-cadmium rechargeable batteries. This long awaited TRAR, which has already been endorsed by the 15 Member States' technical experts, is a vital tool for decision makers in the ongoing debate on the proposed new EU Battery Directive.

Mr. Robert Goodwill (former shadow Rapporteur on the Battery Directive at the EU Parliament) welcomes the finalization of the TRAR stating: "Sound scientific risk assessment must form the basis of good regulation and there should be no exception for the Battery directive. This assessment must be taken into account in finalizing the proposed Directive."

The CSTEE opinion

- describes the contribution of nickel-cadmium batteries to the overall exposure of cadmium to environment as "negligible".
- states that "the contribution of cadmium exposure from sources other than nickel-cadmium batteries represents the main component in the overall exposure level for most estimations".
- further states that 90 to 100% of cadmium in the environment is related to other sources.

The Risk Assessment itself confirms that the contribution of cadmium from nickel-cadmium batteries is generally less than 1% of the total input of cadmium to the environment.

These conclusions indicate that any reductions in use of nickel-cadmium batteries would not have any significant effect on the overall inputs of cadmium to the environment.

¹ the CSTEE, the Scientific Committee for Toxicology, Eco-Toxicology and Environment is an independent scientific body from which the Commission requests to produce opinions on risk assessments conducted in the context of Council Regulation 793/93 (existing substances regulations).

The battery industry is fully supportive of the use of regulation to stimulate collection and recycling of nickel cadmium batteries and is committed to building on recent trends in raising collection and recycling rates. This reflects a commitment to efficient use of resources and minimization of waste in line with principles of sustainable development.

Industry is strongly encouraging the EU Council and EU Parliament to take into account the findings of the TRAR as previously considered by the Commission in the draft Battery Directive proposal of November 2003.

In line with the EU Inter-Institutional Agreement on Better Law making, the TRAR constitutes an important basis on which good legislation should be prepared particularly for products containing substances classified as hazardous.

References:

Link to CSTEE Opinion :

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_risk/committees/sct/documents/out229_en.pdf

Link to TRAR on ECB web site

http://ecb.jrc.it/Documents/Existing-chemicals/RISK_ASSESSMENT/DRAFT/R303_0307_env_hh.pdf

Link to www.cadmium.org

Link to www.collectnicad.org

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