

## **Leading Electronics companies and Environmental organisations urge EU to restrict more hazardous substances in their electronic products in 2015 to avoid more dioxin formation**

(Brussels – 30. May 2010) EU legislators are now in the process of deciding future restrictions on hazardous substances in electronics through the EU Restrictions on Hazardous Substances (RoHS) directive.<sup>1</sup> An alliance consisting<sup>1</sup> of Acer, Dell, HP and Sony Ericsson, together with public interest organisations ChemSec, Clean Production Action and the European Environmental Bureau, call on EU legislators to restrict the use of all brominated flame retardants (BFR) and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) in electronics starting with RoHS categories 3 and 4 (IT and telecommunications equipment and consumer equipment, respectively) put on the market from end of 2015 onwards. Exemptions should be allowed for the use of restricted substances in applications where current substitution is not technically feasible as shown via the EU RoHS exemption process.

The current RoHS Directive restricts some heavy metals and two types of BFRs. The alliance is calling for restrictions on all brominated substances as well as PVC in parallel to establishing a robust methodology for future restrictions. The methodology to select a substance for restriction, in EEE or waste derived from it, should be based on an impact assessment taking into account the precautionary principle. The impact assessment must take into account:

- i. Scientific evidence of:
  - The potential to release hazardous substances to the environment, throughout any of the life cycle phases, including substances from transformation/degradation products and including emissions from substandard treatment outside the EU (e.g. dioxins), or
  - Negative impact to health and environment of the substance and on preparing for the reuse of EEE and recycling of WEEE, or
  - Exposure of workers involved in end of life stages of treatment of WEEE, or
  - The feasibility and profitability of reuse and recycling;
- ii. Assessment of the impacts of alternative materials or design changes in relation to all the same factors ;
- iii. Assessment of technical reliability and availability of the alternative materials and design changes where availability means ready to use.

**The Alliance feels that these elements are generally reflected in the consolidated amendment package 3a and 3b dated 26 May 2010, and supports the direction of that package. The Alliance also calls for an inclusion of the assessment of impacts of alternatives and their technical reliability and availability, as outlined in points ii. and iii. above. The Alliance also believes that PVC and BFRs, starting with the categories and timeline mentioned above, should be restricted via annex IV (as in consolidated amendment 7a-f). Annex III listing of these substances (for example as in consolidated amendments 4a-d), while not what the Alliance is asking for, should be supported in absence of that option.**

---

<sup>1</sup> Each company is speaking only for the product sets they sell. For specific on each manufacturer position please see their respective websites.

The European Parliament Environment Committee will vote on the RoHS proposal on 2 June. The European Parliament will consider the directive in plenary in July 2010.

#### Perspectives from the NGOs:

- “The supply chain can indeed provide safer substitutes for these hazardous substances,” adds ChemSec Senior Policy Advisor Nardono Nimpuno. “Our recent research report testifies to the fact that alternatives are available, cost effective and suppliers are ready to scale up their production of these alternative materials.<sup>ii</sup>”
- Alexandra McPherson, Managing Partner at Clean Production Action, “Strong substance restrictions in RoHS will drive the global market place in the electronic sector towards substances and materials that are safer for human health and the environment. Companies committed to innovation and green chemistry have paid a premium for safer products, we now need RoHS to level the playing field.”
- “The objective of the RoHS directive is to protect human health and the environment and to contribute to environmentally sound recovery and disposal of electrical and electronic equipment”, explains Christian Schaible of the European Environmental Bureau, EEB. “EU lawmakers should accordingly take this opportunity to eliminate these hazardous substances in the products mentioned above that are having a negative impact on recycling and the conservation of resources”.

This alliance of businesses and NGOs is calling on the EU to recognize the ability of these substances to generate highly hazardous dioxins and other substances of concern when these substances are burned in substandard treatment sites outside the EU. The export of e-waste for disposal is banned under EU law but much e-waste makes its way to substandard treatment operations in Asia, Africa and Latin America under the guise of re-use and recycling.

When burned in substandard treatment sites PVC and brominated flame retardants have the potential to transform into some of the most toxic chemicals ever made by humans, dioxins and furans. Dioxins and furans are global pollutants that are highly persistent in the environment and can cause cancer, birth defects and neurological damage. Chlorinated dioxins are generated from the burning of PVC plastic and have been classified as one of the top global pollutants by the International Stockholm Convention. Brominated flame retardants also have the potential to generate dioxins in substandard treatment and their presence in products has been shown to present risks to workers in substandard shredding facilities. Both pathways have been documented recently by researchers from UMEA University in a report compiled for the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (draft report March 2010<sup>iii</sup>).

A recent research report released by ChemSec demonstrates that most applications of PVC and BFRs have been removed from over 500 product models on the market today, including mobile phones, computers, washing machines, coffee machines and TVs. Products from 28 companies, among them Acer, Apple, Dell, HP, Nokia, Philips, Samsung and Sony Ericsson, are listed in the report.

#### Perspectives from the IT industry:

- “The transition away from environmentally sensitive substances, such as brominated flame retardants and PVC is well under way at Acer. However we do not have the leverage to move the entire supply-chain on our own. Legislators can help in this process”, explains Richard Lai, head of Corporate Sustainability Office at Acer. “By introducing restrictions, and thereby

ensuring that the entire supply-chain is on board, costs are kept down and availability of safer alternative material is promoted.”

- “Dell supports including BFRs and PVC among the substances restricted by RoHS, as well as a full ban on these substances in 2015,” said Mark Newton, Dell’s director of sustainability. “Given the ongoing discussions in the EU Institutions on the RoHS recast, we hope EU decision makers revise RoHS to prohibit the use of PVC and BFRs in electrical and electronic equipment.”
- “HP is working with suppliers globally to remove these chemicals from personal computing product lines”, said Ray Moskaluk at HP. “We support these restrictions in a revised RoHS directive.”
- Sony Ericsson is committed to a complete phase-out of halogenated organic substances from its products, and at the current time has phased out almost all brominated flame retardants (BFR),” said Daniel Paska, Environmental Expert at Sony Ericsson. “We believe the electronics industry has a responsibility to move proactively to find substitutes to replace BFR and PVC and are therefore calling on EU legislators to show leadership on this issue by voting to tighten the RoHS directive.”

*Contact Details:*

**Acer:** Richard Lai, Corporate Sustainability Office, ACER Inc., +886. 2.8691.3140, [richardlai@acer.com.tw](mailto:richardlai@acer.com.tw)

**Dell:** Mark Newton, Senior Manager Environmental Sustainability, DELL Inc., +1.512.724.2236, [mark\\_D\\_Newton@dell.com](mailto:mark_D_Newton@dell.com)

<http://i.dell.com/sites/content/corporate/environment/en/Documents/chemical-use-policy.pdf>

**HP:** Sara Rodriguez Martinez, EMEA Government Affairs, Hewlett Packard Company +32 475 907711, [sara.rodriguez-martinez@hp.com](mailto:sara.rodriguez-martinez@hp.com)

<http://www.hp.com/hpinfo/globalcitizenship/environment/pdf/leadposition.pdf>

**Sony Ericsson:** Daniel Paska, Environmental Expert, SONY ERICSSON Mobile Communications, +46 1080 10223, [daniel.paska@sonyericsson.com](mailto:daniel.paska@sonyericsson.com)

Merran Wrigley, Head of External communications and PR, SONY ERICSSON Mobile Communications, +44 7887 628358, [merran.wrigley@sonyericsson.com](mailto:merran.wrigley@sonyericsson.com)

<http://www.sonyericsson.com/cws/corporate/company/sustainability/consciousdesign>

**ChemSec:** Nardono Nimpuno, Senior policy advisor, +46736939617, [nardono@chemsec.org](mailto:nardono@chemsec.org)

**Clean Production Action:** Alexandra McPherson, Managing Partner, [alexandra@cleanproduction.org](mailto:alexandra@cleanproduction.org), 716-805-1056

**European Environmental Bureau:** Christian Schaible, EU Policy Officer Industrial Policies and Chemicals, +32(0)2.289.10.94 [christian.schaible@eeb.org](mailto:christian.schaible@eeb.org)

---

<sup>i</sup>The EU RoHS Directive, restricting the use of hazardous substances in electronic and electrical equipment, is currently under review. Since 2006 RoHS restricts the use of two groups of brominated flame retardants and four heavy metals, among them lead and mercury.

<sup>ii</sup>Greening Consumer Electronics report 2009. See <http://www.chemsec.org/news/385-new-chemsec-report-apple-sony-ericsson-and-suppliers-are-removing-chlorine-and-bromine-from-electronics>

<sup>iii</sup>Health hazards and environmental impacts associated with recycling and disposal of electronic waste. Naturvårdsverket, Sverige. Compiled for the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency Author: Staffan Lundstedt, Department of Chemistry Umeå University. Draft report March 2010.