Ref.: LDE/022009039/cm

10 February 2009

Declaration on banning Bisphenol A in babies' bottles

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

We are writing on behalf of consumer, environmental and health NGOs to ask for your support in relation to the attached Written Declaration on banning Bisphenol A in babies' bottles (Nr. 0106/2008). This declaration has been tabled by MEPs Hanne Dahl, Christel Schaldemose, Hélène Goudin and Carl Schlyter and is open for signature until 4 April.

Bisphenol A (BPA) is a plastic chemical widely used in a range of products but mostly in polycarbonate plastics, making the material hard and shatterproof. Unfortunately, this chemical has been shown to migrate, especially if the material is scratched, heated or comes in contact with warm liquids. This migration is worrying in more than one way; a number of scientific studies have already shown that when BPA enters the body, it increases the risk of several serious health conditions. We find it unacceptable that young children are exposed to these risks.

To be more specific, several scientific reports have demonstrated that:

- Bisphenol A is an endocrine disrupting chemical (i.e. it affects and disturbs the hormonal system)[1]. It has been proven that even at very low doses BPA disturbs the reproductive system in mice, thereby causing a multigenerational problem[2].
- Bisphenol A has been included to the candidate list of endocrine disrupting compounds established by DG Environment in the context of the implementation of the EU Community Strategy for Endocrine Disrupters3. It has been identified as a priority substance with evidence of endocrine disrupting activity in at least one species (Category 1).
- A recent study has pointed to the possible correlation in humans between levels of BPA in urine and heart disease, diabetes and other serious diseases[4].
- Several studies have concluded that BPA may increase the risks of cancer[5].
- A study in which primates were exposed to the tolerable daily intake set by the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA), the results indicated possible signs of brain function damage and mood disorders[6].

In Canada, after a risk assessment undertaken by government authorities equivalent to EFSA, Bisphenol A is about to be classified as a toxic substance. The Canadian government has thus decided to take measures in order to protect its citizens and the environment. It has reached this conclusion in particular because it recognizes the potential effects of exposure to Bisphenol A even at low doses (e.g. below the tolerable daily intake level).

.../...

Although there are still gaps in the knowledge about possible (long term) health risks posed by BPA, there is enough evidence for applying a precautionary approach in the European Union. As a precautionary measure, the use of this chemical should be prohibited in babies' bottles.

Of course, we also believe that other routes of exposure to Bisphenol A need to be addressed, such as those of women before and during pregnancy. We therefore consider that Bisphenol A should be put on the EU chemicals law REACH "Candidate List" as soon as possible.

For your information, Friends of the Earth Europe' comprehensive scientific review on Bisphenol A can be found at:
http://www.foeeurope.org/safer_chemicals/Blissfully_unaware_of_BPA_report.pdf Also find the joint FoEE and Health & Environment Alliance consumer guide at:
http://www.env-health.org/IMG/pdf/15_foee_bisphenol_cons_lr.pdf
Printed copies of both can be obtained in the Parliament's building from MEP Hélène Goudin's office.

We urge you to sign up to the Written Declaration on banning Bisphenol A in babies' bottles and to call on your national ministry responsible for chemicals management[7] to nominate BPA for the REACH Candidate List.

Yours sincerely,

Laura Degallaix
The European Consumers' Organisation (BEUC)
Tel: +32 2 743 15 93
www.beuc.eu

Lisette van Vliet
Health & Environment Alliance (HEAL)
Tel: +32 2 234 3645
www.chemicalshealthmonitor.org

Nicole van Gemert / Sonja Haider
Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF)
Tel: +31-30-2310300
www.wecf.eu

Patricia Cameron
Friends of the Earth (FoE)
Tel: + 49 30 275 86426
www.foeeurope.org

---

[1] Okada H, Tokunaga T, Liu X, Takayanagi S, Matsushima A, Shimohigashi Y (2008) http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?tool=pmcentrez&artid=2199305; Vom Saal, F.S et al. Reproductive Toxicology vol 24, 2, 2007.

[2] Bisphenol A Exposure in Utero Disrupts Early Oogenesis in the Mouse. Susiarjo M, Hassold TJ, Freeman E. and P A Hunt, 2007.
http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/picrender.fcgi?artid=1781485&blobtype=pdf

[3] COM (1999)706.

[4] Lang Iain A.; Galloway Tamara S.; Scarlett Alan; Henley William E.; Depledge Michael; Wallace Robert B.; Melzer David, 2008 (http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/300/11/1303

[5] For example *Does Breast Cancer Start in the Womb?* Soto Ana M et al 2008.; Wetherill YB et al 2002; Markey CM et al 200, and Perinatal exposure to oestadiol and Bisphenol A alters the prostate epigenome and increases susceptibility to carcinogenesis, Prins, Tang, Belmonte, Ho, 2008, Basic and clinical pharmacology and toxicology, vol 102:2.

[6] Bisphenol A prevents the synaptogenic response to estradiol in hippocampus and prefrontal cortex of ovariectomized nonhuman primates. Leranth Csaba et al 2008. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, vol 105, 37.

[7] A listing of 'Competent Authorities' can be found at (see page 44-46):
http://www.env-health.org/IMG/pdf/22_chemical_r_activist_web.pdf