

PRESS RELEASE

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EU Proposes Ban of Highly Hazardous Biocides

The European Commission published a draft for the revision of the ten-year old EC Biocidal Products Directive (BPD) 98/8/EC which regulates the authorisation and placing on the market of approx. 50,000 products, such as moth spray, disinfectants or wood preservatives within the EU. PAN calls for improvements.

In its proposed regulation published on 12 June 2009 the Commission announced its intention to ban in the future the use of biocides which are carcinogenic, have a negative impact on reproduction or are mutagen, or influence the endocrine system. Furthermore, the draft intends to label articles and materials treated with biocides, e.g. textiles with antibacterial additives or carpets fitted against moth damage.

The aim with this labelling is to protect consumers against hazardous substances prohibited within the EU, but which are still used abroad; for example, pentachlorophenol (PCP). Treated leather couches or anti-sweat socks containing authorised biocides should be labelled in the future, and if necessary, hazard statements should be added.

Susanne Smolka, expert for biocides at PAN Germany: "We welcome the draft of the European Commission as it strengthens consumer protection and increases transparency. However, the draft is in urgent need of improvements. For example, exclusion criteria for particularly hazardous environmental properties are urgently needed."

Examples of biocidal products released directly into the environment are the anti-fouling paint used on ships' hulls, or the increasingly common façade protection against fungi and algae used on buildings. Studies prove that significant quantities of environmentally harmful substances are washed out of the façades during rain.

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PAN position paper "Main Issues on the Further Development of the EC Biocidal Products Directive from the Point of View of German Environmental, Consumer and Animal Welfare Organisations", March 2008, see:

http://www.pan-germany.org/download/BPD-Revision_NGOs%20main%20issues.pdf

