PlasticsEurope
Association of Plastics Manufacturers

Polycarbonate / Bisphenol A Group

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Letter for Publication

TCE, on page 6 of its October edition, carried an article about plastic waste in the oceans. Bisphenol A (BPA) was mentioned as a substance released from decomposing plastics. However, Bisphenol A - based materials are not used for one-way packaging. Polycarbonate – one of the key polymers based on BPA - is a high performance material used mainly for long service life applications. It is therefore very unlikely that significant amounts of it will be found in marine plastic debris. In fact, monitoring studies have not found significant levels of Bisphenol A in the marine environment.

The European Risk Assessment for BPA, carried out by Member State scientists under strict European rules and probably the most comprehensive and authoritative study of the risks of BPA ever performed, concluded that Bisphenol A biodegrades *rapidly (?)* in marine waters. Therefore, it does not accumulate in the environment. It is thus highly unlikely that any BPA will enter the food chain via this route. The risk assessment also concluded that BPA is not a carcinogen and that it does not adversely affect reproduction.

TCE is published for the members of one of the leading engineering institutions in the UK. There are safety issues surrounding almost everything that chemicals engineers do and the products which their companies make. Everybody in the profession and in the industry supports high levels of care and safety. That's why it is important that we get these things right. For those interested, more information about BPA can be found on the industry information website www.bisphenol-a-europe.org.

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