

Friends of the Earth report ignores EU's own science

The report issued by Friends of the Earth on July 10 – “*Blissfully unaware of Bisphenol A: Reasons why regulators should live up to their responsibilities*” constitutes a groundless attack on the very basis of the European chemicals safety system.

By focusing on Bisphenol A (BPA), an extensively researched substance shown to be safe by the most rigorous regulatory procedures, it undermines the integrity of the system and the numerous government scientists who operate it.

The latest European Union (EU) risk assessment of BPA, published in June 2008, re-confirmed that BPA-based materials such as polycarbonate or epoxy resins pose no risk to the public or the environment when used as intended. Consumers can continue to use BPA-based products with confidence.

Such risk assessments are carried out by expert government scientists, not by industry, and are reviewed by the most senior scientific committees of the EU.

In their updated BPA risk assessment these experts considered several hundreds of studies that appeared during recent years, among them both small exploratory studies that do not follow established protocols, as well as comprehensive, statistically-robust studies following accepted international protocols and standards, such as the Good Laboratory Practice Directive. It also covered all potentially affected age groups of consumers including babies and small children.

It is an established principle that EU risk assessments must use the best available science. EFSA, the European Food Safety Authority, works on similar principles.

Contrary to these principles, the Friends of the Earth document cherry picks alarmist reports and includes studies which were rejected by the EU's high-level assessors as unreliable.

Friends of the Earth argues that regulators should “*live up to their responsibilities*”. Perhaps it should question whether ignoring the overwhelming opinions of the EU's principle research institutions can itself be described as “responsible action”.

The EU risk assessment reports on BPA are available to the public on the website of the European Chemicals Bureau:

http://ecb.jrc.it/documents/Existing-Chemicals/RISK_ASSESSMENT/ADDENDUM/bisphenola_add_325.pdf

BPA is used for the manufacture of polycarbonate plastic and epoxy resins, valuable materials found in a wide range of consumer and industrial products. The shatter-resistance, safety, clarity, and durability of polycarbonate plastic make it a material of choice for products as diverse as baby bottles, CDs, safety and other glasses, electrical and electronic equipment, drinking bottles, and even aircraft cockpit windows. Epoxy resins are used in a variety of applications in the electrical, electronics, transport, construction and aerospace industry. Food cans lined with epoxy based coatings contribute to the hygienic and safe conservation of food.

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