

EU bans BPA in thermal paper

Concerns to focus next on potential substitute BPS

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A committee of member state officials on Wednesday backed a proposed EU ban on thermal paper containing bisphenol A (BPA). This paves the way for its formal adoption shortly.



The ban, which takes the form of a Regulation amending REACH's list of restrictions (Annex XVII), was originally proposed by France in 2014. It was then supported by Echa's Risk Assessment and Socio-economic Analysis Committees (Rac and Seac).

France says BPA affects many human health endpoints. These include the female reproductive system, the brain and behaviour, the mammary gland, metabolism and obesity. The effects on the mammary gland are used to calculate the derived no effect level (Dnel).

The Rac decided the studies selected by France to calculate the Dnel did not allow it to calculate the dose-response relationships. So to calculate an oral Dnel it selected effects on the kidney and applied an additional assessment factor of six because these effects are not considered the most critical.

As the restriction proposal concerned dermal exposure, the Rac also calculated a Dnel for workers handling thermal paper receipts, using new biomonitoring data on cashiers' exposure.

Seac decided the estimated costs outweighed the potential health benefits. However, it noted that the costs were relatively small, and would be borne by the wider EU population rather than just cashiers.

The committee backed the proposed Regulation without any changes to the text. It will come into force 20 days after its publication in the *EU Official Journal*. The restriction concerns thermal paper containing BPA in a concentration equal to or above 0.02% by weight. It will apply 36 months after the Regulation comes into force.

Attention turns to BPS

The Regulation's preamble also says that as bisphenol S (BPS) – the most likely substitute for BPA in thermal paper – may cause similar health problems, particular attention should be paid

to this scenario. Echa is to keep the European Commission abreast of any further information relating to this, so it can decide if a proposal to ban BPS is also necessary.

The Commission has already [asked Echa to conduct a survey](#) in 2017 to verify whether BPS is used in thermal paper and, if so, at what volumes; and whether thermal paper manufacturers are substituting BPA with BPS.

Danish environment minister Esben Lunde Larsen welcomed the BPA ban. A ministry press release says BPA can harm the ability to have children and is suspected of being an endocrine disruptor. Several supermarket chains in Denmark have started phasing out thermal paper containing BPA, it says, but a mandatory ban avoids the problem of unequal competition if some companies don't comply with a voluntary phase-out.

The EU ban may have effects outside the trade bloc. [NGOs in South Korea](#), for example, are campaigning for a ban on BPA and BPS in till receipts.



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