



AN UPDATE ON THE ORGANOTIN RISK ASSESSMENT IN EUROPE - FEBRUARY 2006

For the past few years, a study has been underway in Europe to determine the potential risks to human health and the environment posed by organotin compounds. This Risk Assessment was commissioned by the European Commission (EC) and covers all applications of organotin chemicals in consumer products. This includes organotin stabilizers used as heat stabilizers in processing polyvinyl chloride (PVC or vinyl). The Tin Stabilizers Association (TSA) and its European counterpart, ESPA/ETINSA, provided extensive information to the consultants contracted to perform the study.

The purpose of the risk assessment is to assess in a scientific way, if there are any risks posed to the environment or to human health through the use of these organotin compounds. The risk assessment is now entering its final stages, and the consultants have submitted their report to the EC. This report will be reviewed by the Commission and also by the EU Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks (SCHER). A copy of the report is not yet available, but it is likely to be circulated by the Commission after the technical review by SCHER, expected mid-year 2006.

The first two interim reports found that many uses were safe, and identified areas where there were data gaps. The organotin industry has worked to provide the additional data needed, and this most recent report incorporates this data in reaching its conclusions about overall safety. In particular it is expected that all uses of organotins in rigid PVC applications will be assessed as safe for human health and the environment. For a few flexible applications industry may be asked to provide some additional data to confirm safety. The industry will also continue to work with the Commission to resolve any other issues that might come up during the review.

The Tin Stabilizers Association was established in 1999 to promote the use of tin stabilizers in vinyl plastics. Its member companies are Akcros Chemicals America, Arkema Group, Inc., Chemtura Corporation, Reagens Canada, LTD, and Rohm and Haas Company. TSA works to provide accurate information about the quality and safety of tin stabilizers and to differentiate the use of tin stabilizers from other tin-based applications. TSA cooperates with other organizations throughout the world to promote product stewardship, conduct scientific studies and enhance communications related to tin stabilizers.

More information: www.tinstabilizers.org.