

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Industrial emissions of brominated flame retardant fall significantly**

#### **Annual Report on the Voluntary Emissions Control Action Programme (VECAP)**

**BRUSSELS, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2007** – The textiles industry in the UK has reduced its emissions of Deca-BDE<sup>1</sup> into water by 97% as a result of using a voluntary emissions control programme.

The findings were published in the 2007 annual report<sup>2</sup> of the Voluntary Emissions Control Action Programme (VECAP), which is a major Responsible Care® commitment<sup>3</sup> from manufacturers of brominated flame retardants and their customers.

VECAP uses the principle of continuous improvement to minimize emissions of BFRs into the environment. The annual report aims to give transparent and concise information on the programme's progress – and incorporates feedback and comments from regulators, industry and the public.

VECAP, which is now a global initiative, started among Deca-BDE user companies from the UK textile additives industry. Within 12 months, VECAP had resulted in a 75% reduction of Deca-BDE emissions into water.

Subsequently, VECAP was extended to the plastics sector and from the UK to Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Italy and Germany. It is now also used for reducing emissions of other BFRs, such as HBCD and TBBPA.

In 2006, the programme was also rolled out to North America and Japan. In addition, auto and retail companies have started to encourage VECAP compliance for their suppliers of textiles and plastics.

The annual report reveals that, in the six EU member states, 97% of Deca-BDE used in the EU textiles industry and 82% of Deca-BDE used in the EU plastics industry are now covered by detailed emissions surveys using the VECAP protocol.

The programme was set up in 2004 by the manufacturers of Deca-BDE in partnership with user companies in the supply chain, many of which are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Using a series of measures, the BFR manufacturers support the user companies in their efforts to minimise emissions of the chemical. For example, VECAP offers participants access to a rich body of best practice experience in processes involving Deca-BDE. It also uses 'mass balance' techniques<sup>4</sup> to calculate emissions; it implements procedure analyses; and VECAP members must all sign up to an industry-specific code of practice.

The VECAP Best Available Technique guidance has been proved to be extremely effective in reducing emissions. For example, initial measurements at manufacturing plants indicate that, by using the specific guidance for emptying packaging containing BFRs, the amount of Deca-BDE left in the bags can be reduced by up to 90%. This leads to increased process efficiency as well as reducing emissions levels when disposing of the packaging.

Using the mass balance technique has also highlighted potential new emission sources that had previously not been considered, with benefits all the way down the supply chain.

Companies using VECAP have also found that its techniques and principles can be applied equally to a far broader range of chemicals than just BFRs.

*"Such an initiative deserves to be copied by other industry sectors with other substances,"* said Dr Dick Jung, Head of the Department for Substances and Standardisation in the Dutch Ministry of the Environment. *"It is in line with the REACH intention that industry must take responsibility to go for the best emission control."*

With VECAP being compatible with the international standard ISO14000, this enables SMEs using the programme to apply environmental standards that would previously just be applicable to multinational companies.

**ENDS**

## **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

### **1. Deca-BDE**

No other flame retardant has been as exhaustively evaluated as Deca-BDE – from initial production through recycling at the end of consumer product life. As a result of an EU risk assessment, Deca-BDE has been exempted from the RoHS directive and therefore is specifically allowed for use in electrical and electronic devices.

2. To download a full copy of the VECAP Annual Report, visit <http://www.vecap.info>

### **3. Responsible Care®**

Responsible Care® is the chemical industry's global voluntary initiative under which companies, through their national associations, work together to continuously improve their health, safety and environmental performance, and to communicate with stakeholders about their products and processes.

### **4. About 'mass balance'**

A mass balance (also called a material balance) is an accounting of material entering and leaving a system. Fundamental to the balance is the conservation of mass principle, i.e. that matter can not disappear or be created.

### **5. Media contacts**

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