5 February 2008

Antimony Trioxide - EU Risk Assessment Nearly Completed

EU Member State Technical Experts (TC-NES) met on 4 December to discuss for the last time the environmental risk assessment of Antimony Trioxide (ATO). No major risk was identified for ATO and no further studies are scheduled. In particular, **no risk was identified for soil, water, air and secondary poisoning.**

A local risk for sediment was outlined for one ATO producer in Europe. Emissions from this plant are low and are decreasing year on year, following changes made to the plant's waste emission process. A local risk was identified for sediment for some textiles plants on a precautionary basis in view of a lack of information supplied by some of the companies from the textiles industry. For all other sectors for which data was provided (including textile), no risk for sediment was identified. **The TC-NES also agreed not to assign any environmental classification to ATO.**

The updated environmental part of ATO's risk assessment will be open for written comments by industry and EU Members states until 1st of March 2008. The environmental report will then be reviewed one last time and will be finalised before summer 2008.

The health part of the risk assessment will be revised by the Member State rapporteur (Sweden) by the end of February 2008 and then discussed at TC-NES for the last time in April 2008. **No risk was identified for consumers or for exposure via the environment. ATO is not toxic, reprotoxic or genotoxic in vivo.** It is irritating to human skin for workers (R38). It is currently classified as a carcinogen category 3[1] -only female rats, being more sensitive, have shown any reaction- and a 2-year study to be conducted by the US National Toxicology Program will clarify the underlying mechanism (threshold) of the carcinogenicity.

ATO is well advanced in preparing for REACH registration, a process managed by the International Antimony Association (i2a). Most of the necessary studies for REACH registration have already been developed in the context of the EU risk assessment. There is no classification resulting from this assessment that would lead ATO to Authorisation under REACH.

In January, in order to meet REACH requirements, the former International Antimony Oxide Industry Association (IAOIA) broadened its scope to cover antimony compounds in general and in so doing was renamed the "International Antimony Association" (i2a).

The first antimony REACH consortium meeting was held on 30th January 2008 in Antwerp. **Interested parties can still join the consortium BEFORE 31st MARCH 2008** by registering at: www.iaoia.org/reach.htm

-ENDS-

[1] Substances and preparations of concern for humans because of the possible CMR effects but for which there is not enough information available to classify these substances and preparations as a category 2 (suspected CMR).

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