



26 April 2017

Zero Waste Intervention on the recycling exemption

Given by Delphine Lévi Alvarès

Thank you Mr. president,

I am speaking on behalf of the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives and Zero Waste Europe. Together we are working towards a zero waste and toxics free future.

We strongly support ending the PentaBDE and OctaBDE recycling exemption.

We would like to direct our comments to the issue of how this recycling exemption affects the circular economy. To achieve a circular economy, we need to close the loop of materials by building trust in a toxic-free secondary material market so that both producers and consumers are willing to use them.

Continuing the recycling exemption will lead to contamination of products never intended to contain such chemicals. This is outlined in IPEN's latest report where toys made from recycled plastic were found to contain high quantities of OctaBDE and DecaBDE.

As a group focused on zero waste, we strongly support recycling. However, recycling should not occur at the expense of the health of children or recycling workers in the informal sector or other end users of such products globally.

The recycling exemption also touches upon synergies between the chemicals conventions. The Cartagena Declaration from the Tenth Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention, states that “measures should be undertaken to achieve prevention and minimization of hazardous wastes and other wastes generated at source”. This is not compatible with contaminating products with toxic chemicals during recycling.

To develop a coherent circular economy it is essential to advocate for international policies that are compatible with a clean and safe economy for every one of us.

Thank you.