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Toxic chemicals from electronic waste are recycled into children's toys

Prague, 12 October 2015: A new survey found toxic flame retardant chemicals from electronic waste are recycled into plastic children's toys for sale in the European Union. Measurements of 21 toys purchased in six EU countries found that 43% of them contained significant levels of OctaBDE and/or DecaBDE. OctaBDE is listed in the Stockholm Convention for global elimination. DecaBDE is under evaluation by the Stockholm Convention expert committee which has concluded that "global action is warranted." Both chemicals are ubiquitous in the environment globally and can disrupt human hormone systems, creating potential adverse effects on the development of the nervous system and children's IQ.

"Toxic chemicals should not be recycled into consumer products, especially toys for children," said Jitka Strakova, Arnika Association. "Toxic recycling poisons our children and the circular economy."

At issue is a Stockholm Convention policy that permits the recycling of materials containing OctaBDE and a related substance, PentaBDE, until 2030. A decision about whether to recommend a similar toxic recycling policy for DecaBDE will be made by a Stockholm Convention expert committee known as the POPs Review Committee during its meeting from 19 – 23 October. In 2011, the POPs Review Committee warned against toxic recycling and recommended countries to, "...eliminate brominated diphenyl ethers [BDEs] from the recycling streams as swiftly as possible" Despite this recommendation, a small number of countries have suggested the possibility of recommending a recycling exemption for DecaBDE at the upcoming meeting.

"The POPs Review Committee should endorse the current draft DecaBDE document which clearly states that toxic recycling of DecaBDE should be avoided," said Joe DiGangi, IPEN. "In addition to poisoning children at home, recycled materials containing DecaBDE can be dumped in developing countries that do not have the capacity to deal with it. That's not acceptable."

More info, download:

New Study: *Toxic toy or toxic waste: Recycling POPs into new products*
<http://ipen.org/documents/toxic-toy-or-toxic-waste-recycling-pops-new-products>

Info Graphic: *Toxic Recycling: POPs in Recycled & New Products*
http://ipen.org/sites/default/files/pictures/Toxic-recycling-POPs-in-new-and-recycled-products_0_0.jpg

IPEN is a global network of over 700 public interest organizations 100 countries working to eliminate toxic substances. www.ipen.org twitter: @ToxicsFree