



E&E Workshop

“Building the future for flame retardants in E&E”

Executive summary

Brussels, 24th June 2010

Background

On 24th June 2010, pinfa held a workshop focusing on “Building the future for flame retardants in E&E”. This event was a productive continuation of the discussion between various stakeholders in the E&E sector that was started at pinfa’s first workshop in 2009.

Over 60 participants attended, including representatives from the entire value chain (compounds, OEM manufacturers, and flame retardant producers), as well as from national and international regulators (European Commission, UBA) and civil society organisations (ChemSec, European Consumers’ Organisation BEUC).

Objective

pinfa wants to work with the supply chain and all stakeholders to understand their needs and priorities, and to continue building a dialogue. The first objective of the workshop was to further improve communication between the supply chain, other stakeholders and phosphorous, inorganic and nitrogen (PIN) FR producers on the different needs of each group. The workshop also sought to discuss the practical applications and future directions in the management of flame retardants, and served as an open forum for all stakeholders.

Political signals & regulatory environment

The first section of the workshop focused on external drivers on the market, from regulation to activities of campaign groups (NGOs).

Speaking about “Green Chemistry” and the role of legislation and business, **Klaus Berend (European Commission, DG Enterprise)** explained that it is the EU’s goal to reduce the risk from chemicals to human health and the environment – an objective which pinfa is well positioned to achieve, with its products that "appear to be less hazardous, greener, more sustainable". He also stressed the need for continuing data exchange, both along the supply chain, and between a wider group of stakeholders.

Responding to requests following last year’s workshop to engage with more diverging opinions including those of NGOs, **Nardono Nimpuno (ChemSec, International Chemical Secretariat)** recommended members of the value chain to “tackle the problem” systematically, rather than try to “beat the system” by tweaking products. ChemSec views pinfa as part of the solution in providing



E&E Workshop

environmentally friendly alternatives to some of the most contested chemicals, but stressed the need for pinfa to be more vocal about its products. Many members of the European Parliament in recent RoHS discussions were led to believe there were not good alternatives to brominated flame retardants, even though such alternatives represent 40% of the market.

Market trends: managing a transition

The second session of the workshop focused on the lessons learned by the supply chain in transitioning towards PIN FR technologies.

Sharing the experience of transition from halogenated to PIN FRs, **Sietse van der Sluis (DSM Engineering Plastics)** explained how his company is resolving the biggest compounder dilemma, namely achieving optimum performance/cost ratio. Although the process can be long, companies are willing to undergo it, because it helps them achieve their sustainability strategy and thus be better positioned in the market.

Describing the challenges OEMs face in their quest for sustainability, **Maarten ten Houten (Philips Lighting)** stressed that legislation today is dynamic, and companies need to have a longer-term strategy concerning the substances they plan to use, in line with their sustainability objectives. They should share this list with their suppliers, to already start phasing out substances that are likely to be banned in the future.

Speaking about the latest trends in the E&E industry and research, **Grace O'Malley (iNEMI, International Electronics Manufacturing Initiative)** agreed that going halogen-free is a key objective for the E&E industry. iNEMI shared the latest progress of its halogen-free work. The Initiative helps its members save time and costs in managing the transition, because companies have learned the lesson that being reactive rather than proactive during a technology shift proves to be more expensive in the long term.

Health & Environment

The final session focused on health and environment, and the work being done to close data gaps on PIN FRs.

Johanna Wurbs (UBA, German Federal Environment Institute) focused on the general need for more systematic and accessible information about the properties of substances as well as end products in which they are contained. The role of providing and sharing this information falls on the entire supply chain. Moreover, legislators need feedback from E&E manufacturers about possible criteria for eco-labels.

Jürgen Vogelgesang (European Commission, DG SANCO, Health & Consumers Protection) indicated that the EU continues to expand and enforce its fire safety standards. Flame retardants



E&E Workshop

are likely to play a very important role in residential fire safety standards (especially concerning consumer products, such as upholstered furniture), which are currently under review by DG SANCO.

Speaking about recycling of polymers containing flame retardants, **Carine Chivas-Joly (LNE, French National Laboratory for metrology and tests)** indicated that polymers containing halogenated FRs are effectively excluded from recycling (as stipulated under the EU WEEE Directives). As a result, an important decrease in the volume of brominated FRs used has been observed, also due to advances in halogen identification techniques in plastics.

Pim Leonards (Vrij Universiteit Amsterdam) presented the ongoing European project ENFIRO, which analyses the substitution options for specific halogenated flame retardants. Non-halogenated flame retardants have been identified as an alternative for each application. All FRs will be evaluated on the criteria of Health & Environment, Technical Performance, Economic Feasibility and Social Justice.

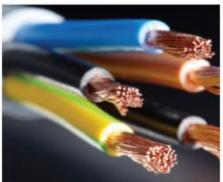
Conclusions

The participants of the workshop, representing the value chain, legislators and civil society, agreed that the flame retardants industry is in the middle of a technological transition. The general message was that this transition is now in progress, and that it is important for stakeholders to continue the dialogue.

Industry representatives seek reassurance that having developed new polymers compatible with PIN FRs, they would not be forced to repeat the process in the near future due to regulators' action. The workshop played an important role in discussing these issues freely with all interested stakeholders, with many noticing the level of openness of the dialogue, yet with much harmony in the room!

Appreciating the discussion between all parties, members of the value chain feel that there are quite a few expectations placed on them by the different stakeholders. Therefore, they asked for a continued involvement of all stakeholders in the dialogue, which is proving to be helpful in clarifying and responding to the different expectations.

To facilitate the transition to more sustainable technologies, participants agreed that pinfa should continue and indeed step up its efforts in external communication. Some (especially NGOs) expressed a wish that pinfa be more vocal about its products. Those present also stressed the importance of cooperation between all stakeholders, especially in sharing, clarifying and spreading information about flame retardants.



E&E Workshop

For the programme of the workshop, go to [Programme](#).

If you wish to receive more information /presentations of the workshop of 24th June 2010, please contact the pinfa Secretariat at pinfa@cefic.be.

This event is part of a series of workshops organised by pinfa. Go to [pinfa Workshops](#).