

Proposal for a Directive on the Marketing and Use of perfluorooctane sulfonates (PFOS)

Foreword

The overall objective of the proposed Directive on the Marketing and Use of PFOS is to introduce harmonised provisions relating to restrictions on the marketing and use of PFOS, to preserve the internal market and ensure protection of human health and the environment, as required by the Treaty.

PFOS are anions that are commercially available in the form of salts, derivatives and polymers. They are used in textiles, carpets, paper, general coating, chromium plating, photography, photolithography, fire-fighting foams, in hydraulic fluids for aviation and in the semi-conductor industry.

The risks posed to health and the environment by PFOS have been assessed by the United Kingdom in a [risk evaluation report](#) and [risk reduction strategy](#) prepared in accordance with Council Regulation 793/93. This report was then critically assessed by [SCHER](#) and adopted in March 2005. In addition an [OECD hazard assessment](#) was performed and concluded that PFOS is persistent in the environment, bio accumulative and toxic to mammalian species. Both assessments identified a need to reduce the risk to health and environment of PFOS.

In December 2005, the European Commission drafted a proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council relating to restrictions on the Marketing and Use of PFOS (amendment of Council Directive 76/769/EEC). In brief the following is proposed:

1. Restrictions in the use of PFOS in carpets, textiles, upholstery, leather, apparel, paper, packaging and other applications is proposed under this Directive in order to limit risks through exposure. As the use of PFOS in these areas is being phased out, this proposal would prevent their reintroduction.
2. PFOS is used to a smaller extent, in the aviation, semi conductor and photographic industries and is also used in fire fighting foams and chromium plating. PFOS use in such areas does not appear to pose a relevant risk to the environment or human health, provided its release into the environment and exposure in the workplace are minimised. Therefore PFOS use in such areas is currently exempt from the proposal. However, further examination will be carried out and PFOS use in these areas may become subject of a specific risk assessment.

Consultation period: 5th January 2006 to 5pm on the 17th February 2006

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