Press release | 20.03.2013

Batteries and harmful substances

MEPs vote to recharge EU rules on batteries

The European Parliament's environment committee today voted on proposals to revise EU legislation on batteries. The Greens welcomed the outcome of the vote, with environment and public health spokesperson **Carl Schlyter** stating:

"Today's vote moves us a step closer to safer and more environmentally-friendly batteries, as MEPs supported proposals to recharge EU batteries rules.

"Safer and better alternatives for cadmium in batteries of power tools and for mercury in button cells are already available, and it makes no sense to continue to allow the use of these harmful substances. Outdated derogations in existing EU rules banning the use of cadmium and mercury would be lifted following today's vote, meaning these substances could no longer be used in batteries (for mercury from 2015 on and cadmium from 2016 on).

"Crucially, MEPs also supported proposals to greatly facilitate recycling, reuse, and safer disposal of batteries in devices. If batteries are not readily removable from devices, battery-powered devices should be manufactured in a way that ensures general professionals can remove the batteries (and not just the manufacturers). This will break the monopoly of manufacturers and greatly facilitate the waste management chain of these devices.

"Hopefully, EU governments will endorse this position and will not give in to the interests of a few manufacturers who want to continue selling their substandard and polluting products as long as possible."

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