Press release | 22.09.2010

Toxic chemicals - biocides

Improvements for public health undermined by gifts to industry in EP vote

The European Parliament today voted on proposed EU legislation on biocidal products (used in hygiene products for example)*, dealing with product approvals and active substances in the products. While the proposals will bring improvements for public health, the Greens are concerned about the way in which product authorisation would be centralised. After the vote, French Green MEP **Michele Rivasi** said:

"While the proposals adopted today will bring improvements for public health, the Greens are concerned about the provisions on product authorisations. The proposed centralisation of product approvals at European-level has been tailored to the demands of the industrial lobby at the possible expense of rigorous product evaluation. For this reason, the Greens abstained in the final vote.

"EU approvals should not lead to less stringent standards. The proposals adopted today would lead to European-level biocidal product approvals, giving the industry full access to all EU markets, without first ensuring the necessary resources are in place to manage these authorisations. The Greens are concerned that the European Chemical Agency will have reduced means and significantly less time than at present to ensure rigorous authorisations. It is, however, a consolation that MEPs supported a Green demand to give Member States the right to place extra controls on the use of biocides.

"On the positive side, we welcome that MEPs supported a Green proposal to ensure that the most harmful substances are no longer used in biocides, except in limited cases. This will be a major step forward for public health. Given the concerns with regard to the use of nanoparticles, it is also welcome that MEPs supported measures proposed by the Greens to oblige the labelling of products containing nanoparticles and to ensure nanosubstances are subject to separate scientific evaluation."

* First reading vote on the legislative report on the placing on the market and use of biocides (Klass)

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Responsible MEPs

Michèle Rivasi

Member

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