

# REACHforLIFE Statement



## REACHforLIFE Expresses Disappointment that EU Eco-label Criteria for Mattresses Compromise Fire Safety

**Brussels 27 March 2009:** REACHforLIFE welcomes the fact that the revision of the European Union's eco-label criteria for mattresses will improve environmental standards on many aspects. Nonetheless, we remain concerned about an anomaly related to the fire safety of mattresses, which could compromise consumer safety in eco-labelled products.

It should be noted that the revised eco-label criteria only allow reactive flame retardants in mattresses. However, no reactive\* flame retardants are currently available for use in the foam of mattresses – they are all additives – meaning effectively that **all available flame retardants will be banned in mattresses under the revised eco-label criteria.**

REACHforLIFE recalls that a number of flame retardants suitable for mattress foams which are banned under the eco-label criteria have undergone EU risk assessments, according to which no limitations on their use were imposed. Seen from a wider perspective, this represents yet another example of sound science, specifically the official risk assessment conclusions, being ignored in EU policy-making.

“Products that are flame retarded provide an extended escape time which helps save between 800 to 1000 lives each year in Europe alone” said Dr. Jürgen Troitzsch from the Fire and Environment Protection Service and a Fire Safety Expert. “Hence, by banning life-saving substances from products – in this case mattresses – it is clear that both fire safety and the well-being of consumers is being jeopardised by the European eco-label.”

REACHforLIFE supports the motivations behind the eco-label as a means to enable consumers and businesses to recognise products which are both environment as well as consumer-friendly. However, if the eco-label is to live up to its own billing, informed decision-making is necessary so as to ensure that its requirements are technically feasible, while not compromising consumer fire safety.

\* Following the revised criteria definition wording: “reactive” = chemically bound into or onto the material, and less than 0.1% of the flame retardant may remain in the form as before the application.

### **About REACHforLIFE**

The objective of REACHforLIFE is to launch a debate, the aim of which is to move away from a mistrust of science and towards a balanced approach in applying sound scientific evidence when approving for use substances that are critical for our lives. In particular it is calling for the official scientific risk assessments to be trusted and upheld in the EU's legislative infrastructure.

Our campaign is pan-European, embracing the Brussels regulatory landscape and the EU Member States, particularly France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK.

REACHforLIFE was founded in June 2008 and currently comprises the companies Albemarle, Chemtura, and ICL-IP – [www.reachforlife.eu](http://www.reachforlife.eu)

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