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Council tightens rules on hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment

The Council today revised the directive on hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment. This will extend protection from dangerous chemicals to more electrical appliances and improve the safety of products such as mobile phones, refrigerators and electronic toys ([62/10](#), [8117/11 ADDI REVI](#)).¹

First adopted in 2003, the law bans six hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment, including lead, mercury and cadmium.

The review extends the scope of the ban to more products, while harmonising it across the EU: the ban will now in principle apply to all electrical and electronic equipment as well as to cables and spare parts. Certain transitional periods are provided for, though: monitoring and control devices and medical devices will be covered in three years, in vitro medical devices in five years and industrial control appliances in six years.

The law adopted today also obliges the Commission to regularly review and adapt the list of restricted substances according to a number of criteria. This means that further substances in electrical and electronic equipment may be banned in future.

In order to attain the EU's ambitious targets for renewable energy and energy efficiency, photovoltaic panels to produce energy from solar light do not have to comply with the restriction. Energy-saving light bulbs are also temporarily exempted from the directive.

¹ The decision was taken without discussion at today's Transport, Telecoms and Energy Council. The Bulgarian delegation abstained.

P R E S S

The revised act will enter into force shortly after its publication in the Official Journal of the EU and must be transposed into national law within 18 months.

The Commission proposed the revised directive in December 2008. The Council and the European Parliament agreed on the review at first reading under the Belgian presidency. In accepting all amendments adopted by the European Parliament at its vote on 24 November 2010, the Council has now ensured the definitive adoption of this law.
