Dangerous substances and preparations: restrictions on the marketing and use of 2-(2-methoxyethoxy)ethanol, 2-(2-butoxyethoxy) ethanol, methylenediphenyl diisocyanate, cyclohexane and ammonium nitrate

2007/0200(COD) - 02/10/2007 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to provide harmonised rules for the placing on the market and use of 2-(2-methoxyethoxy) ethanol, 2-(2-butoxyethoxy)ethanol, methylenediphenyl diisocyanate**,** and cyclohexane preparations for supply to the general public, and to provide harmonised rules for the placing on the market of ammonium nitrateas a substance and in preparations for use as a fertiliser.

PROPOSED ACT: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.

CONTENT: Council Directive 76/769/EEC establishes a framework for harmonised rules throughout the EU concerning the placing on the market and use of dangerous substances and preparations. It is used to manage the risks to human health and the environment from dangerous substances. Dangerous substances and preparations listed in Annex I to Directive 76/769/EEC may only be placed on the market and used under specified conditions.

It is proposed to manage risks on the following five substances by listing them in Annex I of Directive 76 /769/EEC:

- **2-(2-methoxyethoxy)ethanol (DEGME).** The main use of DEGME is as anti-icing agent in jet fuel. DEGME is further used as chemical intermediate, basic chemical (processing solvent) and solvent in paints and varnishes, paint strippers, cleaning agents, self-shining emulsions, floor sealants, windscreen washer liquids, skin-cleaning products (soap) and skin-care products.
- **2-(2-butoxyethoxy) ethanol (DEGBE).** This is used in paints, dyes, inks, detergents and cleaners. The major function of this agent is to dissolve various components of mixtures in both aqueous and non-aqueous systems.
- **methylenediphenyl diisocyanate (MDI).** This is mainly used in the industrial production of rigid polyurethane foams with world wide use. Many other uses are in the fields of paints and coatings, adhesives, sealants (including weather resistant sealing material), elastomers, and footwear. There is use also in the production of particle board (for the bonding of wood) and mould cores for the foundry industry.
- **cyclohexane.** The main use as a solvent is in adhesives (cyclohexane combined with other solvents). These are mostly “neoprene” based adhesives used in the leather industry (shoes), the construction industry (floor coatings) and the automobile equipment industry. Cyclohexane adhesives products are mainly used by craftsmen but also by the general public in household and “do-it-yourself” products.
- **ammonium nitrate (AN).** Ammonium nitrate is widely used throughout the EU as a fertiliser, but it is also constitutes the main ingredient in the commercial blasting agent ANFO (ammonium nitrate fuel-oil). Ammonium nitrate is used in fertiliser both alone, and in blends with other nutrient substances. Fertilisers containing more than 28% nitrogen are known as high-nitrogen ammonium nitrate fertilisers.

Restrictions: due to the fact that there is a need for limiting the risks for consumers and in particular for ensuring adequate protection during the "Do-It-Yourself" uses, certain restrictions should be applied for preparations containing DEGME, DEGBE, MDI or cyclohexane which are placed on the market for supply to the general public.

This proposal would amend Annex I to Directive 76/769/EEC by adding the following chemical substances: DEGME, DEGBE, MDI and cyclohexane. The placing on the market for supply to the general public of preparations containing these substances will be restricted for certain applications.

Relevant measures, such as maximum concentration of the substance (e.g. DEGME and DEGBE), package size reduction (e.g. cyclohexane), mandatory sale of gloves with the product (e.g. MDI) and additional instructions on the product (e.g. DEGBE, MDI, cyclohexane) should be applied under the provisions of the Decision in order to reduce the possible risks to consumers when using preparations containing these substances.

In order to ensure a uniform high level of safety for farmers and distributors within the EU for all ammonium nitrate fertilisers, and to limit access to high nitrogen fertilisers to agricultural professionals, the Annex I to Directive 76/769/EEC will also be amended to impose the same safety requirements on all ammonium nitrate fertilisers marketed in the EU, and to limit the nitrogen content of the ammonium nitrate fertilisers that are sold to the general public.