




Procedure file

Basic information		
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)		Procedure completed
2000/2297(COS)		
Environment and human health: impact of polyvinyl chloride PVC. Green paper		
Subject		
3.40.01 Chemical industry, fertilizers, plastics		
3.70.13 Dangerous substances, toxic and radioactive wastes (storage, transport)		
4.60.04.02 Consumer security		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Environment, Public Health, Consumer Policy		10/10/2000
		PSE SACCONI Guido	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	 Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy		05/12/2000
		GUE/NGL SEPPÄNEN Esko	
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)	2289	28/09/2000
European Commission	Commission DG Environment	Commissioner	

Key events			
26/07/2000	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2000)0469	Summary
28/09/2000	Debate in Council	2289	
29/11/2000	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
20/03/2001	Vote in committee		Summary
20/03/2001	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0092/2001	
02/04/2001	Debate in Parliament		
03/04/2001	Decision by Parliament	T5-0171/2001	Summary
03/04/2001	End of procedure in Parliament		
24/01/2002	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2000/2297(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/5/13515

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2000)0469	26/07/2000	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0092/2001	20/03/2001	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0171/2001 OJ C 021 24.01.2002, p. 0025-0112 E	03/04/2001	EP	Summary

Environment and human health: impact of polyvinyl chloride PVC. Green paper

PURPOSE: to present the Green Paper on Environmental issues of PVC. CONTENT : the two objectives of this Green Paper are, firstly, to present and assess on a scientific basis, the various environmental issues including related human health aspects that occur during the life cycle of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and secondly, to consider, in view of sustainable development, a number of options to reduce those impacts that need to be addressed. This should serve as a basis for a consultation with stakeholders in order to identify practical solutions to health and environmental issues raised by PVC. The Commission considers, on the basis of the analysis presented in this Green Paper, that the contamination of the environment by lead and cadmium should be avoided as much as possible. The Commission is in favour of a reduction of the use of cadmium and lead as stabilisers in PVC products. A number of measures could be envisaged and should be assessed in the light of their potential environmental and economic implications: 1) Legislative phase-out or other risk reduction measures for cadmium and/or lead with the possibility of temporary derogations; 2) Implementation of the voluntary commitment of the PVC industry on cadmium; 3) Development of further voluntary commitments for lead. In addition, the use of phthalates in PVC applications raises issues, described above, which could be addressed through a number of measures, including legislative or voluntary risk reduction measures. These potential measures should be assessed in the light of their environmental and economic implications. The Commission considers, on the basis of the analysis in its Green Paper and given the present low recycling rate, that recycling of PVC should be increased. This could be done through a range of measures, which could be used separately or in combination. Their potential environmental and economic implications should be assessed. These potential measures include: 1) Mandatory collection and recycling targets for some relevant PVC waste streams; 2) Voluntary commitment of the industry to improve and finance, totally or partially, the collection and the recycling of some relevant PVC waste streams; 3) Recommendations to Member States with the objective of establishing and developing separate collection of PVC waste and other demolition waste; 4) Development of appropriate standards that allow the use of recycled PVC materials; 5) Marking of plastic products as a useful tool to facilitate the separation of PVC waste from the general waste stream and development of other methods for plastic identification and sorting; 6) Development of innovative recycling processes for certain post-consumer PVC waste. The recycling of PVC waste containing heavy metals raises specific issues due to the potential dilution of heavy metals into new and possibly wider range of products. Some potential measures could be envisaged to address these issues. These measures should be assessed in the light of their potential environmental and economic implications. They include: 1) Legislative instruments to restrict the mechanical recycling of PVC waste containing lead and cadmium; 2) Specific conditions for this recycling, such a recycling in the same type of application, the control of the placing on the market of recyclates, the marking of the recycled products and the control of the use of heavy metals; 3) No specific conditions for this recycling. As regards the incineration of PVC waste, the Commission considers that this raises a number of issues. A range of measures could be envisaged to address these issues and should be assessed in the light of their potential environmental and economic implications. Finally, the Commission considers that the landfilling of flexible PVC waste raises some issues. A range of measures could be envisaged to address these issues and environmental and economic implications of these measures should be considered. On the basis of the analyses presented in this paper and based on the outcome of the consultation process, the Commission will present at the beginning of 2001 a Communication setting out a comprehensive Community strategy on the environmental issues of PVC. ?

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The committee adopted the report by Guido SACCONI (PES, I) on the Green Paper in which it called for the "polluter pays" principle to apply to PVC waste so that PVC producers were charged for any additional costs generated by the presence of PVC in waste (such as the need for better filter equipment, costs caused by corrosion, etc.). Because of the problems PVC caused during incineration, the committee wanted the Commission to bring forward legislation requiring separate waste collection of PVC products. The report also called for research in the field of incineration to include ways of recovering harmful hydrogen chloride. Hard and soft PVC, it said, should be separated, with hard PVC being landfilled because of its high chlorine content and soft PVC being incinerated as otherwise there was a risk that phthalates would be released. The committee regarded the undertakings given by the PVC industry as regards the use of toxic additives in PVC as insufficient and therefore

wanted Community legislation to phase out cadmium and lead-based stabilisers and to ban imports of them from third countries. On the subject of phthalates, which were often used as plasticisers (for manufacturing flexible PVC products) but were suspected of mimicking hormones and causing fertility problems, the committee wanted the Commission to examine alternatives and establish targets to reduce their use, particularly in medical equipment. The committee regretted that the Commission had not carried out any lifecycle analysis of PVC products and alternative products and said this could be a field for research within the Sixth Framework Research Programme. It called on the Commission to bring forward a long-term horizontal strategy involving the introduction of substitution policies. The committee wanted the percentage of PVC waste which was recycled to be increased and called for research in the area of chemical recycling. It suggested a recycling model on the basis of the end-of-life vehicles directive. It also proposed the introduction of compulsory marking so that PVC could be distinguished more easily from other plastic waste to facilitate recycling. However, it believed legislation should only be adopted if precise objectives for the recovery of waste could not be met through voluntary commitments by industry. ?

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In approving the report presented by Guido SACCONI (PES, I) (please refer to previous document), the European Parliament called on the Commission to propose an amendment to Directive 76/769/EEC with the aim of banning all use of cadmium as a stabiliser in the PVC industry - but no date was added there. The European Parliament also believes that legislation should be adopted as this cannot be left to the goodwill of the industry within the framework of the voluntary commitment. ?