Fire safety is a concern to all of us, and the WHO report (see article ‘Fire Victims and Fire safety’) clearly shows that there is much room for improvement. This is why within EFRA (the European Flame Retardants Association), all members are fully committed to contribute to improved fire safety. All of us have relatives, children, friends, pets, and are certainly not willing to see them affected by a fire or any other associated reason. Fire safety is achieved in several ways: relying on multiple and complementary proven technologies which help prevent the initiation, slow the growth, quickly detect and thoroughly suppress a fire. Complementing these, are the additional safety aspects of separating high fire risk areas from occupied zones and safe means of rapid evacuation. A complete toolbox of solutions must be available and where all possible solutions are considered without being discounted or doubted as a result of sentimentality or emotional beliefs. The use of flame retardants makes an effective contribution by helping prevent fires from starting and rapidly growing, while other tools such as smoke detectors and sprinklers, play their vital role once the fire has started.

These are synergetic solutions, which mean working together to consider all, not just for one or part of one, of the solutions. That could lead to inappropriate conclusions and decisions being made which could have catastrophic effects, demanding a reverse in actions if not too late.

Concerning fire safety solutions, there is currently some conflicting debate regarding the efficacy of substances such as flame retardants. It is even said that they have no function. This statement is difficult to understand, given the fact that there are many reports from communities that recognise the need for fire safety technologies, and from large amounts of objective data derived from scientific studies of independent institutions. They demonstrate and provide evidence to the contrary. May we even dare say that, quite obviously, the name “flame retardants” was given to these substances on the basis of their action and what they were and are achieving today.

Without doubt, as with any study, its accuracy and conclusions derived will depend on several factors. Fortunately, from the tremendous effort and continuous progress made in science, the quality and reliability of studies have evolved over the years. Rules such as for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) have ensured that the performed studies are more reliable and as accurate as possible (examples below).

This Newsletter reports on an interesting comparative test made on commercial products, which is factual and visual proof of the efficiency of flame retardants.

Philippe Salemis
Director, EFRA

I wish you good reading.

Example studies:
- DTI (2000) Effectiveness of furniture and furnishing (fire) (safety) regulations 1998, University of Surrey for the UK Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), ref. URN/783, Jun 2000
- Brand in huis “Overleven of overlijden” October 2011 (Summary in English)
Fire Safety

Standardising fire safety regulations
Is your sofa safe?

Industry and campaign groups are very concerned that the EU has yet to conform to the UK and Ireland Fire Safe Regulations for upholstered furniture and furnishings, introduced in 1988, and which have been clearly proven to save hundreds of lives. Materials that make a sofa soft and comfortable are also known to be flammable. If they are accidentally ignited by even by a small candle flame, it can cause a living room to be engulfed in flames in a matter of minutes if the materials are not flame retarded.

Please watch the interactive burn test tool on the RUSC.eu website which demonstrates how sofas purchased around Europe differ in their flammability. For example, a sofa ignited in the test and which had been purchased in Ireland could still be extinguished after 4 minutes of burning. Whereas the sofa purchased in Spain was full flames and dangerous after just 2 minutes, leaving little time for discovery of the fire and safe escape.

Fire Victims and Fire Safety

Thankfully, not all fires and in tragedy, but those who suffer the long term effects of having been burnt or involved in fires, are often scarred for life. The WHO reports an estimated 195,000 fire deaths per year globally; a further 300,000 die from burn-related injuries with millions more suffering disfigurement and disability, most often in the low to middle income countries. Houses and workplace fires mostly account these, where overcrowding, poverty and lack of safety equipment prevail. Burns are preventable, burns are avertable.

We need to raise awareness, develop and improve regulations identify risk factors and act on this information continue research priorities and promote approved interventions.


EFRA calls for a ‘European Fire Safety Platform’

There exists a highly regarded associations working to improve fire safety or are concerned by fire safety. At year to date, most fire safety activities are based on individual group initiatives.

To enhance the significance of fire safety issues already of concern to these many associations around the world, EFRA calls for the establishment of a fire safety platform, which puts trade associations from industry together with these European fire safety associations or their families.

EFRA believes this project could, one day, save the life of one or more of these EU regulatory members or their families.

EFRA has launched this box project to highlight domestic fire safety in a simple, but highly efficient way.

Together with all stakeholders, they offer to support the EU in building better and more fireproof devices, which will contribute to improved fire safety in all of our homes within the EU.

If you think you can help EFRA in reaching their goals, please contact the EFRA office, Bruylstraat 1, 1120 Neder-over-Haasbeek (Brussels) or mail them at info@efra.info

Harto Nagy
President EFRA
Paul Villain
Vice-President EFRA
Dominik Wieven
Member of the Board EFRA

Fire Statistics Reporting

Fire is appealing for the harmonisation of fire statistics reporting across the globe. It is widely recognised by leading fire prevention and rescue services that both weakness and disparity exist in fire statistics reporting, to the point that there are not even Pan-European, let alone global sets of accurate national fire data available.

The discrepancies in data collection range from causes of fires, direct and indirect losses, casualties and fatalities recording to the point that there are not Pan-European, let alone global sets of accurate national fire data available. The discrepancies in data collection range from causes of fires, direct and indirect losses, casualties and fatalities recording to the point that there are not even Pan-European, let alone global sets of accurate national fire data available.

The process of assembling fire statistics is a complex and rigorous task, yet in order to persuade governments to adopt national risk management fire strategies and measures, aimed at reducing loss of life and property, all associated fire safety industries must call for consensus in coherent recording and documentation of comparable statistics.

European Safety Standards for Russia

As fire safety recently hit headline news in Russia following a number of horrific and deadly fires, the head of the Russian Emergency Ministry has adjusted over a quarter of Russia’s fire safety standards. These are now fully harmonised with European norms, with the remaining under revision. Russia has an appalling record of fire safety with European norms with the remaining under revision. These are now fully harmonised with European norms, with the remaining under revision. Both existing and other such issues need to be further defined, judiciously recorded, and measures, aimed at reducing loss of life and property, all associated fire safety industries must call for consensus in coherent recording and documentation of comparable statistics.

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EFRA SUMMER 2012

EFRA welcomes NEW MEMBERS

Introducing Total

With long experience of using Flame Retardant (FR) solutions in compounding, of ABS and Polystyrene (PS), Total today focuses on two worldwide businesses for compounding: PS and PP (Polypropylene) compounds. Total will in future, be widely using FR solutions for its new generation of EPS (expanded polystyrene) products. Historically in Europe, coloured grades and Flame Retardant grades of PS Compounds (CPD) were developed by either producing masterbatches or ready to use compounds. With an expertise in E&E FR solutions, Total focuses in providing polymer alloys and advanced FR solutions for this market, both with brominated and halogen free compounds. These PS CPD products are made available with worldwide technical service and production facilities in Europe and Asia.

Total intends to keep its leadership in the usage of FR solutions by constantly improving its existing styrenics products such as PS Compounds, and by launching a new generation of EPS; responding to increasing technical market demand which involves working closely with its FR suppliers via EFRA.

‘Committed and Competent’

Campine is a leading European specialist in fire retardancy powder and concentrates, plastics masterbatches, PET catalysts and lead recycling. Consistent application of its marketing strategy has enabled Campine to build up significant market positions in a number of specialized business fields.

Campine will be celebrating its 100 year Anniversary towards the end of 2012.

Green Matters

VECAP - Positive progress

Have you seen the VECAP 2011 Report?
It outlines the outstanding results achieved.

In the coming year, industry will further step up its efforts in expanding the program across the globe, reaching out to the Asia-Pacific region where significant opportunities have already been identified. The VECAP team will continue in their challenge to ensure that best practices in chemical management are followed throughout the flame retardants industry, as well as encouraging other industries and downstream users to adopt this successful program.

SUSPROC - Sustainable Production and Consumption

A scientific project from the European Commission’s JRC Institute, contributing to EU policy development for a sustainable environment.

Under the Waste Framework Directive of 2008, the Commission is establishing end-of-waste criteria for a number of specific recyclable materials including plastics. A technical working group of experts from academia, industry and Member State representatives have met to determine the end-of-waste criteria for plastic waste conversion and to make thorough techno-economic environmental assessments. This will help verify when a recyclable waste material is safe for the environment and has a high enough quality to meet being released from the waste regime.

Their Second Working Document was released in May 2012 and can be found at:

GREEN MATTERS

EGG

Electronics Goes Green

EFRA has announced that it will be participating in this year’s international congress to be held September 21-22, 2012 in Berlin. The slogan ‘Taking Green to the Next level’ will feature new approaches to green IT, lifecycle engineering and new technologies whilst covering regulations and legislation, corporate social responsibility, managing critical resources and sustainability matters.

Please support EFRA at this conference where hundreds of participants from industry, academia, NGOs and politicians will be attending.

EUROPEAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2011

The Voluntary Emissions Control Action Program (VECAP) team will continue in their mission to promote best practices in chemical management through a series of engagements in the Asia-Pacific region which will include events in China and Japan. The focus of these activities will be awareness raising for the Asia-Pacific region on best practices in chemical management.

VECAP - Positive progress

Green Matters

One Banner!

EFRA and PINFA have collaborated to create the Phosphorous Working Group. This common working group will concentrate its efforts on fire safety linked to phosphorous and its derivatives.

Egg Electronics Goes Green

EFRA SUMMER 2012
EFRA’s organizes second UF&T Forum Workshop

The second UF&T Workshop was held in Brussels on 5th June and was attended by 30 members with a vested interest in the current and future regulations governing fire safety and flame retardants within the furnishings and textiles industry.

Markets, Requirements, Challenges and Innovations

3rd International SKZ Conference on Flame Retardants, Shanghai, China

Fire safety of polymeric materials is a topic that touches all industry sectors, from transportation and construction to electrical engineering and electronics. In the light of new regulations and an ever-increasing demand for sustainable and “green” solutions, the global flame retardant market faces new challenges. This conference gave a comprehensive overview on new approaches and developments in flame retardant polymer materials and flame retardant systems, as well as on the highly complex theme of the current status of national and international regulations and testing standards.

An important topic were the new approaches in flame retardants, flame retarded polymers, and synergistic systems. Innovations in halogenated and halogen-free flame retardants were presented. The focus was on a new sustainable, “drop-in” branched FR for thermoplastics and polyethylene foams, new reactive phosphorus-based FR systems for FR4 epoxies, synergistic systems for engineering plastics, N/P as well as intumescent systems for polyolefins, and new FR engineering plastics meeting the most stringent requirements in E&E and for automobiles in building construction.

The current situation and trends in fire safety regulations, tests and their impact on the use of flame retardant products was addressed for the building sectors in Europe, road vehicles (too low fire safety in buses), railway applications and aircraft, and also importantly E&E equipment.

Following the conference, the Industry Interest Group Workshop on the European research project Polymer-“Processing and upscaling of fire-resistant nanofilled thermosetting polyurethane resin” took place. The objective was to keep industry informed of the project’s progress and to initiate the exchange of scientific and technological information.

Lively discussions demonstrated the high interest of both suppliers and users of flame retardant materials and the next 4th International Conference on Flame Retardants is scheduled for May 18-19 2013 in Guangzhou.

Future Events 2012

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>June 13-15</td>
<td>6th Int. Conf. on FRP Composites</td>
<td><a href="http://www.6icfrp.com/index.html">http://www.6icfrp.com/index.html</a></td>
<td>Rome, Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 24-28</td>
<td>15th EU Conf. on Composite Materials</td>
<td><a href="http://www.composites2012.fr/">http://www.composites2012.fr/</a></td>
<td>Venice, Italy</td>
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<td>July 10-12</td>
<td>Life Cycle Assessment and Construction</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lca-construction2012.fr/">http://www.lca-construction2012.fr/</a></td>
<td>Nantes, France</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 29-30</td>
<td>34th International Conf. on Combustion</td>
<td><a href="http://www.socience2012.org/">http://www.socience2012.org/</a></td>
<td>Warsaw, Poland</td>
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<td>Aug. 31-Sept. 5</td>
<td>Electronics FR 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://www.efra.com/">http://www.efra.com/</a></td>
<td>Berlin, Germany</td>
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<td>Sept. 4-6</td>
<td>7th Int. Flame Retardant Technology and Material Industry Exhibition, EFRA 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fra80.com/">http://www.fra80.com/</a></td>
<td>Shanghai, China</td>
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<td>Sept. 9-12</td>
<td>Electronics Green 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://www.eurofira.com">http://www.eurofira.com</a></td>
<td>Berlin, Germany</td>
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<td>Sept. 12-14</td>
<td>17th Int. Congress for Battery Recycling (ICBR 2012)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.euroFabrics.com/">http://www.euroFabrics.com/</a></td>
<td>Amsterdam, Netherlands</td>
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<td>Sept.17-20</td>
<td>2nd Int. Symposium on FR Materials and Technologies</td>
<td><a href="http://www.epfr.org/">http://www.epfr.org/</a></td>
<td>Chengdu, China</td>
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<td>Sept. 27-28</td>
<td>2nd Int. Conf. on Fires in Vehicles</td>
<td><a href="http://www.intfr.org/">http://www.intfr.org/</a></td>
<td>Chicago, USA</td>
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<td>Oct. 9-10</td>
<td>Polymer Foam 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://www.intfr.org/">http://www.intfr.org/</a></td>
<td>New Jersey, USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 17-20</td>
<td>7th Asia-Oceania Symposium on Fire Science and Technology</td>
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<td>Hefei, China</td>
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<td>Nov. 1-2</td>
<td>14th Europa Roundtable</td>
<td><a href="http://www.eurofira.com/">http://www.eurofira.com/</a></td>
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<td>Nov. 6-7</td>
<td>Life Cycle Assessment Conf.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.efra.com/">http://www.efra.com/</a></td>
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<td>Nov. 27-29</td>
<td>Fire Resistance in Plastics</td>
<td><a href="http://www.socience2012.org/">http://www.socience2012.org/</a></td>
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<td>Nov. 27-28</td>
<td>Minerals in Composting (AIR)</td>
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