

European Community

News Release

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY BANS BENZENE USE

IN TOYS: THREAT TO CHILDREN'S HEALTH

The European Community, on 15 October, banned the use of benzene, a chemical widely used to make children's balloons, in the manufacture of all toys in the Community.

A directive from the EC's Council of Ministers announced the ban of benzene, which it said could affect the central nervous system and cause cancer.

Benzene is a constituent of one of the chemicals used in balloons. A recent British survey showed that the level of benzene in the solvent for certain balloon-making kits ranged up to 40 per cent.

The Community-wide ban, which EC member states must enforce by March 1981, forms part of a consumer protection programme launched in 1976, aimed at standardizing EC legislation on the marketing and use of dangerous substances.

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