

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1982 - 1983

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DOCUMENT 1-255/82

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION
tabled by Mr MUNTINGH

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedures

on polychlorinated biphenyls and polychlorinated
terphenyls (PCBs)¹

¹ Where reference is made to PCBs in this motion for a resolution, the term is understood to mean polychlorinated biphenyls and polychlorinated terphenyls or compounds containing PCBs and/or PCTs.



The European Parliament,

- (a) whereas PCBs are extremely harmful to human health and to the environment, because they are not readily degradable and are highly toxic,
- (b) having regard to the environmental action programme of the European Community,
- (c) having regard to Directive 75/442/EEC on the disposal of waste,
- (d) having regard to Directive 76/403/EEC which lays down rules for the disposal of waste PCBs and of waste articles and apparatus containing PCBs in order to restrict the uncontrolled discharge of PCBs
- (e) having regard to Directive 76/769/EEC in which it is stipulated that PCBs may be used for a number of specific applications,
- (f) whereas there are currently still several hundred tonnes of PCBs, primarily in small condensers, on waste dumps, while of the remainder two thirds to three quarters are to be found in the environment,
- (g) whereas large quantities of PCBs will also be released in the European Community in the next few years, mainly into the atmosphere,
- (h) whereas in the present situation, even with a total ban on discharges - and no such ban exists at present - it could still be decades before the quantity of PCBs in the environment is reduced to a level approaching zero,
- (i) aware of the damage caused by PCBs to the reproductive systems of human beings and animals, and the carcinogenic effect of PCBs,
- (j) whereas in the Member States the concentration of PCBs in mother's milk and fatty tissue is of a comparable and dangerously high level,

- (k) whereas babies that are exclusively breastfed during the first few months of their lives may easily have an intake of time times the permitted quantity of PCBs per day,
- (l) whereas adult seals found dead in the Netherlands were found to have an average PCB content of 701 µg/g, the figures varying between 87 and 1447 µg/g,
- (m) whereas, under present legislation, this serious threat to humans and animals from PCB poisoning continues to exist,
- (n) whereas the environmental action programme referred to above recognizes the need to take Community measures in respect of the treatment of waste which, because of its toxicity and non-degradability, requires solutions going beyond the national level,
- (o) whereas the directive on waste 75/442/EEC provides for the possibility of making certain kinds of dangerous waste subject to special regulations which safeguard human health and the environment,
- (p) whereas the PCB directive referred to above have already imposed restrictions, primarily on uncontrolled discharges into the environment,
- (q) concludes that the basis and instruments for more far-reaching measures are available,
- (r) whereas the production of PCBs was voluntarily discontinued in Japan in 1971 and their production and importation banned in 1973, apart from a few exceptions,
- (s) whereas production in the United States was discontinued in 1977 and importation also banned in 1979, subject to a few exceptions until 1984,

- (t) whereas production and use in open systems has been abandoned on a voluntary basis in the Netherlands,
- (u) whereas in 1973 the Council of the OECD asked member states to stop using PCBs in open systems and to continue only those uses in closed systems for which there was no alternative
- (v) whereas, for most applications, alternative materials have now been developed which do not produce effects similar to those produced by PCBs in man and the environment;
- (w) having regard to the resolution adopted at the symposium on seals organized by the Rural Association for the Preservation of the Waddenzee at Texel on 7 May 1981, and forwarded to the European Community, the European Parliament and the Member States bordering on the Waddenzee, with a request for such a ban to be instituted without delay,

Requests the Commission to

1. institute a total ban on the production, use and importation of PCBs in open and closed systems;
2. examine ways in which PCBs now present in the Community can be treated in reliable combustion furnaces;
3. report, pursuant to Article 10 of Directive 76/403/EEC on PCBs, on the measures taken under the proposals made in this motion for a resolution.

