

**DIRECTIVE 2002/95/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL**  
**of 27 January 2003**  
**on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment**

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 95 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission <sup>(1)</sup>,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee <sup>(2)</sup>,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of Regions <sup>(3)</sup>,

Acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 251 of the Treaty in the light of the joint text approved by the Conciliation Committee on 8 November 2002 <sup>(4)</sup>,

Whereas:

- (1) The disparities between the laws or administrative measures adopted by the Member States as regards the restriction of the use of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment could create barriers to trade and distort competition in the Community and may thereby have a direct impact on the establishment and functioning of the internal market. It therefore appears necessary to approximate the laws of the Member States in this field and to contribute to the protection of human health and the environmentally sound recovery and disposal of waste electrical and electronic equipment.
- (2) The European Council at its meeting in Nice on 7, 8 and 9 December 2000 endorsed the Council Resolution of 4 December 2000 on the precautionary principle.
- (3) The Commission Communication of 30 July 1996 on the review of the Community strategy for waste management stresses the need to reduce the content of hazardous substances in waste and points out the potential benefits of Community-wide rules limiting the presence of such substances in products and in production processes.
- (4) The Council Resolution of 25 January 1988 on a Community action programme to combat environmental pollution by cadmium <sup>(5)</sup> invites the Commission to pursue without delay the development of specific measures for such a programme. Human health also has

to be protected and an overall strategy that in particular restricts the use of cadmium and stimulates research into substitutes should therefore be implemented. The Resolution stresses that the use of cadmium should be limited to cases where suitable and safer alternatives do not exist.

- (5) The available evidence indicates that measures on the collection, treatment, recycling and disposal of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) as set out in Directive 2002/96/EC of 27 January 2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council on waste electrical and electronic equipment <sup>(6)</sup> are necessary to reduce the waste management problems linked to the heavy metals concerned and the flame retardants concerned. In spite of those measures, however, significant parts of WEEE will continue to be found in the current disposal routes. Even if WEEE were collected separately and submitted to recycling processes, its content of mercury, cadmium, lead, chromium VI, PBB and PBDE would be likely to pose risks to health or the environment.
- (6) Taking into account technical and economic feasibility, the most effective way of ensuring the significant reduction of risks to health and the environment relating to those substances which can achieve the chosen level of protection in the Community is the substitution of those substances in electrical and electronic equipment by safe or safer materials. Restricting the use of these hazardous substances is likely to enhance the possibilities and economic profitability of recycling of WEEE and decrease the negative health impact on workers in recycling plants.
- (7) The substances covered by this Directive are scientifically well researched and evaluated and have been subject to different measures both at Community and at national level.
- (8) The measures provided for in this Directive take into account existing international guidelines and recommendations and are based on an assessment of available scientific and technical information. The measures are necessary to achieve the chosen level of protection of

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 365 E, 19.12.2000, p. 195 and OJ C 240 E, 28.8.2001, p. 303.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 116, 20.4.2001, p. 38.

<sup>(3)</sup> OJ C 148, 18.5.2001, p. 1.

<sup>(4)</sup> Opinion of the European Parliament of 15 May 2001 (OJ C 34 E, 7.2.2002, p. 109), Council Common Position of 4 December 2001 (OJ C 90 E, 16.4.2002, p. 12) and Decision of the European Parliament of 10 April 2002 (not yet published in the Official Journal), Decision of the European Parliament of 18 December 2002 and Decision of the Council of 16 December 2002.

<sup>(5)</sup> OJ C 30, 4.2.1988, p. 1.

<sup>(6)</sup> See page 24 of this Official Journal.







