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M / 388 EN

Standardisation Mandate to CEN for Standard Measuring methods for the determination of dioxin-like PCBs from stationary sources

I Motivation

1 million tons of PCBs have been produced and used during 20th century until their ban in 1985. PCBs are not as toxic as dioxins, but the quantities of PCBs released to the environment are several times higher. Much equipment and material containing PCBs will be reaching their waste stage in the coming years and the majority will probably be disposed by incineration. Therefore, one source of PCB emissions is the incineration of waste as one starting point of the trophic chain. Other sources are metal recycling plants, sintering plants, electric arc furnaces and hazardous waste incinerators.

A necessary condition for effective control and monitoring mechanism is the availability of appropriate measurement methods and the comparability of data. This requirement can only be fulfilled by a European Standard specifying a standardised measurement method for PCBs. This European Standard does not exist at the time being.

The following legal acts will especially benefit from a standardised method for PCBs:

POPs Regulation

Regulation (EC) No 850/2004 on persistent organic pollutants (POPs) includes PCBs as one of 16 substances or group of substances to be subject for prohibition and/or release reduction provisions. One of the major provisions is the drawing up of release inventories:

“Within two years MS shall draw up and maintain release inventories for the substances in Annex III (includes PCB) into air, water and land (Article 6(1)).”

Those release inventories of the MS could only be compared regarding PCBs if a standardised method for analysing PCBs is existing.

On top of that, Article 9 is directly addressing the provision of comparable data on PCBs: *“The Commission and the MS shall establish, in close co-operation, appropriate programmes and mechanisms,..., for the regular provision of comparable monitoring data on the presence of dioxins, furans and PCBs as identified in Annex III in the environment.*

European PRTR Regulation

Regulation (EC) No 166/2006 concerning the establishment of a European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register includes PCBs as one of 91 parameters of which releases to air, water and land from industrial facilities have to be reported. The inclusion of PCBs in the Regulation was inevitable since the UN-ECE PRTR Protocol includes PCBs and the European PRTR will implement the UN-ECE PRTR Protocol.

During the negotiations in Council some Member States already asked for a standardised method for analysing PCBs.

Community Strategies for Dioxins, Furans and PCBs and Environment and Health

In the Council Conclusions on the Dioxin Strategy (COM(2001) 593)) it is recalled that WHO has derived toxicity equivalency factors for dioxin-like PCBs and has stressed the importance of integrated standards for dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs. The Council therefore requests the Commission to address this in the strategy as a priority subject and, where appropriate, consider proposals.

Human exposure to these groups of substances is mainly via food. Limit values for dioxin-like PCBs in feed and food have been recently published by Commission Regulation (EC) No 199/2006. Furthermore, the European Environment and Health Strategy (COM(2003) 338)) aims at increasing our understanding of the links and pathways between emissions to the environment and human exposure. One way of contributing to this is to make sure that the same substances are considered in the two areas.

Dioxin-like PCBs have thus been identified by WHO as having health effects equivalent to those of dioxins and furans. For also addressing dioxin-like PCBs in the environment in line with the Environment and Health Strategy, validated standardised emission measurement methods are essential.

Others

PCB will also play a role as important pollutant in the discussions on the thematic strategies towards soil protection and towards prevention and recycling of waste. The need of comparable data for PCBs and therefore the need of a standardised method of measurement will also be evident under those thematic strategies.

PCBs are also listed in the two multilateral environmental agreements on POPs, the UNECE Protocol and the Stockholm Convention. The Community as well as most of the MSs have ratified them. Development of a European standardised method of measurement would also contribute to the proper implementation of these international conventions.

II Description of the mandated work

1. The Commission entrusts CEN with the following work:

Establishing of standard measuring methods for the determination of the dioxin-like PCBs in air emission measurements at stationary sources. The standard is intended to be Part 4 of EN 1948 (Parts 1-3 deal with the sampling, extraction/clean-up and identification/quantification of similar pollutant group PCDDs/PCDFs (dioxins/furans)).

Validation of the methods, including the different types of sampling (filter/cooler-method, dilution method, cooled probe method) for stationary sources. Part 1 of EN1948 shall be an integral part of Part 4.

2. The standard called EN 1948 Part 4 will cover the following subjects:

- Scope, normative references
- Terms and definitions, symbols and abbreviations
- Principle of the measurement procedure

- Device, materials and standards
- Measurement procedure
- Method validation and quality control requirements
- Quality control requirements for the measurement
- Quality assurance criteria
- Performance characteristics/lower determination limits
- Interferences
- Annexes as appropriate

3. The Commission recommends CEN to take account, as much as possible, of standards or rules currently available in the determination of dioxin-like and other PCBs in different materials (e.g. food and feed, waste oil, products, sludge, sediment, dust, construction and demolition wastes, excavated soil) and media (e.g. water, soil, salted water, fresh water, air) at national or international level (Stockholm Convention on POP (Toolkit), Rotterdam Convention (PIC), Basel Convention on Wastes, OSPAR, NATO-CCMS, SAICM).

III Execution of the mandate

1. CEN will present the draft standard (EN) to the Commission before 1 December 2009.
2. The European Standard (EN) will be adopted before 1 July 2011. At this date, the three linguistic versions (DE, EN, FR) will be available as well as the correct titles in other Community languages.
3. Before 1 December 2011, the standard (EN) will be transposed into national standards and all conflicting national standards of the Member States will be withdrawn.
4. CEN will present a report, at least once a year, on the progress of work.
5. The standstill period referred to in Article 7 of Directive 98/34/EC of 22 June 1998 shall commence when the CEN accepts this standardisation mandate¹.

¹ OJ, L 204, 21.7.1998, p.37, as amended by Directive 98/48/EC (OJ L 217, 5.8.1998, p.18)