

Scientists call on the EU to include PV Modules under RoHS

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We, the undersigned scientists, note that the EU will soon come to a decision with regard to the important environmental Directive on the Restriction of Hazardous Substances Directive (RoHS). We would like to make policy makers and the public aware of most recent scientific evidence that sheds new light on the safety of cadmium-telluride solar panels which are currently not covered by RoHS.

The Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy, one of the most respected institutions in the field of climate, energy and the environment, has conducted an appraisal of recent tests by independent scientific institutions. The conclusion of the appraisal is as follows:

Recent independent laboratory analyses conducted on CdTe PV modules confirm that these present a threat to the environment and health if disposed of in an improper and unprofessional way. The only way to rule out the risks associated with the use of cadmium in PV is to refrain from using cadmium in the first place. This requires non-toxic substitutes to be readily available, which they are (e.g. silicon-based photovoltaics). Cadmium should not spread in "green" solar technologies, but needs to be disposed of safely.

We believe similar problems may exist with lead in the silicon based modules mentioned above, although manufacturers of those modules have expressed their desire to comply with RoHS legislation should this be directed.

We urge the EU to include photovoltaics under RoHS.

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