

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS
Green Party

for the South East of England

Commissioner Markos Kyprianou
DG Health and Consumer Protection
The European Commission
B1049 Brussels,
Belgium

February 2nd 2006

Dear Commissioner,

I understand that the Commission's Scientific Committee is due to review data relating to the safety of para phenylenediamine (PPD) in June 2006. The last time the safety of PPD was examined the Committee made no recommendations, concluding that there was insufficient data. I have been in correspondence with a representative of the hairdressing industry in the UK who has asked me to raise concerns about PPD and its impact on consumers.

A paper published in the British Journal of Dermatology (July 2005) estimates that 500,000 people are affected by an allergic reaction to chemicals applied to the scalp. Studies carried out in Sweden, that prior to EU membership upheld a ban on the use of PPD, suggest that it is the hair dye constituent most likely to cause sensitization or allergic reaction. Those affected include individuals dyeing their hair and, of course, hairdressers - in the UK hairdressers and barbers are in the top 3 occupational groups in terms of prevalence of dermatitis. There is a summary of recent studies enclosed for your interest.

As you are well aware, the European Parliament is committed to the precautionary principle, and it is in this context that I write to request a strong line be taken on PPD. Existing studies reveal that the risk to health is more than marginal and that it is an occupational hazard for hairdressers and their clients. This ought to be sufficient grounds to phase out the use of PPD and enforce far stricter health and safety procedures during the phasing out period. I believe that until such an approach is adopted there is no incentive for the chemicals industry to invest in safe alternatives to PPD or the similar, but slightly less aggressive, TDA (toluene-2,5-diamine).

PPD is just one of many chemicals that are harmful to human health and I urge you to use the opportunity of a Scientific Committee review to act to protect consumers from potential allergies and other severe reactions. I look forward to hearing what progress has been made on this issue.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.

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