



The Greens | European Free Alliance  
in the European Parliament

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## Chemicals

### **Dangerous paint stripper finally banned**

Today, the European Parliament confirmed an agreement with Council to ban the highly hazardous substance dichloromethane from use in paint strippers. It foresees a blanket EU-wide ban for consumer use, and also a ban for professional use that allows Member States to derogate under certain conditions. DCM has long been banned in some EU Member States, but is still used in others.

**Swedish Green MEP Carl Schlyter**, Parliament's rapporteur for this law, commented:

*"At last, consumers in the EU will no longer be exposed to the very hazardous chemical dichloromethane (DCM), which is used in paint strippers. This chlorine-based substance is carcinogenic, harmful to the brain and nervous system and extremely volatile – by the time you can smell it, you are already exposed to levels well above occupational limits. The ban is long overdue, not least because safer alternatives are widely available.*

*"Importantly, the ban also applies to professional use. I regret that UK-led opposition in Council blocked my proposal for a complete ban for professional use, which had been supported at committee level in the European Parliament. As in the heated debate over pesticides, the UK and in particular its Health and Safety Executive has once again proved to be the chemical industry's best friend, defending the industry's interests at all costs, discriminating against safer alternatives, and denying the risks to human health."*

*"Upon my insistence, Member States wishing to apply the derogation for professional use of DCM must prioritise alternatives and apply safety measures to protect those professionals who do persist with DCM. I hope few Member States take this option and I call on the Commission to ensure safeguards are enforced. DCM safety measures are expensive. I expect that many professionals will realise that DCM is simply not worth the health risks and extra costs."*

\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\*

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