

# Mercury in Certain Energy-saving Light Bulbs –

## Exposure of Children

### Request for a SCHER opinion

#### **1. BACKGROUND**

Certain energy-saving light bulbs, namely compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), are widely available on the market and are offered for saving electricity and, eventually, reducing carbon dioxide emissions particularly from coal-fired power plants. They fulfill the requirements of Commission Regulation (EC) No 244/2009 on ecodesign requirements for non-directional household lamps<sup>1</sup> (Ecodesign Regulation), in contrast to traditional incandescent light bulbs which will be phased out progressively in accordance with the Regulation.

The Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks (SCHER) provided an opinion on mercury released from breaking CFLs (in May 2010)<sup>1</sup>, but could not conclude on the potential risk of children due to lack of data. We would like to ask SCHER now for an opinion on the potential mercury exposure to children, and thus the risk.

#### **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Against the above background, taking into account all available scientific assessments on mercury, including the Risk Assessment under 793/93/EEC and the previous opinions of SCHER, CSTEE, SCENIHR and the EFSA Scientific Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain, the SCHER is requested to assess the possible health risks to children, from the mercury released from accidental breakage of CFLs.

#### **3. DEADLINE**

December 2011 or shortly thereafter.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific\\_committees/environmental\\_risks/docs/scher\\_o\\_124.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/environmental_risks/docs/scher_o_124.pdf)