

# The Case for FLAME RETARDANT FREE FURNITURE

## STATEMENT

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### **The Alliance for Flame Retardant Free Furniture welcomes report of British Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee on 'Toxic Chemicals in Everyday Life'**

***Brussels, 17 July 2019 - The Alliance for Flame Retardant Free Furniture is pleased with the outcome of the report 'Toxic Chemicals in Everyday Life' published by the British Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) on 16 July 2019, claiming that the UK Government is stalling on action to reduce exposure to toxic chemicals in homes, including flame retardants in furniture, and proposing a set of measures to act upon.***

Flame retardants can cause serious harm to human health and the environment, they are an obstacle to the implementation of a Circular Economy and constitute a costly burden to furniture producers. Increasing evidence shows the need for flame retardant free furniture to ensure protection of human health and the environment and to promote competition and fire safety.

Today, the United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland are the only two European Union (EU) countries requiring upholstered furniture products such as sofas, beds or mattresses to pass ignition and flammability tests. To achieve compliance with these tests, large amounts of flame retardants are used. Given the harmful effects of these chemicals, this Alliance would like to reinforce the message of the EAC and calls upon the British Government to urgently re-evaluate the use of flame retardants in furniture and to not cause further delays to the reform of the 1988 Regulations.

Alternative and innovative solutions exist to chemical flame retardants and the presumption that fire safety is best met by the use of these chemicals is wrong. As a matter of fact, toxicity of fires caused by the presence of chemicals is a field of major concern. This Alliance believes that smoulder ignition tests should be put in place instead of open flame tests that require the use of flame retardants. This approach takes into account the flammability requirements, chemical exposure and consumers' protection to make safe fire safety possible. In addition to this, the Alliance strongly supports the promotion of a fire safety culture (education to consumers on tools, such as sprinklers and fire alarms) to achieve behavioural changes in consumers.

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### **About the Flame Retardants Free Furniture Alliance**

The Flame Retardants Free Furniture Alliance was created in 2016. It gathers the furniture industry, health and environmental NGOs, trade unions and firefighters in the call for flame retardant free furniture. See the Alliance's [policy paper](#) and [website](#) for further information!