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## **Press release**

April 2005

### ***The RoHS Directive: to spotlight environmental issues in production processes, both upstream and downstream***

Before 2003, no specific legislation covered the environmental impact of electrical and electronic equipment manufacturing. However, when inexpensive devices with increasingly short lifespans began to flood the market, the European Commission felt it was time to act.

Effective July 1, 2006, the RoHS Directive will ban the sale in Europe of certain low voltage electrical and/or electronic devices (below 1,000 V AC and 1,500 V DC) that contain lead, mercury, cadmium, hexavalent chromium and two first-generation brominated flame retardants (PBB and PBDE).

The Directive reflects the EU's growing willingness to spotlight environmental issues in production processes, both upstream and downstream. Its companion Waste of Electric and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive, which will take effect in August 2005, covers end-of-life recovery and recycling.

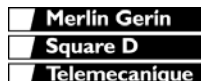
The European Commission's main concern is that difficult to recover consumer goods, such as cell phones, will end up in landfills and that the resulting leachate will pollute the soil and groundwater.

**Each year, Europe discards six million metric tons of electrical and electronic equipment. This figure could rise to 20 million metric tons of potentially toxic waste when today's cell phones reach the end of their useful lives.**

#### **A global concern**

Europe isn't alone in taking initiatives to reduce hazardous substances. Japan, world leader in the development, manufacture and assembly of electronic components, was the first country to remove lead in its production processes.

The government's objective was to eliminate more than 90% of the lead in its domestic production by the end of 2003. The law should be extended to computer equipment in 2006. The United States has not yet devised a federal framework similar to RoHS and WEEE, but the State of California has announced that it will adapt its laws to comply with the European Directives within the deadline set by the Commission



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