

02 FEB 2004

Brussels,
PMA/da A:25396/D:8584

Mr Bent Hindrup Andersen,
MEP
European Parliament
Rue Wiertz
1047 Brussels

Dear Mr Hindrup Andersen,

Thank you for your letter of 11 February 2004 concerning the Commission's proposal for a new Battery Directive, which was forwarded to me by Commissioner Byrne.

I believe that this proposal establishes the necessary measures to manage the risks that spent batteries pose to human health and the environment. One of the main aims of this proposal is to establish a closed-loop system for all batteries. The Directive proposes that Member States take all necessary measures to avoid the final disposal of spent batteries and accumulators and to achieve a high level of collection and recycling.

Portable NiCd batteries are a particular health and environmental concern when they end up in the environment. These batteries are covered by the proposed collection target of 160 grams per inhabitant. However, the Commission is also proposing to set an additional collection target of 80% of the amount of spent portable NiCd batteries generated annually. This target will guarantee that the proposed closed-loop system works in practice and that portable NiCd batteries will not end up in the environment.

As you mention in your letter, the additional collection target for portable NiCd batteries requires monitoring of the waste stream. The costs of this will, of course, depend on the particular method chosen at national level. The Commission's proposal states that minimum monitoring requirements will be established in a separate Commission decision on the basis of a comitology procedure, in close discussion with the Member States.

Several Member States have already performed monitoring campaigns to determine the amount of discarded portable NiCd batteries. These cost around €30,000 in France, €100,000 in Belgium and €150,000 in Germany. CollectNiCad, the European association of nickel-cadmium batteries manufacturers, has estimated that this monitoring costs less than 1% of the total annual budget of the national battery associations. Of course, Member States are free, in line with the polluter pays principle, to make the relevant battery producers responsible for bearing the costs of this monitoring exercise on their national territory.

Yours sincerely,



Margot WALLSTRÖM