



MAY 2007

// CED RESOLUTION

DENTAL AMALGAM

// HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

The safety and importance of the continued use of amalgam is supported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Dental Federation (FDI) (Consensus Statement, 1997); and by the report from 1998 of the ad hoc dental amalgam working group mandated by the European Commission. The effectiveness and safety of dental amalgam in the restoration of decayed teeth has been demonstrated through long usage. **Research over many decades has failed to show any significant health risk posed by dental amalgam.**

The CED regrets the European Parliament's call in March 2006 for restrictions on the use of amalgam despite the lack of any scientific justification for this action (P6_TA(2006)0078). **It is important that political decisions of the EU institutions take into account up-to-date scientific evidence.**

Research into the potential health risks posed by dental amalgam should continue. However, this must go hand in hand with research into existing alternative materials, since far too little is known about their risk of toxicity, safety to both patients and dental staff and about their other properties. In this respect, the CED welcomes the Commission's request for a scientific opinion on the safety of both amalgam and alternatives for both patients and users.

// ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The dental profession takes seriously the environmental impact of its members' activities. The CED calls on Member States to ensure the full implementation and enforcement of EU waste laws, and fully supports examination into whether this is happening. In most Member States amalgam separators are used and in many they are obligatory. Amalgam separators are an effective way of reducing harmful waste – preventing more than 95% of waste amalgam entering the waste stream – and their use should be encouraged.

The CED also encourages national dental associations to share best practice on waste management and to support their members regarding compliance with waste management obligations.

// USE OF AMALGAM

The worldwide consensus of the dental profession is that amalgam should remain part of the dentist's armoury in order to best meet the needs of patients. It is important that patients must not be denied freedom of choice in respect of how to be treated

Dental amalgam continues to be the most appropriate filling material for many restorations, due to its ease of use, durability and cost-effectiveness. Dentists are best placed to identify patients' oral health needs.

Restrictions on the use of amalgam would damage the financial stability of health systems as well as impact on individual patients' ability to afford dental care.

// **IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTION**

All healthcare interventions carry with them some risk. The CED stresses the **importance of promoting national and targeted prevention programmes for oral health** in order to reduce the need for such interventions.

Adopted unanimously by the CED General Meeting on 11 May 2007