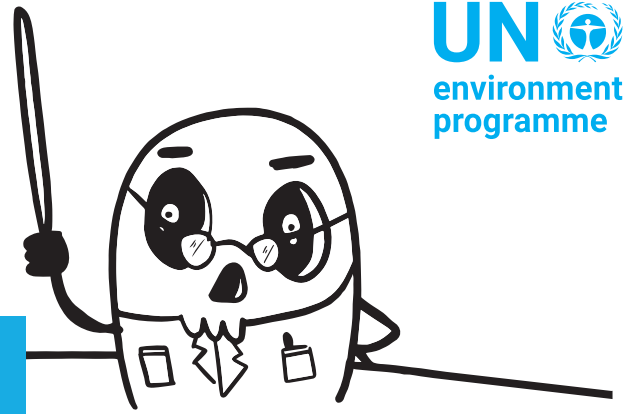


## THE FAMILY OF WORST FRIENDS FOREVER



### A BIT OF #HISTORY:

POPs serve various human needs, including enhancing the performance of consumer products and controlling pests in agriculture and public health.

Given their long-term damage to human health and the environment, safer alternatives must be developed to eliminate POPs as soon as possible.

The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, established in 2004, initially listed 12 POPs for global action to control or eliminate their production and release. From 2009 to 2023, 22 new members of the family were added:

- Some of them were chemicals whose POPs characteristics were subsequently recognized.
- Some of them were introduced as alternatives to the initial 12, but later classified as POPs themselves.



### The story of flame retardants:

Flame retardants are chemical compounds that can prevent or slow down the spread of fire.

Mirex and PCB were among the first chemicals used as flame retardants dating back to the 60s. They are among the **first 12 POPs listed** under the Stockholm Convention in 2004.

Alternative flame retardants like **PeCB, PBDEs, HBB,** and **HBCD** were listed for elimination under the Convention from 2009 to 2017 as they were found to be similar to their predecessors.

**The struggle between fire prevention and chemical safety has not ended.**

**SCCPs**, used as a flame retardant, have been detected as the second highest POP in human milk according to the UNEP/WHO human milk survey in 43 countries in 2016-2019.

**PFOS**, used as a flame retardant, was restricted under the Convention in 2009. The “relatives” in the same group of synthetic chemicals who filled in the place of PFOS were soon also classified as **POPs**; e.g.: **PFOA** was severely restricted in 2019 and **PFHxS** was banned in 2022.

However, the damage was already caused. These toxic chemicals detected in surface water in 22 countries across the world, even in remote islands in the Pacific.

This is a game of POPs “whac-a-mole” at the cost of human health and the environment. **Substituting one harmful chemical with another is not the solution.**