



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **IFQC Ranks Top 100 Countries by Gasoline Benzene Standards; U.S. Ranks 67<sup>th</sup>**

HOUSTON, TEXAS (Dec. 8, 2008) -- The *International Fuel Quality Center (IFQC)* has ranked the top 100 countries based on benzene content standards in gasoline; Colombia came in first with the earliest implementation of the lowest benzene limits. Following in second and third were Canada and Luxembourg, respectively.

Benzene is found naturally in crude oil and thus passes into refined products, including transportation fuels. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) classifies benzene as a Group A, known human carcinogen, which can have harmful effects on bone marrow and lower red blood cell count. Controlling benzene levels in gasoline is the most direct way to limit evaporative and exhaust emissions of benzene from vehicles.

"The current global trend is to reduce benzene content in gasoline, as it's also seen as the most effective way to reduce human exposure to the chemical," said Liisa Kiuru, executive director, *IFQC*.

Most countries do not have separate specifications for gasoline and low level gasoline-ethanol (oxygenated) blends, as does Colombia. Oxygenated regular gasoline (benzene limit of 0.9 vol%), was used in the ranking because it is the most prevalent in the Colombian market.

European countries topped the ranking (Luxembourg in third, Belgium in fourth, and nine other EU countries tied for fifth) along with several Asian countries, including Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan, tied at 18<sup>th</sup> along with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

The U.S. came in at 67<sup>th</sup>, primarily because these rankings are based on national maximum allowance standards; U.S. standards were last updated in 1997. However, the state of California would have actually ranked first if it was a country, as its gasoline benzene limit is 0.7 vol%. The U.S. would have ranked second if reformulated gasoline (0.93 vol%) was used instead of conventional gasoline (4.9 vol%).

“Refiners are lowering benzene and aromatics levels in gasoline around the world as part of continued efforts to lower air toxics and improve health conditions globally,” said Frederick L. Potter, executive vice president, Hart Energy Publishing, LP. “We at HART and *IFQC* commend industry as well as governments worldwide for the achievements they have made.”

The complete table ranking the top 100 countries by gasoline benzene content standards is available on the *IFQC*'s Web site at <http://www.ifqc.org>.

HART Energy Consulting is a division of HART Energy Publishing, LP, one of the world's largest energy industry publishers, with a diverse array of informational products for the worldwide energy industry. Multi-client consulting services include the *International Fuel Quality Center*, the *Global Biofuels Center* and an annual *Crude, Refining & Clean Transportation Fuel Outlook to 2025*. Headquartered in Houston, with offices in New York, London, Washington, Brussels, Bahrain, Singapore, Mexico City and Moscow, HART Energy Publishing's market-leading publications include *Oil and Gas Investor*, *E&P*, *FUEL* and *PipeLine & Gas Technology*. HART also produces newsletters, custom publishing products, conferences, and unique multi-and single-client consulting services.

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