



PRESS RELEASE

MEPs discuss cancer prevention through better regulation of hormone disrupting chemicals

Brussels, 7 January 2015 – MEP Christel Schaldemose told an inter-party meeting of Members of the European Parliament active on cancer today that: *“Effective regulation of endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) represents an important opportunity for the primary prevention of hormone-related cancers, including breast, prostate and testicular.”*

She was the host of a meeting of MEPs Against Cancer (MAC) (1) which was co-organised by the Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL) and the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL).

“Curbing exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals should become a central part of cancer prevention strategy in Europe,” Wendy Tse Yared, Director of the Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL) told the meeting. *“It represents an exciting opportunity for prevention because reducing exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals in our everyday environment may stop cancers before they start.”*

“We need to use every possible opportunity to prevent cancer so environmental prevention is important. Hormone-related cancers, especially of those of the breast and prostate, have been increasing in recent decades. Today, breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in women in Europe, and prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in men.”

Dutch toxicologist Dr Majorie B.M. van Duursen says scientific evidence of the role that exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals plays in disrupting our hormones and triggering chronic disease, including hormonal cancers, is growing all the time. A recent review by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2012 defined the advances that had been made since 2002. (2)

In answer to the question: “What we do we know?” Dr Duursen said: *“On breast cancer, for example, numerous studies have shown that exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals, such as BPA, PBDE and pesticides, can adversely affect the normal development of the mammary gland, potentially making it more susceptible to cancers.”*

Génon K. Jensen, HEAL Director, said: *“Exposure to EDCs is a likely explanation of why cancers that are hormone dependent, such as many breast and prostate cancers, have been increasing in recent decades.”*

She said that public concern related to this exposure was reflected not only in the interest that cancer groups are showing but also from the number of ordinary individuals who are responding to the EU consultation on EDCs. *“An online platform to support members of the general public who wish to respond to the current EU consultation has been launched by the EDC-Free Europe coalition, in which HEAL is a member. Since it was launched five weeks ago, over 10,000 individuals have responded via this platform.”* (3)

Two recent publications have highlighted the prevention opportunities and potential health cost savings from regulatory action on endocrine disrupting chemicals. A report by Nordic countries estimated costs related male reproductive problems associated with EDC exposure. It suggested that exposure to these chemicals might be responsible for up to 40% of all cases of testicular cancer.(4) HEAL's report addressing the overall health costs related to EDC exposure suggested that associated costs may be up to €31 billion per year in the European Union. (4)

Notes

1. MEPs Against Cancer (MAC) Briefing: EU Consultation on Endocrine Disruptors. European Parliament, Room ASP-3G3 on Wednesday, 7 January 2015, 12.30-14.00. See <http://www.europeancancerleagues.org/mac/mac-events/371-meeps-against-cancer-briefing-on-endocrine-disrupting-chemicals-regulation.html>
2. WHO/UNEP State of the Science of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals 2012
3. EDC-Free Europe coalition platform for responding to the European Commission's public consultation « on defining criteria for identifying endocrine disruptors in the context of the implementation of the plant protection product regulation and the biocidal products regulation » is at <http://www.no2hormonedisruptingchemicals.org/> It is available in seven languages.
4. "The Cost of Inaction: Socioeconomic analysis of costs linked to effects of endocrine disrupting substances on male reproductive health" <http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A763442&dswid=-8392>
5. Health costs in the EU: How much is related to Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals? http://www.env-health.org/IMG/pdf/18062014_final_health_costs_in_the_european_union_how_much_is_realted_to_edcs.pdf

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MEPs against Cancer (MAC) is an all-party informal group of Members of the European Parliament committed to promoting action on cancer as an EU priority and harnessing European health policy to that end. Through quarterly discussions between MEPs, other policy makers and invited guests, the group aims to strengthen the political will needed to fight cancer in Europe. The MAC Secretariat is provided by ECL. Website: <http://www.europeancancerleagues.org/mac.html> Twitter: @MAC_MEPs

The Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL) is a pan-European umbrella organisation of national and regional cancer leagues. For the past 30 years, it has been providing a unique and important platform for cancer societies from Iceland to Turkey to "Make a difference in cancer prevention and control". Website: <http://www.europeancancerleagues.org/> Twitter: @CancerLeagues

The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) is a leading European not-for-profit organisation addressing how the environment affects health in the European Union (EU). With the support of 70 member organisations, HEAL brings independent expertise and evidence from the health community to different decision-making processes. Our broad alliance represents health professionals, not-for-profit health insurers, doctors, nurses, cancer and asthma groups, citizens, women's groups, youth groups, environmental NGOs, scientists and public health research institutes. Members include international and Europe-wide organisations as well as national and local groups. Website: www.env-health.org. Facebook [@HealthandEnv](#) [@EDCFree](#) and [@CHM_HEAL](#)