

SPEECH TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

I am a professor in Cancerology, in charge of implementing the National Cancer Scheme in France, and the chairman of the French Association for Therapeutic Cancer Research, the ARTAC. I'd like to address this assembly in my own name, on behalf of the ARTAC and also on behalf of the Paris Appeal signatories.

In every industrialized countries, cancer incidence is on the increase. In France, breast cancers have increased twofold over the last 20 years, while prostate cancers have tripled. This rise concerns the vast majority of European countries, and not only adults. In Europe, according to a recent IARC study, the incidence of pediatric cancers has increased approximately 1% a year for the past 20 to 30 years, as in the U.S. How can this be explained ? In many Western European countries, tobacco addiction and alcoholism have dropped. In France, however, smoking still induces 20-25% of cancers. Some attribute the current incidence rise to modifications in our lifestyle over the last 20 years : food, obesity, hormone treatments.

The fact is that – except for smoking – none of the lifestyle-related factors are mutagenic, whereas cancer necessarily involves mutations. Likewise, a longer life expectancy over the past 20 years cannot be the only factor to take into account, as the growing cancer incidence also affects young people and particularly children.

Therefore many scientists now believe that the environment, and more specifically physico-chemical pollution, have a major role to explain the genesis of cancers, but also of numerous other diseases, such as some malformations of the reproductive system, as well as certain diseases of the nervous system, allergies and asthma in children. This is the reason for the Paris Appeal that has been signed so far by a hundred international scientists, including several Nobel Prizes, and by more than 200 NGOs.

What does this Appeal state in its three articles ?

1. Many diseases today are due to chemical pollution in our environment,
2. Today, because of this pollution, children are threatened,
3. By persisting to pollute, we put at risk the survival of the human race itself.

This Appeal proposes 7 categories of measures, three of which are essential :

1. We must withdraw CMR products from the environment, applying the substitution principle, and therefore reinforce the REACH program rather than weaken it, as is currently the case,
2. We must adapt regulatory standards regarding pollution according to the most vulnerable people in the population, i.e. according to children,
3. We must not wait for the Kyoto Protocol to be ratified to implement drastic measures to fight the greenhouse effect.

The Paris Appeal is a document to which the European Commission now refers to. I'd like to invite each and everyone of you, as well as every NGOs, to sign it. Our

target is to collect 1 million signatures. It is essential that European authorities bear this Appeal in mind in the current and future debates on the REACH program.

Thank you for your attention.