

Chemicals



Successes included establishing an EDC-Free Europe network, one-to-one access to top policy makers, and significant media coverage. Specific “wins” related to the REACH authorisation process.



39,000 hits on the “Take Action” photos page has provided images identifying everyday products that individuals suspect contain EDCs with the banner ‘Is this disrupting me?’ The first photos were made into a collage for an action outside the EU Commission in November 2013.

Pushing for proper control of EDCs



The objective this year was to push for the EU to set criteria and launch its strategy on endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs). In May 2013, HEAL wrote to the President of the EU Commission José Manuel Barroso and to EU Commissioners for Industry and Enterprise, Environment, and Health.

However, it soon became clear that a full impact assessment would be carried out before the launch of a policy proposal. Throughout the year, HEAL was in contact with cabinet officials and desk officers to present our concerns on the deliberations and urge for quick EU action.

HEAL also asked for a meeting with EU Commission President José Manuel Barroso on behalf of the EDC-Free Europe coalition. A member of his cabinet came down from her office to receive the letter during an action outside the Commission building in November 2013.

EDC-Free Europe grows apace

Since HEAL launched the EDC-Free campaign in July 2013, it has swelled to over 50 organisations from 16 countries. Over



The photo collage of President Barroso shows him making an “all OK” sign – this was in the hope that he would respond positively in supporting urgent action on EDCs to reduce human exposure, particularly in products used by the most vulnerable, such as babies and pregnant women.



Following the action, an article entitled ‘Commission delay over endocrine disruptors ‘prolonging public exposure’ was published in The Parliament Magazine. This journal is widely read in EU policy circles. The article was tweeted to the magazine’s 13,000 Twitter followers, including many MEPs, distributed to 8,000 readers via the Daily Bulletin, and is now searchable on the website. At about the same time, HEAL’s Senior Chemicals Officer Lisette van Vliet was quoted in Chemical Watch’s monthly briefing highlighting the urgent need for the EU to act on EDCs.

Making REACH chemicals law work for public health

In June 2013, HEAL participated in the committee of Europe’s chemical agency (ECHA) which identified six chemicals, including EDCs to be placed on Europe’s list of most harmful chemicals and to be strictly controlled in the REACH system.

On 12 March 2014, ECHA's Risk Assessment Committee (RAC) adopted an opinion proposing to reclassify bisphenol A (BPA) from "suspected" to "presumed human reproductive toxicant".

Another triumph came with HEAL's initiative of a critique in ECHA's RAC. At the meeting in November, Senior Chemicals Officer Lisette van Vliet said that the practice of identifying safe levels for reproductive toxicants was outdated since some substances are assessed because of their EDCs properties. If this debate is won, it will improve the outcome of the REACH review of EDC authorisation.

There was also good news to share with members on brominated flame retardants (BFRs). First, the industry-proposed standard on the use of BFRs in televisions had been rejected in Europe. Second, a standard set in California in the 1970s requiring BFRs in many products (to serve as a "flame retardant" but offering no additional security) had now officially been corrected. This would open the market for BFR-free products around the world.

National support

In the UK, HEAL signed up to a manifesto on breast cancer prevention produced by member, Breast Cancer UK. It calls on the UK government to stop breast cancer before it starts and highlights the role of chemicals in breast cancer. Twitter activity by Alliance for Cancer Prevention brought a reaction on EDCs from Cancer Research UK, which has 121,000 followers. ACP gave HEAL and others the opportunity to join the discussion.

SEPSAS, a public health society in **Spain** with 3,800 members released a press release drawing on HEAL materials. HEAL promoted an English translation and it was featured in Chemical Watch.

Prevention is better than cure

5 PLEDGES FOR 2015 AND BEYOND TOWARDS THE PREVENTION OF BREAST CANCER

One in eight women in the UK will be diagnosed with breast cancer at some point in their lives.

BC UK Breast Cancer UK
Preventing breast cancer

The Chemicals Health Monitor project aims to increase environmental and health protection by raising awareness among health and environmental groups, journalists and the general public on hazardous chemicals, especially on endocrine disruptors, and on how EU policy needs to be strengthened.

CHM turns attention to Germany

This year, HEAL translated and promoted several key materials into German. One was a briefing on scientific evidence of harm to health from EDCs ("Hormonell wirksame Chemikalien – das sagt die Wissenschaft") released in November 2013. It provides support for scientists and others who want to become engaged in EU policy deliberations on EDCs. The briefing includes a translation of the Berlaymont Declaration and the position of the Collegium Ramazzini, two scientific documents on EDCs, both of which call for an EU policy change. When the Berlaymont Declaration by over 80 leading scientists was published in May 2013, HEAL voiced support with a press release.

CHEMISCHE SUBSTANZEN IN LEBENSMITTELN UND KONSUMGÜTERN – DAS FEHLENDE GLIED IN DER KETTE?

Neue Forschungsergebnisse verweisen auf Schadstoffe als Mitverursacher von Übergewicht und Diabetes

Die schnelle Verbreitung von Übergewicht und Diabetes lässt sich nicht allein durch falsche Ernährung und Bewegungsmangel erklären.

CHEMTrust
Protecting humans and wildlife from harmful chemicals

HEAL
Promoting environmental policy that contributes to good health

In December 2013, HEAL's leaflet on chemicals, diabetes and obesity was launched as "Chemische Substanzen in Lebensmitteln und Konsumgütern – das fehlende Glied in der Kette?"

HEAL's former project coordinator for the Chemical Health Monitor Germany (CHM) Angela Franz-Balsen networked with journalists at the Wissenwerte conference in November 2013. It is one of the largest conferences of journalists in Germany.

