



PRESS RELEASE

HEAL response to the European Commission's proposal on EDC criteria

Europe's opportunity to stop hormone disruption crushed

Brussels, 15 June 2016 - Today, the European Commission dashed all positive expectations with a proposal that will fail to protect Europeans from exposure to hormone or endocrine, disrupting chemicals (EDCs).

These substances have been recognised by the scientific community as a major threat to human health and the environment. (1)

After a delay of nearly three years, the Health Commissioner has presented documents (2) that lay out the criteria for identifying EDCs. These criteria are needed to allow existing pesticide and biocide regulations to function - and to become powerful measures for preventing hormonal cancers and other endocrine-related health conditions, such as diabetes and infertility.

The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) is astounded by the proposal.

*"What the Commission has proposed today will not prevent diseases related to endocrine disrupting chemicals. The requirements are so strict, the burden of proof so high that we'll have years of harm to health before we can remove them. This is not what the legislation requires, which is, that EDCs **may** cause adverse effects are banned."*

"Even worse, it would cripple the use of accumulated (and future) knowledge about effects on animals, which should be used to prevent harm to human health. A scientific consensus (3) exists on how best to identify these harmful chemicals (Option 3 of 4 in the roadmap (4)) but the College of Commissioners have not chosen to follow it," says HEAL's senior policy officer, Lisette van Vliet.

"HEAL wants to see the EU use the option supported by scientific consensus because it makes the best use of existing evidence and can take on new evidence. It adopts the successful practice of ranking chemicals into categories, such as "known", "suspected" or "potential" EDCs, like the system for carcinogens. We believe that the law requires this by stipulating that the criteria are to identify and ban hormone disruptors which 'may cause adverse effects' and not only those with a proven causal link."

HEAL says that EU Member States should not accept the Commission's current proposal. The biocides expert committee is due to discuss the proposal on 8 July and the Pesticides Standing Committee on 11-12 July.

"We call on Member States and MEPs to block these criteria until and unless they are significantly improved - or vote to reject them. The criteria must include the World Health Organization definition of potential endocrine disruptors and the modification to the Pesticides derogation on negligible exposure must be eliminated."

An article by leading scientific experts published in The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology (13 June) supports Option 3. It also says that an assessment of the strength of the evidence has been used in studies on the cost of managing health consequences of endocrine disruptors in the EU. The finding - with more than 99% probability – is that this cost exceeds €160 billion per year. (6)

Last year, the European Court of Justice condemned the Commission for the delay in presenting the criteria. (7) A recent vote in the European Parliament overwhelmingly condemned the Commission for its failure to comply with the original deadline. (8)

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Notes for journalists

1. World Health Organization, State of the Science of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals – 2012 <http://www.who.int/ceh/publications/endocrine/en/>
2. European Commission - Press release, Commission presents scientific criteria to identify endocrine disruptors in the pesticides and biocides areas http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-2152_en.htm and all documents here: http://ec.europa.eu/health/endocrine_disruptors/policy/index_en.htm
3. http://www.bfr.bund.de/en/international_expert_meeting_on_endocrine_disruptors-197246.html
4. http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/endocrine/index_en.htm
5. http://www.healthandenvironment.org/partnership_calls/18522
6. Trasande L, Zoeller RT, Hass U, et al. Estimating burden and disease costs of exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals in the European Union. *J Clin Endocrinol Metab* 2015; **100**:1245–55.
7. <http://www.env-health.org/news/latest-news/article/commission-breached-eu-law-by>
8. <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/endocrine-disruptors-commission-breach-eu-law-says-parliament>

*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 more than 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. Follow HEAL on [Facebook](#) and Twitter [@HealthandEnv](#) [@EDCFree](#) and [@CHM_HEAL](#)*