

EPHA Environment Network annual report 2005

In 2006, we became the
Health & Environment Alliance



Annual Report 2005

European Public Health Alliance Environment Network

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Director's Message

Génon K. Jensen, Executive Director

In just two years, the European Public Health Alliance Environment Network (EEN) has managed to achieve some very encouraging results. Despite a context in which almost every indicator of environmental health appears to be moving in the wrong direction, EEN has succeeded in ensuring that some key EU policy makers have heard its messages: the evidence and perspectives of a wide range of citizens' groups on the effects of a deteriorating environment on human health.

The task of putting health at the centre of environment policy is not a simple one. The European institutions tend to see targets in terms of economic goals rather than improvements in health and the quality of life.

One important challenge for the network is therefore to demonstrate that European citizens do not always share this priority on growth and industry. In fact, the European Commission's own surveys have repeatedly shown that a higher priority is often given to social and environmental policy.

Another difficulty is that the evidence linking environmental factors to health problems is far from complete. The relationships are often very complex, and not always well understood. Partly this is because of the subtle and numerous combinations of factors involved, and partly because of the length of time the effects on our bodies may take to manifest themselves.

This means that even when there are opportunities for erring on the side of caution, the institutions that hold the solutions to the problems are not adopting as swiftly as possible the regulatory frameworks required. Without full proof, there is tendency not to prioritise human health or the protection of the most vulnerable populations - children and pregnant women.

Our mission this year was therefore to set the right priorities within the health and environment agenda in Europe and to bring related recommendations to important opinion makers and decision-makers at the European level in the hope of encouraging policy change for the better.

With strong support from our members, ensuring the survival of the EU's chemical safety project

known as REACH was identified as an area of particular concern and urgency. During the course of the year, we were able to produce and disseminate a booklet providing current evidence linking different chemicals to health conditions called "Sick of chemicals", co-organise a meeting in the European Parliament with European doctors and scientists to highlight their concerns on chemicals and health, and bring young people from four European countries to Brussels to discuss with policy makers and industry their observations and frustrations, especially in relation to the lack of access to information on chemicals in everyday products.

It is difficult to measure how extensively our position papers on REACH and other priorities such as the EU's environment and health plan (known as SCALE), climate change and mercury influenced thinking among policy makers. However, it was often gratifying to note how often official reports reflected some of our key points. This was particularly the case in relation to the very well received report by Frédérique Ries, MEP criticising the EU's environment and health plan. Several calls resonated with points made in the EEN position paper.

But apart from priority setting and position statements on the aspects of EU policy that need to change, the network has also succeeded in creating several partnerships and achieving media coverage that have also contributed considerably to getting our messages across. For example, by working with WWF on its "How contaminated are you? - Blood-testing survey", we not only helped to put over to the general public some of the concerns about chemicals in everyday life, it also improved the profile of the organization when our President Marie-Christine Dewolf was featured within the campaign on EuroNews television and national television in Belgium.

Much work remains to be done. However, we are convinced that we are successfully charting a course ahead. Happily, this is confirmed by a growing membership. Numbers have swelled from 14 groups when the network was formed in 2003 to 40 in 2005. This latter figure includes eight European networks and several international organisations. By joining us, they have given to us their all-important vote of confidence!

Mission

The mission of EPHA Environment Network is to protect the environment as a means to improving the health and well-being of European people. Our key objective is to bring health expertise to the environmental policy-making process.

We strive for:

- *The introduction and implementation of policies that protect the environment* and promote sustainable development across the EU policy spectre so as to protect and improve the health of all people living in Europe.
- *Citizens' participation* in the decision-making concerning the environment and its impact on their health.
- *Mobilisation of stakeholders* across sectors at local, national and European level for mutual support, joint platforms and the formation of coalitions.

EPHA Environment Network does so by:

- *Monitoring EU decision-making* and draft legislation in the field of environment and health, providing regular information to members, and facilitating their input into the EU decision-making process.
- *Acting in a consultative and working partnership* with the European institutions, NGOs and other international organisations to promote, monitor and evaluate all policies for their impact on environment and health.
- *Raising awareness of the health links and impacts of environmental policy-making* through advocacy campaigns, publications.

I. Organisation

History

In 2003, member organisations of the European Public Health Alliance became increasingly aware of the intimate connection between human health and our environment. They founded the European Public Health Alliance Environment Network with the remit of following and influencing the environmental and health agenda of EU policy-makers, as well as bringing health expertise to the environmental policy-making process.

EPHA Environment Network (EEN) is an international non-profit non-governmental organisation dedicated to protecting the environment as a means to improving the health and well-being of European people. It was registered under Belgian law in June 2003 and is based in Brussels. Its governing bodies are the Executive Committee and the General Assembly.

The General Assembly

The General Assembly comprises the entire membership of the organisation. This body determines and authorises the broad policy

guidelines of EPHA Environment Network. It meets once a year in Brussels as the Annual General Assembly. The General Assembly's primary functions are:

- To elect the members of the Executive Committee;
- To vote on the admission of new member organisations;
- To modify the Statutes;
- To approve the annual accounts and budget.

The Executive Committee

Elected by the General Assembly for a period of two years renewable, this body elects a President from among its number. It has the powers of management with responsibility for:

- The annual work programme - setting priorities and programming the major activities;
- The financial management of the organisation;
- Overseeing the work of the Secretariat;
- Enlisting the support of the members.

The 2005 Executive Committee comprised:

Marie-Christine Dewolf, President, Hygiène Publique en Hainaut, a.s.b.l., Belgium

Lew Gerbilsky, Vice President, Green Doctors, ISDE - Ukraine

Tamsin Rose (until September 2005), Treasurer;

Lara Garrido-Herrero (as of October 2005), European Public Health Alliance, Belgium

Sascha Gabizon, Women in Europe for a Common Future, the Netherlands

Peter van den Hazel, International Network on Children's Health, Environment and Safety, The Netherlands

Antoaneta Yoveva, Sustainable World Foundation, Bulgaria

Caroline Stephens, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, UK

The Secretariat

In 2005, the Secretariat's office in Brussels worked with a multicultural team of five full-time staff and an intern who changes every six months. The tasks of the Secretariat are manifold, the major ones being:

- To feed relevant and timely policy information from the European scene to the membership, advising them to intervene as political opportunities arise;
- To monitor policy developments and consolidate members' input into draft legislation;
- To advocate key messages to the EU institutions and to organise thematic campaigns;
- To represent and defend the membership's environmental and health concerns at various stakeholder fora.

Members

Our membership has progressively expanded, both in numbers and in geographical scope. Our ambition has been to recruit more members in the Central, Eastern and Southern European region, which is under-represented at European level, yet is generally an area that has to deal with heavy environmental degradation. In 2005, EEN's membership comprised 40 organisations from across Europe. See page 20 for the full list of our member organisations.

II. Strengthening our network and mobilising civil society**Policy-coordination meetings**

EPHA Environment Network periodically holds policy-coordination meetings. Their objective is to bring the membership together as a think tank, and consolidate their position on the main policy vectors of the organisation. The two policy coordination meetings in May and September 2005 discussed the organisation's strategy on the EU Environment and Health Action Plan (SCALE), REACH and chemicals policy, the Pan-European environment and health process, public participation and the right to know (the Aarhus Convention and PRTR Protocol), the EU's mercury policy and public health, climate change and health as well as some emerging issues such as debrominated flame retardants, GMOs, the Water Directive, and electromagnetic radiation.

Capacity-building**Central and Eastern Europe**

EPHA Environment Network organises capacity-building seminars in countries in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe. These countries' recent and forthcoming accession to the EU and the transposition of the environmental *acquis communautaire* into their national legislation creates unique opportunities for civil society to influence the environmental debate. Our emphasis on the region also stems from the fact that environment and health issues are tightly intertwined with the problems of developing democracies such as public participation and consultation, good management of public policy, and, economic and environmental justice.

Slovenia

On 24-25 January 2005, the European Public Health Alliance and EPHA Environment Network co-organised a capacity-building workshop entitled "**Towards a national public health platform in Slovenia**". The workshop took place in Ljubljana and brought together representatives of 30 Slovenian NGOs, patient groups and institutes for health promotion. The primary aim of the workshop was to foster the creation of a National Public Health Alliance in Slovenia. To achieve it, the workshop delivered three training modules seeking to increase understanding of the concepts and basis of public health, with particular reference to Slovenia, set out the EU institutional framework for health and environment policy and

agree on the purposes and principles of operation for a public health platform of NGOs and not-for-profit organisations. The format of the workshop was widely participatory and sought to actively involve all participants. There was a mixture of presentations and interactive sessions in small groups.

Bulgaria

The seminar held on 1-2 December 2005 in Sofia welcomed participants from Romania, Macedonia, Latvia, the Czech Republic and Hungary, alongside the overwhelming majority of Bulgarian national and local organisations taking part. In applying a wider definition of civil society, we included not only large, well organised NGOs, but also other formal and informal organisations, community groups, movements, representatives of the media and academia. This helped determine the combined nature of the seminar as a training, networking and platform-building forum.

Presentations were delivered by representatives of the Environment and Health Focal Point at the Ministry of Health, the Delegation of the European Commission to Bulgaria and local NGOs such as Environmental Association “For the Earth”, “Earth Forever” from Stara Zagora, and Sustainable World Foundation. The latter shared their organisations’ latest successful case studies.



Dr Hristina Mileva, Bulgarian Ministry of Health

In terms of training, the seminar tackled two fundamental areas of NGO work: advocacy and media relations, both of which require particular skills and approaches. At the workshop “Developing effective relations with the media”, participants met with a panel of journalists from the local media who analysed the most appropriate approaches to working with media. The seminar comprised two other training

workshops: “Lobbying and steps in planning an advocacy campaign” using the Network’s REACH campaign as an example, and “Environmental justice and tools for new member and accession countries” using the Aarhus Convention.



Panel of journalists during capacity-building seminar in Sofia, Bulgaria

The seminar channelled the information on environment and health in general, children’s environmental health, air pollution, persistent toxic substances, water, urban development, healthy schools, etc. and related it to the EU accession process that Bulgaria was undergoing. In that way, it identified the concrete country-specific problems that organisations were facing such as poor consultation and public participation mechanisms, and the need for stronger collaboration between the NGOs. With the hands-on advocacy and media training, participants gained ideas on how to run an effective campaign. Results of a seminar evaluation showed that they considered participation in the workshop had opened up new possibilities for networking and coalition-building.

European level

January 2005, Belgium

The **advocacy and capacity-building training seminar on 31 January and 1 February 2005** was co-organised in Brussels with Physicians for Social Responsibility. The aim was to strengthen the network of the key leaders in the European health and environment community, particularly health professionals, and improve the advocacy role of the health community towards the EU institutions and international organizations on environment and health issues.

The sessions brought participants up-to-date on the EU institutional priorities, offered hands-on advocacy and media training, gave an introduction to Internet campaigning, allowed for the sharing of experience and priorities of the network and the extended coalitions, highlighted the concrete activities that EEN, as a European umbrella organization, can carry out to promote and strengthen the advocacy capacity of the health sector. Speakers included representatives of the European Commission, the World Health Organization, the European Parliament, the permanent representation of the Netherlands to the EU, the European Public Health Alliance as well as media representatives from ENDS Environment Daily, British Medical Journal and The Parliament Magazine.

September 2005, Belgium

The **workshop on media advocacy on 20 September 2005** in Brussels helped EEN members to better understand the reporting of news stories and the needs and constraints of different media. Together with its membership, the EEN Secretariat identified ways to better support its members in media advocacy. Opportunities were mapped out for media activities related to the EU political agenda. EEN introduced its new publication "Working with the Media". Participants undertook an informal survey of three important European newspapers to review how environment and health issues were covered. An overview of the findings of "Environment and health in the press" was given. The event was supported by panel presentations from journalists from Euronews, European Voice, and a former BBC News reporter.

Panel of well known journalists from the European Voice, Euronews and the British Medical Journal share their perspective on what makes a good story.



III. Increasing our influence

Our advocacy efforts – raising awareness, involving people and advancing the issues

Implementing the EU Action Plan on Environment and Health (SCALE)

Since consultations first began on the EU environment and health process, EPHA Environment Network has taken the lead in coordinating and channelling NGO participation and feedback into the process. It has extensively covered the developments for its members via its lists, flashes and written articles for website publication. The secretariat and member organisations contributed with policy analysis and expertise to both the Consultative Forum and the Commission services (including Research, Environment and Health), and provided briefings and updates to the European Parliament and the member state governments of the WHO European Region.

In 2003, the Commission adopted its environment and health action plan 2004-2010 as part of the EU strategy for Environment and Health known as 'SCALE' (Science, Children, Awareness raising, Legal instruments and Evaluation). An overwhelming majority in Parliament rejected the plan as insufficient following a report by MEP Frédérique Ries in February 2005. The report criticises the environment and health action plan for falling short on the legislative proposals initially promised in SCALE. *"The absence of scientific certainty and the need to carry out additional research [...] cannot be used as an excuse for delaying the introduction of essential and urgent measures to reduce children's and adults' exposure to environmental pollution,"* the Parliament stated in its final resolution.

EPHA Environment Network raised awareness with stakeholders to ensure that a strong environment and health policy is firmly established in the future vision of Europe as one of the three key priorities for Public Health under the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. It coordinated the consultation process using the five specialised working groups from among its membership - working groups on Chemicals, on Public Participation, on Children's environmental health, on SCALE and on policy coordination.

Producing sound arguments for advocacy

It is not only our members who appreciate and use the facts, figures and persuasive arguments available in EEN's policy papers.

- Frédérique Ries MEP used many of the same arguments put forward in an EEN response to the EU Action Plan to win support for amendments to SCALE in the European Parliament. Her report called for risk assessments to "specifically address the risk for foetuses, infant and children". It also regretted the lack of targets and the absence of "an indicative financial statement". Although EEN cannot claim that its paper was the sole source of such proposals, Madame Ries praised the organisation publicly for its work in this area.
- EPHA Environment Network was asked by MP Jean Huss, Luxembourg, to provide input into the programme and organise the NGO panel at an environment and health conference held in the context of the Luxembourg EU Presidency on 13-15 June 2005, under the sponsorship of the Health Ministry. Its remit was to discuss progress on the implementation of the EU Environment and Health Action Plan 2004-2010, launched in June 2004 and provide recommendations on indoor air quality and environmental health medicine.

CEHAPE – Making progress on the implementation of the Budapest agenda

EPHA Environment Network is particularly dedicated to the environmental health of vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, pregnant women. In 2005, it was instrumental in facilitating public participation by including more stakeholders from the non-governmental sector in the Pan-European process on the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE). We encouraged NGOs to pro-actively engage in consultations with their governments when they were elaborating their national Children's Environment and Health Action Plans. Stimulating such participatory mechanisms and disseminating information on CEHAPE was also one of the highlights of the network's capacity-building seminar in Bulgaria.

As the health NGO representative at the European Environment and Health Committee (EEHC), EPHA Environment Network took part in the two meetings of the Committee in Copenhagen and Helsinki that focused on children's ill health due to air pollution and chemicals. In Copenhagen, EPHA Environment Network was part of the expert

Roundtable on measures and policies to prevent and reduce respiratory disease due to outdoor and indoor air pollution at local, national and international level.

The Network is also a member of the CEHAPE Task Force and participated in the two WHO CEHAPE Task Force meetings in Vienna in April 2005 and in Edinburgh in October 2005, which focused on the Regional Priority Goal to reduce children's exposure to hazardous chemicals and other physical agents.

In order to raise awareness of progress made by the 52 member states signatories to the Budapest Declaration, EPHA Environment Network set up and launched a **CEHAPE implementation web page**. The site is linked to the WHO official implementation website (MAP), and gives information on the environment and health processes in each country, NGO participation in CEHAPE and examples of local and regional projects linked to the CEHAPE: www.cehape.env-health.org

Environmental awareness and information exchange fosters a generation of environmentally conscious citizens. In this belief, EPHA Environment Network committed to increasing youth participation in the field of environment and health, and specifically in relation to children's issues in the context of the EEHC and the CEHAPE Task Force. It participated in a workshop in Dublin hosted by the Irish National Children's Office on 27-28 September 2005 to define ways in which young people's representatives could be involved in the EEHC and CEHAPE Task Force. On 17 October 2005 in Brussels, EPHA Environment Network presented how the Budapest Action Plan for children's health responds to chemical concerns faced by children at a Forum on REACH organised by a Belgian parliamentarian, entitled "Nos enfants en contact avec les produits chimiques dangereux : jusqu'à quand?".

The Network made a presentation at a conference on "Indoor air quality and children's Health...How to protect them?" organised by the Institut

Provincial d'Hygiène et de Bactériologie du Hainaut and the Laboratoire d'Etudes et de Prévention des Pollutions Intérieures in Mons, Belgium on 18 November 2005.

In 2005, EPHA Environment Network was accredited as a hosting organisation for long-term and full-time volunteers under the European Voluntary Service scheme of the EC's YOUTH Programme. We believe that such projects, though small in scale, yield a multiplier effect among the young after the end of their service.

"REACHing Out to the Health Community" Campaign

EPHA Environment Network seized REACH as a unique political opportunity to reiterate the health-based message with its significant ramifications into environmental justice: more than 90% chemicals on market have not been tested for basic safety and health information and developing babies' and children's susceptibilities are not taken into account in current testing protocols. The policy target of its campaign – adopting strong REACH legislation with stringent testing requirements for all chemicals and a definition of vulnerable groups was disseminated to health professionals, scientists, women, young people, and the public. The campaign was an outcry for precautionary action - data on chemicals and access to it is imperative and people have a right to know.

Besides the numerous position and briefing papers, letters to parliamentarians, the European Commission and the Council of Ministers, individual meetings, recommendations for amendments, press releases and publications, EPHA Environment Network launched several target events.




European Parliament, Brussels, May 2005 - Parliamentarians from different parties hosted a briefing lunch with EPHA Environment Network and WWF Europe "Chemical concerns for public health - How REACH can help" featuring WHO Director for the special programme on Health & Environment Dr Roberto Bertollini and Dr Jonathan Grigg, Professor of Paediatrics at Leicester University, UK.

Providing a EU forum for youth concerns on chemicals




In September 2005, EPHA Environment Network initiated a project prompting a group of young people to make a survey on chemicals and houses. Students from three schools in UK, Russia, France and Armenia participated using an EEN toolkit for their investigative purposes. The results of the survey were addressed to policy-makers as recommendations for future policy action at a workshop at the Committee of the Regions. Participants also put their message across to CEFIC, which represents the European chemicals industry. Several said that they had written to companies asking for information about the contents of some everyday products, such as shampoos and hair gel. They had either had no response or had been told that the information was an industry secret. Recommendations from the meeting, which was covered by Reuters TV, were sent to members of the DG Environment cabinet and Commissioners.

Committee of the Regions, Brussels, 10 November 2005 – The workshop “Young people’s chemical investigation in schools and homes” provided a platform for young people to express their concerns and recommendations on chemicals to MEPs, government officials, WHO representatives. The event was timed to allow decision-makers to incorporate the recommendations into the immediate legislative developments – the November vote on REACH in the European Parliament and the Council. EPHA Environment Network made the survey results widely available on its website and to youth networks.



Youth Recommendations

EPHA Environment Network workshop
Children's environment and health:
Young people's investigations into chemicals and health
Date: 10 November 2005 (14:00-17:00)
Venue: Brussels, Committee of the Regions



Our investigations have highlighted many health problems associated with the use of chemicals in our daily lives, we recommend to Members of the European Parliament and other decision makers the following:

1. **Favor less harmful goods**
All chemicals should be considered hazardous until proven otherwise. Therefore, ensure our laws and financial systems allow for new products (natural) that are not or are less-harmful to our health to replace toxic chemicals.
2. **Ensure proper labeling**
European children and youths have a right to know about chemicals in their everyday lives. Ensure adequate labeling and information on chemicals that is understandable and comprehensive. Develop innovative labeling systems (such as color schemes or one label for all European producers). Produce a list of forbidden chemicals.
3. **Testing for health effects**
When assessing safety of chemicals consider: The long term cumulative effects, not just the short ones. The effect of a mixture of different chemicals.
4. **Consider whole life of chemicals**
Ensure hazardous chemicals are considered throughout their life-cycle, (from development to use to disposal and recycling).
5. **Eliminate harmful products**
Reduce or eliminate harmful chemicals in household goods, particularly those aimed at children.
6. **Provide more information**
Support education and awareness raising, for children and youth representatives, on the safe use of chemicals in their everyday lives, (e.g. schools, homes and workplaces).
7. **Monitor pollution effects**
Ensure we increase our knowledge about the health effects of pollution by monitoring health impacts of environmental pollution and by doing more testing for the health effects of chemicals. Also inform children and youths about forbidden chemicals.
8. **Make more accountable decision-makers**
Ensure transparency in any system so that there is less conflict between all stakeholders and therefore better decisions are made on chemicals.
9. **Support Research**
Financially support research centers to find natural and less hazardous substances for replacing chemicals (especially dyes).
10. **Implement laws in a timely manner**
Guarantee that our laws are implemented and those that break the law are punished. Set a time frame for change to achieve these recommendations.



EEN President's daughter being tested

Bio-monitoring with WWF “How contaminated are you? – Blood-testing survey” – EPHA Environment Network President Marie-Christine Dewolf participated in a WWF bio-monitoring project, which brought the network its biggest media coverage. She appeared in a documentary news item on Swiss television and Arte (French/German television) amongst others. Together with her daughter and mother, she took part in the family blood testing programme in October 2005 that showed that all three of them had at least 18 man-made chemicals in their bloodstream. EPHA Environment Network was a formal supporter of the campaign, which included the development of ‘Frequently Asked Questions on human bio-monitoring’, a brochure, several press releases and a press conference.

Raising awareness of medical professionals' perspectives

EEN worked closely with organisations of medical professionals to ensure that their views were heard at European level. For example, around 100 journalists, MEPs and NGO representatives attended a press conference in November 2005 with MEP Frédérique Ries, Environment/Health rapporteur and Prof Dominique Belpomme, Head of the Association for Research and Treatments Against Cancer (ARTAC), a Paris-based medical NGO. They gathered to hear the views of leading doctors and scientists from around Europe on the relationship between increasing chemical use and trends in cancer and birth deformities. Among the organisations represented was the Standing Committee for European Doctors (CPME). The meeting was supported by EEN and organised by member organisation, ARTAC.



Dr Belpomme and Ms Ries, Member of the European Parliament, - European Parliament, Brussels, 8 November 2005

Supporting information on the environmental causes of breast cancer

Hazardous chemicals, such as hormone disruptors, may be contributing to rising rates of breast cancer, including in young women. EEN worked with Breast Cancer UK to produce a publication on the environmental causes of breast cancer. The report was sent to MEPs in the Environment Committee with recommendations on the REACH proposal that could contribute towards reducing deaths from breast cancer in the future.

Mercury – Aiming for a Ban

Mercury was identified as an emerging issue for human health concern at a policy meeting in summer 2005. EPHA Environment Network began to mobilise and coordinate the European health sector response to the Mercury Strategy of the European Commission; to highlight how the Strategy interlinks with other policy and legislative developments and to raise awareness on the health implications of environmental policy. The aim was mercury reduction and ultimately, a ban. EPHA Environment Network was prominent at a series of international events targeting a ban on the export of mercury.

EPHA Environment Network gave a presentation entitled “Towards a Mercury Free World” on the health effects of mercury exposure at a conference organised in Madrid by the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) on 22-23 April 2005. As a follow-up to the conference, the Network and the members of the coalition of NGOs issued a joint press release entitled “Environment and Health groups urge EU governments: The world urgently needs an EU mercury export ban”.

EEB in cooperation with EPHA Environment Network hosted an international environment and Health NGO meeting on mercury on 14-15 October 2005 in Brussels. For the first time, environment issues related to mercury were placed in the wider context of their health implications. It was hoped that the cross fertilization of sectors will produce synergies, thinking and collaboration on future strategies towards the future UNEP discussions on mercury in February 2007.

Counter-balancing the industry lobby: pressurising the EU to put health first

The Deca-BDE case - a retardant to a sound environmental health policy

The sustainable management of resources and waste is critical to human health. With the earth's resources diminishing, it is imperative to develop lower consumption societies with different and more resource effective production patterns. This is not only a question of scientific or technical improvement; it is foremost a question of the values which underlie and drive societal development and the political will to make the necessary changes.

In 2005, EPHA Environment Network directed its efforts at engaging the health community in the policy priorities and related EU legislation, such as sustainable healthcare management and the implementation of the RoHS Directive (Restriction

of Hazardous Substances); stimulating information and best practice exchange between environment and health interest groups on the reduction of hazardous waste in Europe with the ultimate goal of eliminating their use in products; promoting the use of safer alternatives in terms of design and materials that would eliminate the need for these hazardous substances, and lower health risks.

EPHA Environment Network systematically tracked the policy developments around the implementation of the RoHS Directive. At strategic moments, it highlighted the debate on the proposed exemptions through reports, technical briefings, advocacy letters and resource materials. It played a leading role in ensuring the timely output to the existing chemicals regulation and the restriction of hazardous substances directive (RoHS). Both of these are concerned with the placing on the market of Deca-BDE – a brominated flame retardant. Essentially, EEN worked to ensure the phase-out of Deca-BDE as a precautionary measure in protecting public health while private interests lobbied hard all year to prevent the ban on this hazardous chemical compound.

EPHA Environment Network prepared a preliminary survey of the substitution or not within the market place of Deca-BDE in light of the European Commission's decision to exempt it from the RoHS Directive. The survey would identify which companies have or have not replaced Deca-BDE in their products, and if they have, how do they ensure that fire safety standards are not compromised. EEN also elaborated a scientific paper on Deca debromination and obtained a legal opinion to examine whether or not the EC had acted within its legal mandate when exempting the substance from the RoHS Directive through the comitology procedure.

At the 11th Joint meeting of the Competent Authorities for the implementation of the Directives on Dangerous and Existing Substances in Helsinki on 16-17 June 2005, the Network noted that Deca-BDE is found in rising levels in breast milk, and is linked to neuro-developmental damage in developing brains, that alternatives are available and that a ban is necessary.

Air Quality – Better Air Does Mean Better Health

The challenge throughout 2005 continued to be the Network's efforts to influence standards and strategy on air quality. Despite the fact that the EU's own assessment of the harm of air pollution indicated an estimated 369,980 premature deaths each year, there has been a persistent refusal to legislate the new guidelines

set by the World Health Organization (e.g., on PM2.5, the smallest particulate matter).

A letter sent on 16 March 2006 to the Parliamentarians responsible for drafting reports, urged greater protection within the Air Quality Thematic Strategy and Legislation, particularly for children, older people and those suffering from allergies, asthma and respiratory diseases.

In response to a call from Commission President to delay the EU Thematic Strategy on Air Quality, EPHA Environment Network mobilised affected member organisations, the European Public Health Alliance and the European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations to publish an open letter to the European Commission on 30 June 2005 highlighting their concerns (<http://www.env-health.org/a/1842>).

As a member of the European Environment Bureau's Working Group on Clean Air, the Network enriches the debate with the health dimension of air quality.

Climate change – Changing to Stop the Change

Climate change has profound short and long-term impacts on human health and the environment. We raised awareness of these impacts and the prevention strategies, and mobilised the health community to advocate for policies limiting climate change - such as energy efficient policies as a means to reduce the dependency on non-renewable energy sources. We also aimed to shift the debate in the health and environment community towards the health costs and the benefits of adaptation versus mitigation and to push for EU and national policies that contribute to reducing greenhouse gases.

EPHA Environment Network closely monitored three events related to climate change that took place in mid-May 2005 - the adoption of a resolution by the European Parliament, the 5th Global Forum on Sustainable Energy (GFSE-5) in Vienna and a seminar of governmental experts on climate change in Bonn. It mobilised its membership and consolidated its position in a policy paper on climate change and health on the occasion of the EU's Communication "Winning the Battle against Global Climate Change" COM(2005) (<http://www.env-health.org/a/1732>).

EEN highlighted its views at a DG Research Workshop on "Global Environmental Change: Risks to Human Health?" on 13 June 2005 in Brussels on the role of EU in climate change adaptation policy. The best practice case studies it disseminated to the healthcare community have

showcased energy efficient policies through the "Greening Healthcare" website. It has also widely publicised WHO's new brochure "Climate change and health, the now and how. A policy action guide" to policy-makers, politicians and civil society stakeholders.

The website articles written on the subject cover climate change and flooding in Europe; the announcement by the Environment Commissioner of a new phase in the climate change programme at Green Week; overview of recent developments of the European and global health agenda: (<http://www.env-health.org/a/93>) the present and future risks to human health of climate change, reports on the outcomes of the Kyoto Protocol Montreal talks on global climate changes.

EPHA Environment Network also put forward policy experts and suggested topics and speakers representing the NGO perspective for the European Climate Change Programme (ECCP) stakeholder working group on "Health Impacts and Adaptation" in October 2005.

In 2005, EPHA Environment Network raised the health dimension of the debate more clearly into the EU and international policy circles by monitoring and disseminating information on EU policy developments in the climate change arena, and contributing to joint NGO campaigns - with Climate Change Network, Friends of the Earth Europe and Greenpeace. Together with its coalition partners, it prepared Green Week 2005 "Get to Grips on Climate Change" with DG Environment's Communications team. It organised a Green 10 joint exhibition stand for the event and published a policy paper on EU climate change policy and health (June 2005) (<http://www.env-health.org/a/1732>).

The Aarhus Convention and Health - a tool to protect public health

One of EPHA Environment Network's top priorities in 2005 was to affirm citizens' rights to environmental information and to participate in environmental decision-making mechanisms, particularly as they relate to human health. EPHA Environment Network believes that the implementation of the *Aarhus Convention on Access to Environmental Information, Public Participation in Environmental Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters*, and the related *Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR)* could contribute to health protection and to better governance on environmental health.

In 2005, the Secretariat participated in several UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

working groups and official meetings to better understand how health and environment issues can act as a catalyst for increased access to information, public participation and access to justice. At all fora, EPHA Environment Network brought attention to the fact that the health element must be given just as strong emphasis as the environmental one.

The Network issued a briefing paper for its members on the Aarhus Convention in April 2005. This was followed by regular updates and consultation with membership on developments in the Aarhus Convention and EEN's virtual Public Participation Working Group, and publishing website articles. It contributed to the Draft PRTR guidance document for the implementation of the Protocol presented at the PRTR Working Group and submitted as a formal response; participated in the elaboration of the NGO statement prepared in cooperation with other ECO Forum delegates during the PRTR Working Group, and NGO report from the meeting; the NGO final declaration prepared in cooperation with other ECO Forum delegates during the second Meeting of the Parties and the Green 10 letters to Members of the European Parliament for the Parliamentary vote on the application of the Aarhus Convention principles to the EU institutions and bodies.

IV. Coalitions and partnerships for stronger impact

Partnership agreements

EPHA Environment Network develops dynamic working relationships with its member organisations and other partners by encouraging joint activities and synergies in the context of its annual work programme. These partnerships are established to carry out specific joint activities that enable the Network to create a multiplier effect by tapping into and disseminating the expertise, innovative approaches and project initiatives existing within its membership and partners. They are evaluated on the basis of their overall contribution to our mission, the current EU policy debate, the ability to build capacity or increase awareness in under-represented or specifically defined target groups (children, women, healthcare professionals, patient groups).

In 2005, EPHA Environment Network successfully completed five partnership projects: a fact sheet on breastfeeding with IBFAN Luxembourg; the publication of three brochures on specific environmental health issues with the Dutch Platform for Health and Environment; a media manual with the World Health Communication Associates; a report on breast cancer and its prevention with Breast Cancer UK; and the development of a web portal www.greeninghealthcare.net, the XCHANGE (Best Practice) database and three fact sheets (see below under Publications).

The Green 10

EPHA Environment Network is a member of the Green 10 group. The Green 10 is a coalition consisting of the ten leading environmental NGOs active at EU level. It campaigns for full implementation of EU environmental laws in the member states, ensuring that policies are as environmentally effective as possible, and promotes EU environmental leadership in the global political arena. In 2005, as part of the Green 10, EPHA Environment Network jointly lobbied on the European Commission's draft REACH legislation, proposed amendments to the LIFE+ Regulation, issued numerous joint press releases and letters of concern addressing concrete issues in the policy-making process, and hosted a joint stand at Green Week 2005.

The Civil Society Contact Group

The EU Civil Society Contact Group is an informal coalition which brings together seven of the largest European NGO platforms. EPHA Environment Network is a member of the Group through the Green 10 since 2004. The Group works for a transparent and structured civil dialogue - accessible, inclusive and just, and for the integration of all levels of civil society in the European project.

IPEN

The International POPs (Persistent Organic Pollutants) Elimination Network is a global network of public interest non-governmental organisations united in support of a common POPs elimination goal. The mission of IPEN, achieved through its participating organisations, is to work for the global elimination of persistent organic pollutants, on a socially equitable basis. EPHA Environment Network joined the network as a member in 2005.

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) - Keeping the health community informed

In March 2005, EEN alerted its members when the European Council adopted a negotiating directive on the Stockholm Convention on POPs. In December, a report from the Eco Forum to the World Health Organization's European Environment and Health Committee was published on the website. By monitoring EU and European developments, and through its membership of IPEN, EEN is able to keep track and inform the health community on key developments related to POPs.

V. Publications in 2005



“Working with the Media”, a 100-page media guide which EPHA Environment Network co-produced with World Health Communication Associates, the Media Wise Trust and the European Public Health Alliance to assist NGOs and civil society groups active in health and environment communication. The publication is a key tool for our media advocacy workshop trainings. It is readily accessible on our website www.env-health.org in five languages English, French, German, Russian and Spanish. The manual is also available in paper version in English and Russian.

The fact sheet **“Towards Healthy Environment for Children: Frequently Asked Questions about breastfeeding in a contaminated environment”** in French, English and German emerged out of the combined efforts of breastfeeding and environmental health and justice groups in addressing breastfeeding in a contaminated environment. These allies approach the issue from the breastfeeding and environmental health and justice perspectives in recognition of the fact that breastfeeding promotion must take place alongside efforts to eliminate toxic chemicals from the environment.

Towards Healthy Environments for Children Frequently asked questions (FAQ) about breastfeeding in a contaminated environment

Q. Should mothers be worried about toxic chemicals in the environment?

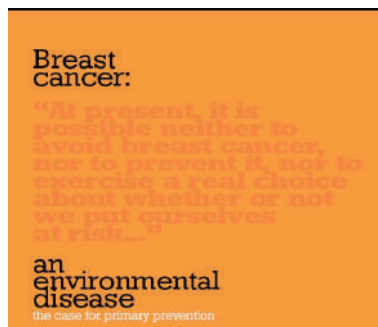
Yes, everyone should be worried. Chemical contaminants are causing harm to our children; environmental activists, breastfeeding groups and health advocates worldwide are calling for the elimination of toxic chemicals in the environment. If we were to start infants born today, anywhere in the world, we would find in them a body burden of industrial toxins including dioxins, PCBs, mercury, pesticides, flame retardants, bisphenol A and other dangerous substances. These chemicals pass through the placenta and into the fetus during pregnancy, and through breastmilk after birth. Babies and toddlers continue to be exposed to hazardous chemicals through contact with air, water, soil and everyday products such as carpets, clothing, furniture and household products. It is critical that chemical residues be reduced in the environment to reduce both the prenatal and postnatal health risks they pose to infants, children and the general public.

Q. How do chemical residues end up in our bodies and the bodies of our infants?

Many chemicals have the capability to travel far from their sites of origin or use, polluting the air we breathe, the water we consume, the food we eat and the everyday products (such as cosmetics and certain plastics) we touch and use. Some of these chemicals resist metabolic breakdown and excretion, or break down into harmful derivatives that accumulate mainly in our body fat, becoming part of our chemical body burden. Some chemicals act as endocrine disruptors and can damage the reproductive system. No matter where we live or how we live, none of us can avoid being exposed to a wide variety of chemicals and passing on this chemical body burden to the next generation. Children are at higher risk than adults because they are undergoing rapid development and consuming more food in relation to their body weight compared to adults. The only way to reduce their body burden is to eliminate hazardous chemicals from production and use, replacing them with less hazardous chemicals and products.

Q. When does exposure to contaminants start?

Children's exposure to toxic chemicals starts before birth and comes from everything their parents were exposed to – the air they breathed, the food they ate, the products they used and the water they drank. After birth, a child continues to be exposed to chemicals through

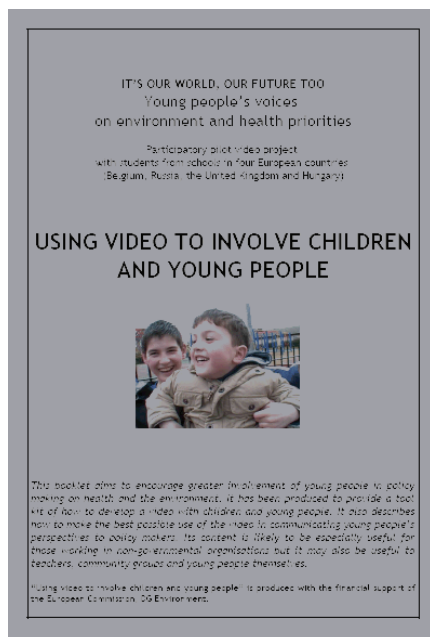
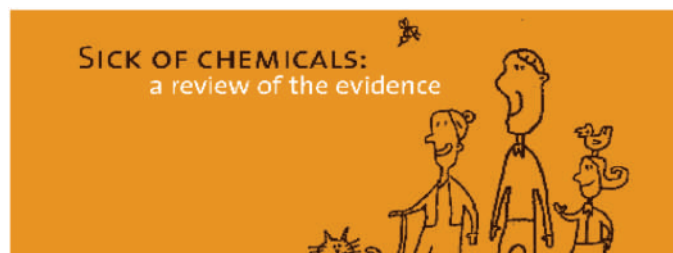


The groundbreaking report and brochure **“Breast Cancer - an Environmental Disease: The Case for Primary Prevention”** published in partnership with Breast Cancer UK says that the UK Government and the “cancer establishment” are complicit in soaring rates of breast cancer by failing to disclose the real facts on the disease - that man-made environmental pollutants are major causes and that breast cancer is preventable.

Three brochures co-produced with the Dutch Platform for Health and Environment: **“Chemical substances: invisible and unknown”**, **“Electromagnetic fields: worries and uncertainties”**, **“Clearing the air: indoor air quality makes all the difference”** in Dutch and English.



The booklet **“Sick of chemicals”**, published in English and German by Chemical Reaction and EPHA Environment Network. Through a light-hearted look at the imaginary fate of a family and its pets as they take in a diet of hazardous chemicals, it raises awareness about the links between ill health and chemical exposure. It highlights a number of chronic diseases, such as childhood cancers, bladder cancer, asthma and thyroid disorders among many others, and lists chemical agents for which there is strong evidence of a link to the disease.



As a follow-up to its 2004 video project entitled “It’s Our World, Our Future Too” with young people from disadvantaged communities in UK, Russia, Belgium and Hungary, EPHA Environment Network finalised a **“Practical Guide on using Video for projects on environmental education”** aiming to increase the participation of young people in environment and health policy-making and to provide an education tool for schools, community groups and other NGOs.

Fact sheet **“Avoiding PVC use in hospitals”** in English and German published by EPHA Environment Network and Health Care Without Harm (HCWH)

Fact sheet **“The weight of evidence on DEHP. Overview of legal actions to restrict the use of phthalates, particularly in relation to medical care”** in English and German published by EPHA Environment Network and HCWH.

“Non-Incineration Medical Waste Treatment Technologies in Europe” – summary report in German, Russian, English and French published by EPHA Environment Network and HCWH.

Avoiding PVC Use in Hospitals

Healthcare patients, especially children, may be at risk from the use of medical devices made of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastic, which contains DEHP. Known as a reproductive toxin, DEHP causes birth defects and infertility in animal studies. Because DEHP does not bind to the PVC matrix, it can leach out of the medical device into the liquid transferred to the patient's body.

Despite the fact that non-PVC medical devices are readily available on the market, many hospitals are still using PVC medical devices that leach DEHP. This brochure aims to showcase how several hospitals and health care facilities across Europe have already taken the necessary steps to eliminate PVC use in medical devices.

In 1992 when Vienna City Council decided to phase out PVC from all city-funded projects and institutions.

Two of the Vienna Hospital Association hospitals - Glaxo Products Hospital and Preyer Pediatric Hospital - serve as excellent examples of PVC and phthalate elimination. They have succeeded in becoming almost completely PVC-free. The Neonatology Unit of the Pediatric Clinic Glaxo has thus become the first Neonatology Unit worldwide to eliminate almost entirely the use of PVC and DEHP in medical practice.

The first step was a PVC audit conducted by hospital staff to identify PVC-containing products and to quantify the amount of PVC waste generated. Among the PVC-containing products were respiratory therapy products, catheters and tubing, urinary drainage catheters, blood pressure cuffs and EEG electrodes. Approximately half of these PVC products were replaced, and for the remaining ones, alternatives were tested or researched. Measured by weight, the share of PVC products amounted to 14.6% (Glaxo) and 9.8% (Preyer) of the total weight of examined products. The PVC share of the entire medical waste was 0.9% in the Preyer Hospital and 0.37% in the Glaxo Hospital.

Vienna Hospital Association Phase Out Policy on PVC

The Vienna Hospital Association operates 18 hospitals, nursing homes and geriatric care centres, employing 32,000 people in total. In 2002, the Vienna Hospital Association looked after 3.4 million patients in ambulatory and 400,000 patients in stationary care annually with a turnover of 2.3 billion Euro. The Vienna Hospital Association's policy to eliminate PVC from packaging, building materials and medical devices then back

VI. Finance

Our financial year runs from 15 March 2005 to 14 March 2006.

PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT - MARCH 14, 2006	
<u>OPERATING INCOME</u>	€
E.C. GRANT	367.402
OTHER GRANTS	72.719,91
MEMBERSHIP FEES	3.621,30
ACTIVITY INCOMES	20.539,05
BANK INTEREST	101,15
Total	464.383,41
<u>OPERATING CHARGES</u>	
SUBCONTRACTORS	-75.124,25
TRANSFERS TO MEMBERS	-29.879,62
PERSONNEL COSTS	-251.831,70
ACTIVITY COSTS	-4.698,00
TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE COSTS	-29.956,68
OFFICE COSTS	-61.953,86
DEPRECIATION	-4.950,72
BANK CHARGES	-5.864,92
RESERVES OF THE YEAR	123,66

VII. EEN Members Overview



Expansion of EEN membership

EEN Members in
March 2003: 14

EEN Members in
September 2004: 29

**Current Members
(September 2005): 40***

** One organisation withdrew
membership*



EEN Members Overview

As of March 2003

Total: 14

International organisations: 2

European networks: 5

National/local organisations: 7

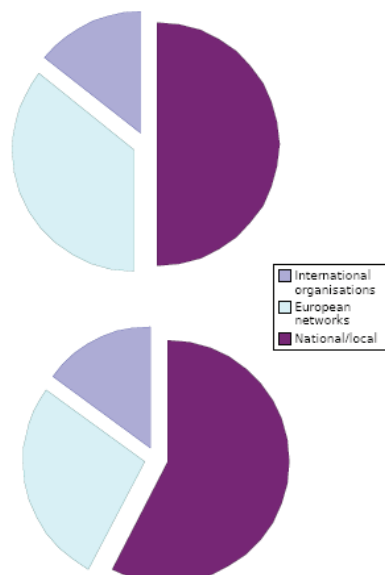
As of September 2005

Total: 40

International organisations: 6

European networks: 11

National/local organisations or
academic: 23



Member organisations in 2005

Armenia	Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment, www.awhhe.am
Austria	International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE), www.isde.org
Belgium	European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), www.epha.org European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations, www.efanet.org Inter-Environment Wallonie, www.iewonline.be Health and Environmental Care Technical Organization (HECTOR), www.hector-asbl.be British Medical Association – European Office Hygiene Publique en Hainaut asbl Stop Poison Santé asbl European Network for Smoking Prevention, www.ensp.org European Federation of Nurses of the EU, www.efnweb.org Espace Environnement
Bulgaria	Sustainable World Foundation
Croatia	Croatian Nurses Association, www.hums.hr PIN for Health, www.pinforhealth.hr
France	Association for Research and Treatment against cancer (ARTAC), www.artac.org
Germany	European Academy for Environmental Medicine, www.europaem.net Network Children's Health and Environment, www.netzwerk-kindergesundheit.de
Hungary	Centre for Environmental Policy and Law, www.cepl.ceu.hu
Ireland	Irish Doctors Environmental' Association (IDEA), www.ideaireland.org
Italy	International School on Environment, Health and Sustainable Development, www.slass.org
Luxembourg	Akut asbl, www.akut.lu International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), www.ibfan.org
Macedonia	Macedonian Association of Doctors for the Environment
Netherlands	Women in Europe for a Common Future, www.wecf.org Dutch Monitoring Network for Health and Environment European Child Safety Alliance, www.childsafetyeurope.org International Network on Children's Health, Environment and Safety, www.inchesnetwork.net
Serbia	Health Development Promotional and Educational Center (CEPRO-MED)
Switzerland	European Respiratory Society, www.ersnet.org
UK	Pesticides Action Network Europe, www.pan-europe.info Breast Cancer UK, www.breastcanceruk.org.uk London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, www.lshtm.ac.uk Chartered Institute for Environment and Health, www.cieh.org European Lung Foundation, www.european-lung-foundation.org South Sefton PCT – Department of Public Health, www.dh.gov.uk Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, www.rosipa.co.uk European Council for Classical Homeopathy, www.homeopathy-ecch.org
Ukraine	Green Doctors-ISDE
Uzbekistan	Centre for Reproductive Health and Environment "Perzent"

The EPHA Environment Network was recently renamed to the **Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)** – a name that better designates its philosophy and sphere of action.

Putting health at the centre of environment issues
Placer la santé au cœur des questions environnementales
Die Gesundheit ins Zentrum des Umweltschutzes stellen
La salud, núcleo de los asuntos medioambientales
La salute al centro delle questioni ambientali
Umístít zdraví do středu úsilí o ochranu životního prostředí
Sundhed som midtpunkt i miljøspørgsmål
Tervis keskkonnaküsimuste keskmesse
Terveyden asettaminen ympäristöasioiden keskipisteeseen
Η υγεία στο επίκεντρο των θεμάτων περιβάλλοντος
Az egészséget a környezeti ügyek központjába téve
Padarīt veselību par vienu no galvenajiem vides jautājumiem
Sveikata – pagrindinis aplinkos klausimas
Leefmilieu en gezondheid
Zdrowie najważniejszym z zagadnień dotyczących ochrony środowiska
Colocar a saúde no centro das questões ambientais
Umístiti zdravie do stredu úsilia o ochranu životného prostredia
Postavimo zdravje v središče okoljskih problemov
Sätter hälsan främst i miljöfrågor
Sănătatea – în centrul preocupărilor legate de mediul înconjurător
Здравето - в центъра на проблемите на околната среда
Inpoġġu s-saħħa fiċ-ċentru ta' kwistjonijiet ambjentali
Здоровье человека - главный аспект экологических проблем

The Health & Environment Alliance aims to protect the environment as a means of improving the health and well being of all people. One of our key objectives is to bring health expertise to the environmental policy-making process.

Our membership includes citizens', patients', women's, health professionals' and environmental organisations working at international, European, national and local level across Europe.

CONTACT DETAILS

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