



Brussels, 18 February 2019

Dear Environment Minister,

Re: Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals and EU Council of Environment Ministers, 5th March 2019

We are writing to you on behalf of the EDC-Free Europe coalition [1], a coalition of public interest groups representing more than 70 environmental, health, women's and consumer groups across Europe who share a concern about hormone-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) and their impact on our health and wildlife.

The EDC-Free Europe coalition has expressed serious disappointment with the 7 November EC Communication entitled "Towards a comprehensive European Union framework on endocrine disruptors" [2]. We call on you to spearhead a Council response to this flawed Communication, requiring that the European Commission strengthens its proposals to reduce exposure to EDCs.

This would be an opportunity for reconnecting the EU's agenda with citizens' demands for better public health protection on EDCs, as illustrated by widely endorsed petitions developed and supported by the EDC-Free campaign partners in 2017. The first one was delivered to member states with almost half a million signatures in July 2017 [3], and the second one with over 300,000 signatures in October 2017 [4]. An ambitious EU EDC agenda would give a clear signal that these demands for public health are being heard.

The EC Communication fails to provide a new EU strategy on EDCs to up-grade the one from 1999, a concrete action plan to truly reduce the environment and people's exposure, as well as a timeline for next steps to move forward. The EDC-Free Europe coalition has already published a set of eight demands for a successful EU EDC strategy [5].

Given the numerous scientific studies highlighting the concern regarding the harmful impacts of EDCs on health and ecosystems [6], some countries have started drafting their own national strategies on EDCs, e.g. France. However, EU citizens and companies can no longer rely on national and local initiatives to attempt reducing exposure to EDCs. A robust EU strategy on EDCs is also required to build the foundations for a truly non-toxic circular economy, encouraging industrial innovation through safer substitution. It is in the interest of all to ensure that there is an effective and comprehensive European approach in this matter in order to guarantee an equal and high level of protection for all citizens and the environment.

In this context, we urge you to take the opportunity of the forthcoming Council of Environment Ministers on 5th March to call on the Commission to develop specific proposals for how the EU can systematically reduce human and environmental exposures to EDCs. The new EU EDC strategy must be an effective tool to deliver the objectives of 7th EAP as adopted by the European Parliament and the Council, and which commits the EU to develop "by 2018 a Union strategy for a non-toxic environment [...] to ensure: [...] the minimisation of exposure to endocrine disruptors" [7].

In light of the Commission's proposal to conduct a fitness check of relevant EU laws addressing EDCs, we urge Member States to insist that the review process is finalised without delay in order to lead to the delivery of a comprehensive EU EDC Strategy for the next Commission to adopt as soon as possible.

The EDC-Free Europe coalition counts on your support and leadership for this essential issue for health and the environment in Europe.

Ms. Genon K. Jensen

Spokesperson on behalf of the EDC-Free Europe campaign

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HEAL Transparency Register #00723343929-96

About the EDC-Free Europe coalition:

EDC-Free Europe is a coalition of public interest groups representing more than 70 environmental, health, women's and consumer groups across Europe who share a concern about hormone disrupting chemicals (EDCs) and their impact on our health and wildlife. Campaign partners include trade unions, consumers, public health and healthcare professionals, advocates for cancer prevention, environmentalists and women's groups. Website: <http://www.edc-free-europe.org/>

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- [1] EDC-Free Europe Coalition <http://www.edc-free-europe.org/>
- [2] EDC-Free Europe reaction to the EU Commission Communication on endocrine disruptors <https://www.edc-free-europe.org/articles/press-release/edc-free-europe-reacts-to-new-communication-on-edcs>
- [3] The SumofUs online petition asks people to reject the European Commission's proposal on EDCs signed by over 465.5K Europeans. The EDC-Free secretariat worked together with EDC-Free partners from Spain, Germany and France to create, develop, translate and share the petitions. July 2017.
- [4] The SumofUs online petition in English, German and French resulted in Members of the European Parliament blocking the European Commission's weak proposal on endocrine disruptors and was signed by 321.675 individuals and forced the Commission to come up with an improved proposal. October 2017.
- [5] EDC-Free Europe's eight demands for a European strategy on EDCs (available in EN, ES, DE, FR, NL) <https://www.edc-free-europe.org/articles/position-paper/eight-demands-edc-strategy>
- [6] WHO/UNEP, "WHO | State of the Science of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals - 2012," WHO (World Health Organization, 2013), <http://www.who.int/ceh/publications/endocrine/en/>.
Endocrine Scientific Statement (review), 2015: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26544531>
- [7] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/non-toxic/index_en.htm