



Endocrine disruptors: A strategy for the future that protects EU citizens and the environment

Brussels, 7 November 2018

Today the Commission has adopted a Communication, confirming its commitment to protecting citizens and the environment from hazardous chemicals. The Communication also outlines how the Commission intends to ensure that the EU approach remains the most modern and fit-for-purpose in the world.

The Communication delivers on the [commitment](#) taken by the Commission last year, when working with Member States on the criteria to identify endocrine disruptors in the areas of pesticides and biocides. It addresses the concerns of the European Parliament and the Council and follows up from the [7th Environment Action Programme](#).

Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Karmenu **Vella** said: "*This Communication confirms that the Commission takes endocrine disruptors very seriously and intends to strengthen its efforts to minimise citizens and environment exposure to these chemicals*".

"The new strategy shows our determination to address endocrine disruptors comprehensively and consistently in a broader scope of areas. I am pleased that we are building on the work that has already been done on the identification criteria of endocrine disruptors under the regulations on pesticides and biocides, based on the World Health Organisation definition", underlined Commissioner Health and Food Safety Vytenis **Andriukaitis**

Commissioner for Internal Market and Industry Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** said: "*We have already significantly reduced our citizens' exposure to endocrine disrupting and other harmful substances through our comprehensive chemicals and cosmetics legislation. Today we are taking a further step to minimise these risks and ensure our citizens' safety.*"

The Commission is updating its approach **for the years to come**, building on the increased knowledge, experience gained and results achieved in the twenty years since the adoption of the Community [Strategy on endocrine disruptors](#).

The EU's strategic approach to endocrine disruptors will continue to be based firmly on science and on the application of the [precautionary principle](#). It aims at:

- **minimising our overall exposure** to endocrine disruptors, paying particular attention to important life periods, such as pregnancy and puberty;
- **accelerating** the development of a thorough **research basis for effective and forward-looking decision-making** in the context of [Horizon Europe](#), building on the existing research and paying particular attention to areas where knowledge gaps exist;
- **promoting active dialogue** allowing all stakeholders to be heard and to work together. In this context, the Commission will organise a Forum on endocrine disruptors on an annual basis and step up its support to the work of international organisations.

For the first time, the Commission will launch a **comprehensive screening of the legislation** applicable to endocrine disruptors through a **Fitness Check** that will build on the data already collected and analysed. Without putting into question the general science-based EU approach to the management of chemicals, the Fitness Check will involve an assessment of the current legislation on whether it delivers on the objectives of protecting human health and the environment. The Fitness Check will also include a **public consultation**.

The Communication adopted today also outlines initiatives currently considered by the Commission to ensure that the implementation of existing policies on endocrine disruptors reaches its full potential. This includes the identification of endocrine disruptors, improving communication throughout supply chains by using Safety Data Sheets as established under [REACH](#), and taking forward the scientific assessment of endocrine disruptors with further regulatory action.

Background

Endocrine disruptors are chemical substances that alter the functioning of the hormonal system and, as

a consequence, negatively affect the health of humans and animals.

Concerns about endocrine disruptors have been growing since the 1990s. Following the adoption by the European Parliament of a Resolution on endocrine disruptors in 1998, the Commission adopted the [Community Strategy for endocrine disruptors](#) in December 1999, which has been taken forward since then through action in the fields of research, regulation and international cooperation.

The EU has already extensively supported research on endocrine disruptors. It has funded over 50 projects, with over €150 million under the various Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation. A further €52 million has been allocated under Horizon 2020 for projects on testing and screening methods.

The EU has also taken strong regulatory action to protect citizens and the environment from endocrine disruptors on the basis of scientific assessments and in line with the different requirements laid down in the relevant legislation. In particular specific provisions on how to address endocrine disruptors are included in the legislation on [pesticides](#) and [biocides](#), chemicals in general ("[REACH Regulation](#)"), [medical devices](#) and [water](#). Furthermore, when it comes to [food contact materials](#), [cosmetics](#), [toys](#) and protection of [workers](#) at the workplace, substances with endocrine disrupting properties have been subject to case-by-case regulatory action as other chemicals with hazardous properties. As a result, multiple substances with endocrine disrupting properties have been prohibited or exposure to them minimised as far as technically and practically feasible.

The Commission has also supported the work of relevant international organisations, in particular the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in the area of testing methods, and carried out bilateral exchanges with international partners.

For more information

[Commission's Communication](#)

https://ec.europa.eu/health/endocrine_disruptors/overview_en

[MEMO](#)

IP/18/6287

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