



EDC Free – Stop hormone disrupting chemicals

Campaign ‘Call for Action’

We are all exposed to hormone disrupting chemicals in our daily lives (also called endocrine disrupting chemicals – EDCs). But despite growing evidence that exposure to them is contributing to a range of health problems, governments have been slow in regulating and eliminating this exposure. This Call for Action arises from the urgent need to reduce people’s exposure to EDCs and states what the EU and national governments should do.

We are deeply concerned about EDCs because they may be making all of us more susceptible to many serious and potentially lethal diseases and health disorders. These include reproductive and fertility problems, cancers, neurological impairment, and obesity and diabetes. People are most vulnerable to endocrine disruption during infancy and childhood, and especially before birth, when developing in the womb.

Recent human biomonitoring studies from across Europe have shown the extent of our chemical contamination. The studies, which look at the levels of certain chemicals in body fluids such as urine, found certain EDCs in both children and their mothers.

Wildlife is also suffering from exposure to hormone disrupters. Fish, birds, otters and even polar bears are showing adversely affected reproduction in polluted areas all over the world. This means EDCs are threatening the survival of some populations in wildlife species.

During 2013, EU member governments and the European Commission will make significant decisions on the regulation of EDCs. This means we have a unique opportunity to prevent diseases and to reduce the rising costs of healthcare associated with EDCs-related illnesses. We need strong legislation to eliminate our exposure to EDCs, which will drive innovation for safer chemicals and safer products, and thereby create a healthier future for us all.

To protect the health of current and future generations, our everyday exposure to EDCs in our homes, workplaces and communities must stop. Help us spread the message!

What we want

The outdated EU EDC Strategy is currently being reviewed. We need a comprehensive new strategy that effectively prevents further ill-health associated with EDCs and that lays out actions for eliminating exposure. We also call on the EU to produce a new EU EDC Strategy based on the most up to date science that is fit for purpose in the 21st century:

1. Revamp all relevant EU laws to reduce our exposure to EDCs:

- Strengthen the main EU chemicals legislation REACH and all other relevant EU legislation (cosmetics, food packaging, medical equipment, toys, worker health and safety etc). The improvements should lead to i) no new EDCs entering the market, ii) the continuous development and promotion of safer alternatives to known/suspected EDCs and iii) reduced exposures of humans and the environment to EDCs. ***Any legal revamp that does not produce these improvements is inadequate.***
- Ensure that EDCs are regulated because they can disrupt our hormones, rather than how much / powerfully they disrupt them. In current EU discussions on 'criteria' to identify EDCs, certain industry groups want some kind of consideration for the strength or potency of EDCs. But this is fundamentally flawed firstly because during pre-natal development, even 'weak' EDCs at very low doses may contribute to ill health, also later in life, and secondly because many EDCs can act together and have a higher combined potency. Furthermore, research on EDCs has shown that effects at very low doses can often occur and could generally be expected for all chemicals with endocrine activity. ***EDCs must be regulated because they are EDCs per se!***

2. Set out a timetable to capture all sources of EDC exposure 'across the board'

- Secure an agreed timeframe for i) swiftly improving the screening and testing system to identify the chemicals with ED properties and ii) installing adequate testing requirements in legislation. These improvements will ensure that EDCs become identified, so that the substitution to safer alternatives noted above can work. ***Make a plan so we know when, where and which chemicals are disrupting our hormones.***

3. Respond more swiftly to early warning signals

- Clear triggers for action are needed to prevent possible damage. Watching and waiting until an extensive scientific consensus has been forged is tantamount to rejecting the principle of precaution. For example, we now have data from yet another country in Europe, showing significant drops in sperm quality which may be related to EDCs. Do we merely undertake more research or do we take necessary measures now to reduce exposure to EDCs? ***Let's start reducing exposures – better safe than sorry.***

4. Enhance public awareness of EDCs

- Educate the public and professionals to i) ensure that, particularly vulnerable groups: women before pregnancy, pregnant women and mothers, are informed of how to minimise the exposures in their everyday life, (food, indoor environments including workplaces, and consumer goods) and ii) guarantee that health and educational professionals are trained on EDCs so they can advise the public on reducing their exposures. ***Knowing about EDCs should be like knowing your ABC.***

Click on our position papers below to obtain more details on our demands for the regulation of EDCs:

- [Joint position paper: Requirements for the proper regulation of chemicals with endocrine disrupting properties. Position paper of environment and health NGOs, consumer organisations and trade union, April 2011.](#)
- [Joint position paper: Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals under REACH: Four Priority Areas for Regulation](#)

Click here to see all NGO position papers

- [CHEM Trust and HEAL: Regulating chemicals with endocrine disrupting properties \(English, French, German\)](#)
- [Pesticides Action Network \(PAN\) Europe: Criteria for the determination of endocrine disrupting pesticides](#)
- [BEUC: Top 10 actions MEPs can undertake to lower the exposure of consumers and of the environment to endocrine disrupting chemicals \(EDCs\)](#)
- [The Danish Ecological Council: Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals. Call-for-Action](#)
- [CHEM Trust/WWF/HEAL briefing Chemical Cocktails: Harmful Mixtures Upset our Hormones \(English/French\)](#)
- [Center for International Environmental Law \(CIEL\): Driving Innovation: How stronger laws help bring safer chemicals to market](#)