

PRESS RELEASE

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European Society of Endocrinology (ESE) strengthens call for action on endocrine disrupting chemicals with key interventions on Thyroid and Bisphenol

Endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) are one of the most pressing health challenges of the 21st century. The European Commission holds annual forums gathering stakeholders to address this issue. Experts connected to the European Society of Endocrinology intervened about the importance of the thyroid pathway for EDCs and the impact of bisphenols as a group on children.

The EDC Forum¹ is a yearly gathering of experts from the public and corporate sectors, convened by the directorate general for Environment (DG ENV) of the European Commission. Participants share knowledge and best practices, pinpoint problems, and create synergies.

Impact on hormone pathways should be considered holistically

The European Chemicals Agency and Member States have so far considered the properties of each EDC individually in assessments on their potential restriction. Endocrinologists look at endocrine pathways, such as the thyroid or the adrenal gland, for which it is important to look at not just the effect of not just one substance but the mix of substances that may interfere with this pathway. Thyroid disease is one of the most common endocrine diseases, impacting millions of people throughout Europe.² Andreas Kortenkamp, ESE expert and Professor of Human Molecular Toxicology at Brunel University in London, described the vital research being conducted by Eurion, a research cluster focused on improving the detection of endocrine disruptors in Europe. Professor Kortenkamp explained the importance of thyroid hormones for healthy brain development. He highlighted that inadequate test methods and regulatory approaches fail to protect us from the dangers of chemical exposures to brain development. He explained that clinicians regard thyroid hormone changes as adverse, while current EU EDC criteria fail to recognise the adversity of such changes. He said: “The EDC criteria should be changed to classify thyroid hormone changes as adverse. This would bring regulation in line with clinical practice and achieve better protection.”

Avoiding regrettable substitution

Bisphenol A has been recognised as a substance of very high concern (SVHC) due to its endocrine disrupting properties, since 2017. Therefore, many products marketed for babies are labelled “free from bisphenol A”. However, this has led to regrettable substitution to other bisphenol groups that were not yet recognised as EDCs but may share some of the same properties. Anne-Simone Parent, ESE expert and professor of

¹ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/events/fourth-annual-forum-endocrine-disruptors-2022-09-21_en

² [ESE White Paper Hormones in European Health Policies: How endocrinologists can contribute towards a healthier Europe.](#)

Paediatric Endocrinology at the University of Liège in Belgium highlighted in her keynote speech the dangers of Bisphenol to our youngest. "I am pleased that the Commission announced that bisphenols will now be evaluated as a group rather than individually. This enables the process of determining which substances require regulatory action or additional data, and which chemicals do not require further action. Our common purpose should be to safeguard the most vulnerable people, particularly children," Professor Parent stated.

The remainder of the year will be critical for chemical regulation due to the continued implementation of the Chemical Strategy for Sustainability, including reviews of significant policy files, such as REACH, CLP and the Cosmetics Products Regulation. With their active participation to the EDC Forum, ESE has highlighted the urgent necessity to further phase out endocrine disrupting chemicals that threaten human health.

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About the European Society of Endocrinology

The European Society of Endocrinology (ESE) provides a platform to develop and share leading research and best knowledge in endocrine science and medicine. By uniting and representing every part of the endocrine community, we are best placed to improve the lives of patients. Through the 51 National Societies involved with the ESE Council of Affiliated Societies (ECAS) ESE represents a community of over 20,000 European endocrinologists. We inform policy makers on health decisions at the highest level through advocacy efforts across Europe.

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