

## Hormones matter in EU health policy

*Experts and policymakers agree that endocrinology (the field of hormone-related diseases) has a critical role to play in multiple health policy areas*

Brussels, 4 May 2021. Today, EU policymakers, experts, patient representatives and other stakeholders gathered online to discuss the role of hormones in our everyday life, its interlinkage with prevalent non-communicable diseases and the policy measures required to address the many challenges in this rapidly growing area of human health.

The event, organised by the European Society of Endocrinology (ESE), saw the launch of the Society's first-ever White Paper titled "Hormones in European Health Policies: How endocrinologists can contribute towards a healthier Europe". Discussions covered a wide range of topics including COVID-19 together with 4 key topics described in the White Paper: obesity, cancer, rare diseases and Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs).

In his opening remarks, John F. Ryan, Director for Public Health in DG SANTE said "I am impressed by the links made in the White paper to the Beating Cancer Plan, obesity, Farm to Fork, nutrition, as well as the European Reference Networks. All these issues are very relevant topics that are being looked at in the European Commission's work plan."

Building on these remarks, President of ESE Prof. Dr. Andrea Giustina from San Raffaele Hospital in Milano said "COVID-19 has really highlighted the importance of endocrinology and hormones across all policy areas. Almost two thirds of people who were hospitalized for COVID-19 had a metabolic condition. Our White Paper is not the last step. It is a first step towards including endocrinology at the highest level of EU policy."

13 top policy and expert speakers spoke in front of more than 130 participants – a testament to the importance of endocrinology across a wide range of policy areas. During the event, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) including Sirpa Pietikäinen (EPP/FI), Cristian Busoi (EPP/RO) and Jytte Guteland (S&D/SE) reflected on the importance of hormones to COVID-19, obesity and cancer respectively together with expert endocrinologists covering the same topics. DG Environment Head of Unit Sustainable Chemicals Cristina de Avila presented the Commission's plan for EDCs, and a rare disease panel saw interventions among others from rare disease umbrella association EURORDIS and DG SANTE policy officer Jose Valverde, responsible for ERNs and health data.

The panel of expert speakers presented the key asks from the white paper, including the need to treat obesity as a disease across all EU member states, and the need for member states to share health data – critically important for rare diseases. The speakers also called for a deeper inclusion of endocrinology in the implementation of the EU's Beating Cancer Plan, as well as an urgent phase out of EDCs. Finally, they expressed the need for research funding to better understand the relationship between EDCs, endocrine diseases and the COVID-19 virus.

All speakers agreed there is scope for more in-depth follow-up meetings between experts and policymakers, to work together on devising solutions for these large societal challenges.

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The Launch event on 'Why hormones matter in EU health policy' took place on Tuesday 4 May from 10h00 to 12h00 (CET). The full line-up of speakers can be found [here](#).

Download the White Paper here: [www.ese-hormones.com/whitepaper](http://www.ese-hormones.com/whitepaper)

### European Society of Endocrinology

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