

## **European Hormone Day 2024: The policy angle – a joint effort**

### **Using European Hormone Day to drive policy change**

[European Hormone Day \(EHD\)](#) aims to increase awareness of the vital role of hormones and ultimately improve endocrine health in Europe. While EHD 2024 will focus on helping individuals realise the small steps they can take towards better hormone health, raising awareness among policymakers remains important to drive change on a much larger scale. EHD is a timely opportunity to reach out to policymakers and encourage them to support health and research policies that promote endocrine health.

This paper summarises the changes on the horizon and outlines some specific actions you can take to engage with policymakers, along with links to useful resources provided by ESE.

### **2024 is a European election year – what could change?**

We're likely to see some big changes in the European institutions this year. The headline event will be the European Parliament (EP) elections that take place between 6-9 June 2024. According to the current polls, these are expected to change the landscape of political representation with an anticipated shift to the right.

Three key developments could affect policy dynamics:

1. As per previous elections, we expect that up to 40-45% of all members of Parliament will be newly elected members. We'll need to engage with a new group of politicians and convince them of our cause.
2. A new, reshaped European Commission will decide on the priorities for Europe for the next five years. Where climate and health were high on the agenda under the last administration, we expect the focus to shift towards defence, industry and agriculture.
3. In research, a High-level Advisory Panel is already identifying priorities for the Framework Programme 10 (FP10), which succeeds Horizon Europe for the period 2027-2035. At the same time, research calls for the period 2025-2027 need to be issued. The Beating Cancer Plan received an unprecedented level of attention and financial commitment over the last few years; at present, we don't know which, if any, areas of health would receive a similar place in the next Commission's programme.

## How does this affect the hormone health agenda?

1. The present Commission made progress with the topic of endocrine disruption by enforcing the Classification, Labelling and Packaging (CLP) regulation, and initiating the review of the legislation referred to as 'Restriction, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals' (REACH). While several parties including ESE have stressed the need to publish the REACH proposal, this has been handed over to the next administration. This delay, as well as the possible watering down of the regulation, are a major cause for concern regarding the necessary changes to reduce exposure to Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs).
2. The European People's Party blocked the sustainable use of pesticides regulation and the nature restoration law over food security concerns. As these proposals are key elements of the EU Green Deal, this action demonstrates the potential changes in EU policy priorities that could transpire following the elections.
3. A portion (€10.6bn) of the €50bn plan for Ukraine approved by EU leaders in February 2024 was funded by reassigning money from other financial envelopes, including EU4Health and Horizon Europe, the main EU research funding scheme.

## How will ESE use EHD 2024 to advocate for stronger endocrine-related policies?

In this context, it is more important than ever to make sure the voice of the endocrine community is heard. EHD 2024 is a chance to make our case to future and returning politicians.

Our manifesto is '[Recognising the key role of hormones in European Health: the Milano Declaration](#)', launched on the first European Hormone Day in 2022. The Milano Declaration sets out what we expect from politicians to secure better health for all citizens in Europe. Two years later, the principles and calls to action remain relevant. The Declaration should be shared with as many policymakers as possible, with an invitation to endorse it.

On the day before EHD and on EHD itself (23-24 April 2024), **the Belgian EU Presidency will host a conference on '[Tomorrow's Chemicals Policies: Perspectives and Challenges](#)'**. The agenda will include discussions about endocrine disruptors and improving the effectiveness of REACH legislation. Prof. Robin Peeters (Erasmus Medical Center, Rotterdam) will speak on behalf of ESE, allowing us to advance our hormone health agenda.

## What can you do at the national level?

Addressing the European policy environment starts at the regional and national levels. Existing and aspiring Members of the European Parliament will be up for election by their national electorate, which presents a fantastic opportunity for national societies, patient advocacy groups and NGOs to highlight their agenda to these politicians.

The launch of the Milano Declaration in 2022 has proven that it is possible to achieve widespread endorsement for our cause. Eleven Members of the European Parliament gave their endorsement to our Declaration and used social media to further spread the message. European Hormone Day 2024 is a chance to reaffirm political support for the Milano Declaration. With that in mind, here are some specific actions you can take:

- Reach out to your local and national politicians – ask them to endorse the Milano Declaration and for their ongoing commitment to support health and research policies that promote hormone health;
- Tag your politicians in relevant social media posts so they can join in the conversation easily;
- Invite policymakers to relevant online or in-person events so they can hear first-hand why hormones matter;
- Encourage your members to reach out to their political representatives;
- Share and comment on ESE's posts following the Belgian EU Presidency event on 23-23 April;
- Join EHD and help spread the word to a wider audience! The more people who understand why hormones matter, the more success we will have in keeping the issue high on the political agenda.

We urge you to engage in the policy angle of European Hormone Day, not only for its influence on decision-making at European level, but also because the support of national policy makers is crucial for making an impact on health policies in your country.

### **How ESE will support you**

To facilitate outreach to your policymakers, ESE has developed a European Hormone Day Policy Toolkit with useful resources all in one place. This toolkit consists of the following:

- The [Milano Declaration](#) and its annex;
- Template letter to ask your local politicians to support the Milano Declaration;
- Key messages on the importance of hormone health for both individuals and society for you to share;
- Update on the present status of chemical legislation relating to EDCs (including PFAS and REACH) and the critical decisions needed to address these important issues;
- Links to the [European Hormone Day Toolkit](#), with visual materials that can be shared by policymakers on social media on or around European Hormone Day.

Please keep ESE informed of your activities and let us know should your national politicians support the cause. You can send updates and information about your activities to the ESE Team at [info@ese-hormones.org](mailto:info@ese-hormones.org).

**European Society of Endocrinology**

March 2024