

# Chemicals



Bringing a constant flow of new evidence to policy makers, health experts and groups, and the public on harm to health from everyday chemical exposures.

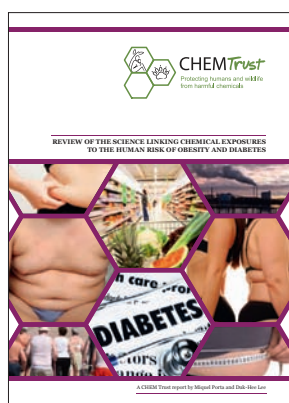
During the year, HEAL organised a breakfast meeting with an expert scientist on endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) in the European Parliament, and promoted a research review on obesity and diabetes in Brussels and in European and international media. HEAL also authored articles in two leading international medical journals on early exposure to chemicals and endocrine disruption as well as coordinating a joint European "EDC-Free" campaign.

## Endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) linked to obesity and diabetes

HEAL disseminated and promoted new science on links between chemicals and the risk for obesity and diabetes, which was the subject of a report released by UK organisation CHEM Trust in March 2012 entitled,

*"Review of the Science linking chemical exposures to the human risk of obesity and diabetes"*.

HEAL's contribution was to co-produce a concise and reader-friendly brochure with Chem Trust and to led the media work with Brussels-based journalists with the help of a tailored press release.



As of June 2012 the report has featured over 175 times in newspapers, journals, radio and TV stations in 14 European and 21 non-European countries.

## The brochure: Chemicals in our food and consumer products: a missing link in the epidemics of obesity and diabetes?

Published jointly with CHEM Trust, HEAL coordinated the translation and Europe-wide media launch. The leaflet is available in English, French, Spanish, Hungarian and German, and translations are planned for Dutch, Czech and Swedish.

The leaflet describes the new research that indicates contaminants play a role in obesity and diabetes. It also gives direction on policy.



## EDC-Free campaign call and website

As campaign secretariat for the EDC-Free platform of NGOs and other public interest groups, HEAL led the development of a joint NGO campaign call and

demands for EU and national policy makers. The call was translated into French and Spanish, and used by many health, environmental, consumer groups to show concern during the parliamentary discussions.

## Risks of early life exposure put into focus

HEAL coordinated joint NGO media work and outreach to scientific networks to promote the PPTOX III conference on early life exposures, and its outcomes, including the scientific consensus statement, *Developmental origins of non-communicable disease: Implications for research and public health*. Thus far, 86 leading scientists from around the world have signed this statement on the

vulnerability of developing children to environmental chemical exposure.



EDC-Free campaign website



Philippe Grandjean, Harvard School of Public Health, University of Southern Denmark is one of the authors of the statement.

## EDCs and reproductive health

European Parliament breakfast briefing “Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals and EU public health protection”



was leading US scientist and expert on phthalates Professor Shanna Swan. The event was co-organised by HEAL and Réseau Environnement Santé and hosted by Danish MEP Christel Schaldemose.



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Professor Shanna H. Swan, a renowned scientist specialising in reproductive medicine, warned MEPs about the health effects of endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) known as phthalates which can end up in food via pesticides or plastics. In an interview with *EurActiv* after the event, she call on regulators to better protect consumers against those “hidden chemicals”.

HEAL’s Executive Committee member Andre Cicoella, emphasised recent bans on EDCs in France to MEP Christel Schaldemose (shown above).

HEAL’s Senior Policy Adviser on Chemicals, Lisette van Vliet laid out the potential opportunities for EU policy action on EDCs for better public health protection.

## EDC criteria briefing



For the policy discussions on defining EDC criteria, HEAL together with CHEM Trust issued a briefing for policy makers and regulatory authorities in March 2012 entitled “Regulating chemicals with endocrine disrupting properties”. The briefing explains the upcoming decisions on EDC criteria and puts forward HEAL’s demands. Also available in Spanish and French.

## European Parliament initiates report on EDCs and public health

HEAL worked with its members and partners to highlight the science, and bring the health perspectives from across Europe and different health constituencies on how EDCs may be contributing to ill health as the European Parliament prepared its report. It led the NGO coordination, and worked with Members of the European Parliament from across political parties.

The Parliament’s report: *“Calls on the Commission to revise its EU Strategy on endocrine disruptors so that it delivers effective protection of human health by placing greater emphasis on the precautionary principle ... to work towards reducing human exposure to endocrine disruptors where necessary.”*



MEP Asa Westlund, Rapporteur for EP report on EDCs



retweeted by MEP Asa Westlund

**HEAL secretariat published articles in prestigious journals:**

- Early-life prevention of non-communicable diseases, **The Lancet, 5 January 2013**

- Revising the EU strategy on endocrine disruptors: nearing a decisive moment, **Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, 9 November 2012**

## Chronic disease and EDCs workshop

HEAL organised a workshop in September 2012 to showcase new science, tools and build capacity on the policy opportunities for EDCs in the EU.



Carol Kwiatkowski from the Endocrine Disrupting Exchange (TEDX) shows participants the critical windows of development website as a science based tool for exploring environmental origins and disease patterns.



Prof. Robert Baroucki, INSERM, gives an overview of the science on prenatal exposure and EDCs. He was co-chair of the 2012 PPTOX conference which adopted a scientific consensus statement on nutritional and developmental origins of disease.

The workshop aimed to highlight both the science and the tools that demonstrate the opportunities and important role that representatives of different disease groups can play in parliamentary discussions on EDCs. Although



Cathy Rigolle from the Flemish Cancer League speaks about the response to their recent report on how chemicals are implicated in the rise of cancer, and which policy measures her association was recommending.

recent regulations on pesticides and biocides foresee removing EDCs from the EU market, implementation of protective law is far too slow. New science on the dangers of both EDC mixtures and

exposure in early life were needed in the discussions on the European Parliament report due in autumn 2012.



French not-for-profit health insurance organisations raise awareness on EDCs and health through a traveling poster exhibition and workshops with HEAL member, Réseau Environnement Sante (RES). Jean Louis Darques, General Secretary, Mutualité Française Ile de France is shown here with Genon Jensen, Executive Director, HEAL at Bye-Bye BPA campaign celebration, February 2013.

## First EU Biomonitoring results

Results of the analysis of 4,000 urine and hair samples from mothers and children in 17 countries showed they were all exposed to harmful chemicals.

*"The truth is that none of these chemicals belong in our bodies. Endocrine disrupting chemicals are*

*all linked to serious health problems ranging from premature puberty in girls and birth defects in baby boys' genitals to increased risk of hormone related cancers, such as breast and prostate."*

Lisette van Vliet, HEAL

The samples were taken as part of the first-ever biomonitoring survey by COPHES and

DEMOCOPHES, two EU-funded research projects.

## Taking the message to international audiences

HEAL helped put EDCs on the agenda of international chemicals management by highlighting latest science and developments at the EU level on EDCs at the

UNEP meeting on Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) in Nairobi in September 2012. Delegates agreed to include new measures related to the United Nation's voluntary chemicals management programme, SAICM.

EU plan for chemical mixtures 'lacks urgency', ENDS Europe, 31 May 2012

NGOs criticise lack of new legislation in EU mixtures plan, Chemicals Watch, 31 May 2012

Chemical effects on the brain and behaviour, Chemical Watch, 18 May 2012.

*'Despite some policy advances in regulating EDCs, serious delays still exist between the publication of new science, the recognition of these hazards in law, and reduction in public exposure.'*

Lisette van Vliet and Genon Jensen, HEAL wrote a commentary in 'Revising the EU Strategy on endocrine disruptors, Nearing a decisive moment', Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, November 2012.

## MEDIA COVERAGE