



UNDER STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL WEDNESDAY 13 NOVEMBER AT 8.30 am CET

Photo opportunity: Fifteen banner-carrying EDC-Free Europe campaigners will hand José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission a colourful collage of photos sent in by citizens and groups from across Europe illustrating concerns about just how pervasive endocrine disrupting chemicals may be in everyday products and our lives. The event takes place on Wednesday, 13 November at 8.30 am outside the European Commission building at Schuman.

The photos are arranged in a visual image portraying President Barroso making an “all OK” sign – in the hope that he will respond positively in supporting urgent action on EDCs to reduce human exposure, particularly in products used by the most vulnerable, such as babies and pregnant women. Photo collage available here <http://www.edc-free-europe.org/media-photo-op-delays-are-wasting-opportunities-for-prevention-of-chronic-disease-and-healthcare-savings/>. Photos of the event will be added by 12 noon today.

MEDIA ADVISORY

Delays are wasting opportunities for prevention of chronic disease and healthcare savings

Brussels, Wednesday 13 November – Fifteen EDC-Free Europe campaigners are presenting José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission with a huge EDC-Free poster today in an urgent call for action on endocrine disrupting chemicals.

The EDC-Free Europe coalition, made up of 50 partners representing hundreds of EU citizens' organizations (1), has integrated dozens of photos from campaign activities across Europe into a poster portraying Barroso. They are calling on him to quickly bring forward delayed EDC policy proposals to better protect people's health and prevent chronic diseases. The chronic disease associated with EDCs is a leading public health challenge and drain on the economy.

The campaign action today reiterates a call made in a letter to Barroso in May this year. (2) The letter called for an end to delays in regulatory action on endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs), and immediate action to reduce people's exposure. The groups say that postponed decisions will unnecessarily prolong people's exposure to these chemicals. Low-level, everyday exposures to EDCs disturb the human hormone system and have been linked to many serious chronic diseases that are increasing in incidence in Europe, such as breast cancer.

“It was democratically agreed by the European Parliament that scientific criteria for EDCs would be set by December this year. The European Commission's recent decision to launch an impact assessment on criteria ignores the December deadline. Since when do scientific criteria get set by impact assessments? This move ignores the public will and goes against scientific recommendation,” says Lisette van Vliet, HEAL, one of the campaign partners in the coalition.

Scientists actively engaged in endocrine disruptor research made their position on the need for urgent action very clear earlier this year. In May 2013, 89 leading public health scientists from around the world signed the *Berlaymont Declaration* on endocrine disruptors, which calls on the European Commission to act. (3) They list EDC-related conditions as infertility, congenital malformations (and testicular cancer), breast cancer, prostate cancer, ADHD, obesity and diabetes, amongst others.

Industry pressure, rather than scientific controversy about the criteria to protect EU citizens from harmful EDCs, may be at the heart of why the decisions are being delayed.

In October, the Swedish and Danish ministers of Environment wrote to Janez Potčnik, the European environment commissioner expressing their concerns that an impact assessment would take socio-economic criteria into account, which they claimed is not within the scope of the biocidal products Regulation's (BPR). (4)

"HEAL believes that the Commission has obtained ample scientific input and should stand up to industry bullying on the criteria. It should publish a revised strategy as soon as possible and ensure that REACH does not authorise chemicals that are hormone disruptors when safer alternatives exist," Ms van Vliet adds.

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Notes for journalists

1. EDC-Free Europe campaign has 50 signed-up members representing hundreds of groups throughout Europe, including trade unions, consumers, public health and healthcare professionals, and advocates for cancer prevention, environmentalists and women's groups. www.edc-free-europe.org Those in Brussels today will carry banners with the campaign message - STOP hormone disrupting chemicals and blown-up photos of suspect consumer items with arrows asking the question: "Is this disrupting me?" as well as the collage of many photos arranged in a visual image portraying President Barroso.

2. Joint NGO letter to President Barroso and Commissioners: Call to reduce our exposure to EDCs, 7 May 2013, <http://www.env-health.org/resources/letters/article/joint-ngo-letter-to-president>)

3. The Berlaymont Declaration is available at www.env-health.org/resources/press.../heal-responds-to-berlaymont

4. Letter on EDCs to Commissioners Potočnik and Tajani from Swedish and Danish Ministers for the Environment, 30 October 2013, Letter and ChemSec press release at <http://www.chemsec.org/news/news-2013/october-december/1209-letter-on-edcs-to-commissioners-potocnik-and-tajani-from-swedish-and-danish-ministers-for-the-environment>

The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) is a leading European not-for-profit organisation addressing how the environment affects health in the European Union (EU). With the support of more than 65 member organisations, HEAL brings independent expertise and evidence from the health community to different decision-making processes. Our broad alliance represents health professionals, not-for-profit health insurers, doctors, nurses, cancer and asthma groups, citizens, women's groups, youth groups, environmental NGOs, scientists and public health research institutes. Members include international and Europe-wide organisations, as well as national and local groups. Website: www.env-health.org