

Endocrine disruptors: Commission in breach of EU law, says Parliament

Written by Martin Banks on 9 June 2016 in News
News

MEPs have handed a stinging rebuke to the Commission for failing to propose scientific criteria to address the problem of hormone-disrupting chemical substances that interfere with the endocrine system.



The executive was required to define the criteria under a European Court of Justice ruling in December last year.

A parliamentary resolution on endocrine disruptors also points out that the Commission's "persistent" failure to publish the criteria breaches EU law.

The resolution was passed at the Strasbourg plenary on Wednesday by 593 votes to 57 with 19 abstentions.

RELATED CONTENT

- [PM+: 'Decisive EU action' on endocrine disruptors could save billions](#) [1]
 - [Michèle Rivasi: Lack of EU action on hormone disruptors 'completely criminal'](#) [2]
 - [Christel Schaldemose: Europe-wide cancer group calls for action on hormone disruptors](#) [3]
-

The Commission has responded by pledging to propose the criteria before the summer recess.

EDCs are chemicals that are present in everyday products - from plastics and cosmetics to pesticides, but the World Health Organisation says they are a global threat to public health.

Because of their ability to interact with the hormonal (endocrine) systems of living organisms, they are suspected of having serious health and environmental impacts.

The EU is supposed to regulate EDCs but the first step - establishing scientific criteria to identify them - has not been taken due to what is said to have been a "massive" industry lobbying campaign.

MEPs have repeatedly urged the EU to clamp down on the substances and say that proposed scientific criteria were ready in 2013 but remained unpublished, as the Commission decided to launch an impact assessment instead, a move deputies insist was neither required by EU law nor appropriate for deciding on a scientific matter.

Welcoming this week's vote, Greens/EFA group environment and health spokesperson Bas Eickhout said resolution amounted to a "strong rebuke" to the Commission.

The Dutch deputy went on, "It is a scandal that the Commission has still not fulfilled its obligation under EU law to propose a list of scientific criteria on endocrine disruptors and is flouting last year's court ruling, in violation of the EU treaties.

"We are now two and half years on from the original deadline and half a year since the Court ruled the Commission is breaching EU law by failing to adopt the criteria. Parliament has today made clear that this is totally unacceptable. This lost time is, first and foremost, a blow to all those who suffer health problems as a result of these substances."

He said, "Defining clear criteria on what constitutes an endocrine disruptor is a crucial step for properly regulating these chemicals and, ultimately, phasing them out.

"It is cynical of the Commission to continue to delay the criteria while it carries out an unnecessary 'socio-economic impact assessment' to placate industry. Impact assessments are completely inappropriate to determine a scientific matter, as the court ruling made clear."

Eickhout said, "The only guiding priority under EU law should be to address the major public health problems caused by these chemicals. However, the Commission is continuing to put the bottom line of a few agro-chemical companies ahead of public health."

Further comment came from German member Matthias Groote, the S&D spokesperson on public health, who told this website, "It is unacceptable the Commission is evidently in breach of EU law. We strongly condemn the continuous and incomprehensible delays in defining clear rules on chemicals

which are believed to cause many serious diseases. It is unacceptable that the Commission, as the guardian of the treaties, does not comply with them.

"We need to specify scientific criteria for the determination of endocrine disrupting properties of active substance and biocides products.

"Our main duty is to ensure the highest level of health protection for all European citizens. This is why in the resolution we call on the Commission to comply, without any further delay, with the court ruling of December 2015 by submitting strict criteria for endocrine disruptors based on science and not on socio-economic considerations."

Elsewhere, the Brussels-based campaign group Corporate Europe Observatory and journalist Stéphane Horel, have published a commentary on the issue, called 'A Toxic Affair: Season Finale'.

CEO and Horel blame a "lobbying Blitzkrieg" for the delay in identifying the scientific criteria, adding, "No means were left unused to derail the process. To succeed, industry lobbies found allies in various member states (the UK and Germany in particular).

"Then on 2 July 2013, the Secretary-General of the Commission decided an impact assessment would be carried out. The process, since, has been in a deadlock, and the legal deadline of December of 2013 passed without scientific criteria for EDCs being in place."

About the author

Martin Banks is a journalist for the Parliament Magazine

Tags

[Environment](#) [4]

[European Commission](#) [5]

[Health](#) [6]

Categories

[Environment](#) [7]

[Health and social care](#) [8]

[Science, technology and research](#) [9]



Parliament Magazine is a Dods Group plc title

Site Sections

- [Home](#)
- [Content](#)
- [Policy](#)
- [Magazines](#)
- [PM+](#)

- [Thought Leader](#)
- [EU Elections 2019](#)
- [Editorial Calendar](#)
- [Policy Events](#)
- [Event Coverage](#)
- [MEP Awards 2019](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

Services

[Dods PeopleDods](#)
[MonitoringDods](#)
[ResearchDods](#)
[EventsDods](#)
[Training](#)

Media & publishing titles

[Politics HomeThe](#)
[HouseThe](#)
[Parliament](#)
[MagazineHolyrood](#)
[Total PoliticsPublic](#)
[Affairs NewsCivil](#)
[Service](#)
[World](#)
[PublicTechnology](#)
[Training](#)
[JournalDods](#)
[Parliamentary](#)
[CompanionVacher's](#)
[Quarterly The](#)
[European Union and](#)
[Public Affairs](#)
[Directory](#)

Dods events

[Westminster](#)
[BriefingDigital](#)
[Health & Care](#)
[ScotlandMEP](#)
[AwardsThe Skills](#)
[SummitScottish](#)
[Public Service](#)
[AwardsPublic Sector](#)
[Procurement](#)
[SummitPublic](#)
[Sector ICT](#)
[SummitCyber](#)
[Security](#)

[SummitCyber
Security
2017Training
Journal Awards](#)

**Partnership
events**

[The Health and
Care Innovation
ExpoCivil Service
LiveCivil Service
AwardsChief
Nursing Officer for
England's
SummitWomen into
LeadershipThe
Youth Justice
ConventionSocitm
Spring
ConferenceNHSCC
Annual Members'
EventDods at Party
Conference](#)

[Privacy PolicyTerms & ConditionsAdvertisingSponsorship Subscriptions](#)

Source URL: <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/endocrine-disruptors-commission-breach-e-law-says-parliament>

Links

- [1] https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/sponsored_article/pm-decisive-eu-action-endocrine-disruptors-could-save-billions
- [2] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/opinion/lack-eu-action-hormone-disruptors-completely-criminal>
- [3] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/opinion/europe-wide-cancer-group-calls-action-hormone-disruptors>
- [4] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/environment>
- [5] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/european-commission>
- [6] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/health>
- [7] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/environment>

[8] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/health-and-social-care>

[9] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/science-technology-and-research>