

THURSDAY 20 APRIL 2023, STRASBOURG

# PREVENTION AND PROTECTION AGAINST ENDOCRINE DISRUPTING CHEMICALS (EDCS)

WHAT ROLES FOR AN ALLIANCE OF CITIES  
AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN EUROPE?

SYMPOSIUM IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, ROOM WIC 100  
13H15 - 17H30

ORGANISERS:



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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## Presentation of the symposium

As the improvements of European Union (EU) legislation on chemicals are progressing slowly, people and nature continue to be exposed everyday to harmful chemicals including endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) present everywhere in our daily life.

**Organised on April 20<sup>th</sup> 2023, at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, by the Réseau Environnement Santé (RES)<sup>1</sup>, in partnership with the coalition EDC-Free Europe<sup>2</sup>, the Baltic Environmental Forum Germany (BEF DE)<sup>3</sup> and the Interreg NonHazCity3 project<sup>4</sup>, this symposium proved to be a valuable platform to share expertise and best practices** on how local authorities are addressing the growing threat of endocrine disrupting chemicals while expecting for EU and national measures to implement the European chemical strategy for sustainability and close the current regulatory loopholes.

[In its roadmap published on April 25, 2022, the European Commission announced the banning of the main groups of endocrine disruptors by 2030.](#)

With the objective of reducing everyday exposure of populations to EDCs as of today, this symposium brought together speakers and participants from seven different countries, including members of the European Parliament and of the European Commission, representatives of three French regions (*Grand Est, Île-de-France and Centre-Val de Loire*), and the cities of *Stockholm, Helsinki, Riga, Hamburg, Strasbourg, Limoges, Lyon, Nice, Epinal, Chambéry, Community of Agglomeration of Cergy-Pontoise*.

The event received the political support of the French Minister Delegate to the Minister of Health and Prevention who is in charge of territorial organisation and health professionals, the political and operational support of the Eurometropolis and the City of Strasbourg, was hosted by the European Parliament in Strasbourg, and received the financial support of the triennial contract Agora Strasbourg European Capital<sup>5</sup>.

This symposium was built in particular on the experience developed in France with the network of the [cities and territories striving to be free of endocrine disrupting chemicals \(VTSPE Charter\)](#) and on the experience of the [Baltic Interreg Non Hazardous Cities project \(NonHazCity\)](#).

These initiatives have already been highlighted

- in [the European Parliament resolution of 10 July 2020 on the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability \(2020/2531\(RSP\)\)](#);
- in the policy recommendations of [the 2019 opinion of the European Committee of the Regions](#): Towards a comprehensive European Union framework on endocrine disruptors;
- during [the Ministerial conference «Chemicals: Better Protecting Health and the Environment» held in Paris on May 11-12, 2022](#), as part of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union, where a panel emphasised the role of local authorities in helping to better achieve the goals set for 2030 in tackling chemical pollution.

**The symposium played a key role in initiating the construction of a European Alliance in Strasbourg, aimed at reducing exposure to chemical pollution, by bringing together local authorities (cities, metropolitan areas, districts/departments, regions) in conjunction with NGOs (environmental health, scientists) to mobilise a wide range of stakeholders at the local level (including state health insurance, health and early childhood professionals, professionals in public procurement, food, water, construction, various communities, and small businesses).**

The meeting concluded with a shared and strong interest expressed by the participants to continue their collaborative exchanges within various action frameworks in 2023 and 2024. Opportunities to enhance networking on a broader scale within the EU were explored, especially in member states where mobilisation on this major public health issue is still relatively limited.

To facilitate the transfer of experience from numerous initiatives in France to the European level, a second symposium will be held in Strasbourg in November 2023. With a focus on public health strategy, the initial segment of this upcoming event will highlight children's health as a primary priority, specifically emphasising the prevention of preterm birth. The second part will consist of workshops aimed at communicating actions implemented in France that are ready to be scaled up.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.reseau-environnement-sante.fr/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.edc-free-europe.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bef-de.org/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://interreg-baltic.eu/project/nonhazcity-3/> / <https://thinkbefore.eu/en>

<sup>5</sup> France State, European Collectivity of Alsace, Grand Est Region, Eurometropolis and City of Strasbourg

## Brief summary of the discussions:

To kick off the event, Agnès FIRMIN LE BODO, Minister Delegate to the Minister of Health and Prevention, in charge of territorial organisation and health professionals, delivered a recorded speech<sup>6</sup>, highlighting the health concerns associated with the exposure to EDCs.

She emphasised the importance of collaboration and cooperation between stakeholders in various European countries, including at sub-national level. She outlined the numerous initiatives undertaken in France since the adoption of the [first national strategy on endocrine disruptors in 2014 \(SNPE\)](#), and drew attention to preventive measures throughout the country, in particular by fostering new partnerships with regions and local representatives.

Jeanne BARSEGHIAN, Mayor of Strasbourg, acknowledged the importance of the symposium and the mobilisation of the numerous actors across Europe involved in projects to raise awareness on EDCs and reduce exposure at the population level.

Dr Alexandre FELTZ, City Council member in charge of public health and environmental health, presented the ["Green Prescription" \(Ordonnance Verte\)](#) measure, which will soon allow half of the pregnant women in the territory to have access to a free weekly basket of organic vegetables in exchange of participation in awareness workshops on endocrine disruptors.

The symposium featured four panel discussions<sup>7</sup>:

- **State of play to strengthen European Union (EU) regulations on EDCs and necessary complementary actions at (sub)national level**

Moderator of this first panel, Sandra JEN (EDC-Free Europe), reminded in introduction that [the health costs of exposure to EDCs are estimated to be at least 163 billion Euros per year in Europe alone](#). Every day of delay to take regulatory actions is a serious cause of concern.

Jutta PAULUS (Member of the European Parliament), Jordane WODLI (European Commission), Arne JAMTROT (City of Stockholm), and Christelle LEHRY (Grand Est Region) discussed the ongoing changes in the EU legislative framework, including the approval [of the criteria for endocrine disruptors in the CLP Regulation](#), discussions on the [REACH Regulation](#) and the [proposal](#) to ban the production and export of EU banned substances for use in third countries.

Arne JAMTROT emphasized that regulatory changes alone are insufficient, highlighting that an essential factor in the development of [Stockholm's successive action plans on chemicals](#) over the past decade has been political leadership at multiple levels (City, State, EU).

Panellists stressed the importance of adequate and comprehensive information for both consumers and local authorities. They agreed that the reform of European legislation (REACH, CLP) is urgent and essential to protect all consumers and to avoid different levels of protection depending on where people live.

- **Prevention and protection: focus on non-persistent endocrine disruptors**

André CIOLELLA, President at Réseau Environnement Santé (RES), highlighted the initiatives taken by RES and its partners (local authorities, state health insurance "Assurance Maladie", health professionals) to reduce exposure to non-persistent endocrine disruptors, primarily [phthalates](#). He [pointed to several studies](#) that indicate a correlation between reducing exposure to endocrine disruptors and reducing the risk of preterm births.

Dr Marike KOLOSSA-GEHRING, HBM4EU\_Program Coordinator and Head of Toxicology at the German Environment Agency (UBA), shared the results of the [HBM4EU initiative](#). "People in Europe are still so highly exposed that they are not safe from the health impact caused by chemical exposure", she explained. She also emphasised the need to work at regional level and in cities to transfer knowledge and protect citizens from exposure to harmful chemicals.

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<sup>6</sup> [Link to the recorded video: https://vimeo.com/819166783/95311a18a6](https://vimeo.com/819166783/95311a18a6) / [Link to the text of the speech \(FR\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> The slides of the speakers are available in the following link: <http://www.reseau-environnement-sante.fr/colloque-vtspe-parlement-europeen-strasbourg/>



Dr Aleksandra RUTKOWSKA (Medical University of Gdansk and member of the Polish Society of Endocrinology) emphasised the need for more preventive actions. She summed up the main scientific certainties on the health consequences of exposure to EDCs during periods of vulnerability. In particular, she highlighted that epigenetic changes are expressed in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation. Scientists having already sounded the alarm for more than 30 years, she hopes that these reminders will lead to concrete actions.

To illustrate the effectiveness of preventive actions, she gave the example of a pilot intervention study, carried out in Gdansk within the framework of NonHazCity, [using urine tests that showed a decrease in exposure following simple behavioural changes in daily life](#).

Sandrine JOUAN, coordinator of the [Belgian national plan on endocrine disruptors \(NAPED\)](#) presented the process through which the action plan was elaborated and adopted, as well as its three main pillars.

Yann WEHLING, Vice-President of the Île-de-France Region, highlighted the many [initiatives undertaken in the implementation of the VTSPE charter since 2018](#), in particular he focused his presentation on [the awareness project PELIF, which was conducted in dozens of high schools using the analysis of silicone wristbands as a method to better show the presence of endocrine disruptors, particularly phthalates, and provide simple measures to avoid them](#).

- **Local actions, learnings from the Baltic Interreg project NonHazCity**

The third panel discussion, moderated by Véronique BERTHOLLE (City Council member in charge of European relations at the City of Strasbourg), brought together Arne JAMTROT (City of Stockholm), Mairita LŪSE (City of Riga), Esa NIKUNEN (City of Helsinki), Lisa KERN (City of Hamburg) and Heidrun FAMMLER (BEF Germany). Panellists explored the increasing synergies and networking opportunities between local authorities across Europe, with a focus on the Baltic Interreg [NonHazCity project](#).

The speakers highlighted some of the key actions taken by local authorities to reduce exposure to endocrine disruptors: action plans on chemicals for a toxic-free life, public procurement policies promoting safer alternatives instead of products containing harmful chemicals, databases of safer alternatives and best practices, and the support to research and cooperation between cities, EU institutions, NGOs, and other projects.

Heidrun FAMMLER (BEF Germany) presented [the NonHazCity Household Check tool](#), which helps consumers reducing the use of toxic chemicals in their homes, and discussed its evolution into the new [LIFE ChemBee: Chemicals Ambassadors for Europe project](#), which involves partners in 10 countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, France, Finland, Poland, Portugal and Sweden.

- **Local actions, learnings from 6 years of implementation of the EDC-Free Charter in France**

The French charter ["Villes et Territoires Sans Perturbateurs Endocriniens \(VTSPE\)"](#) has given rise to a wide variety of projects in many cities, metropolitan areas, departments and regions.

During this final panel, representatives of the French region Centre-Val-de-Loire and the cities of Limoges, Strasbourg, Lyon and Nice shared information on the various initiatives undertaken within the framework under the adoption of the charter. These initiatives included [Operation Zero Phthalates](#), actions to reduce and eliminate [plastic and melamine in schools' canteens](#), and various awareness raising initiatives such as the ["Green Prescription"](#).

Due to the limited time available, only an overview of the initiatives in France was presented. Many initiatives could not be represented in this event. A second symposium will be held in Strasbourg to provide a platform for sharing knowledge and best practices to the European level.

*In conclusion these panel discussions provided an opportunity for speakers from across Europe to exchange views on how best to protect human health and the environment from endocrine disruptors, and to discuss potential synergies to develop a broader European Alliance on these issues.*

## Program

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<b>Jordane WODLI</b> , Sustainable Chemicals Unit, DG ENV, European Commission, EU	
<b>Arne JAMTROT</b> , Head of unit of the Chemicals centre Environment and Health Department, City of Stockholm, Sweden	
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<b>Dr Aleksandra RUTKOWSKA</b> , Biotechnologist at the Medical University of Gdansk and member of the Polish Society of Endocrinology, Poland	
<b>Sandrine JOUAN</b> , Senior regulatory toxicologist and coordinator of the Belgian national plan on EDCs (NAPED), SPF Public Health, Belgium	
<b>Yann WEHRLING</b> , Vice-President in charge of the Ecological Transition, Climate and Biodiversity, Île-de-France Region, France	
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<b>Mairita LÜSE</b> , City Council member in charge of the working group on waste reduction and management, City of Riga, Latvia	
<b>Esa NIKUNEN</b> , Director General of environment services, City of Helsinki, Finland	
<b>Lisa KERN</b> , Member of the parliament of the City of Hamburg, Spokesperson for consumer protection for the green party at Hamburg, Germany	
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<b>Ludivine QUINTALLET</b> , Councillor of Alsace and founder of the plastic-free canteen initiative in Strasbourg, European Collectivity of Alsace, France	
<b>Pascale ROUILLARD-NEAU</b> , Head of the Environmental Health and Hygiene Department, City and Eurometropolis of Strasbourg, France	
<b>Jean-François BRIDET</b> , Vice-President in charge of the Ecological Transition, Climate and Biodiversity, Centre-Val de Loire Region, France	
<b>Céline De LAURENS</b> , City Council member in charge of health, prevention and environmental health, City of Lyon, France	
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## Welcome and opening



**André CIOLELLA, President of Réseau Environnement Santé**, welcomed the participants and shared the unfortunate news that Deputy Minister was unable to attend as initially scheduled. Following this announcement, a pre-recorded speech was played.

### **Agnès FIRMIN-LE BODO, Minister Delegate to the Minister of Health and Prevention, in charge of Territorial Organisation and Health Professionals, France**

Although unable to attend in person, she expressed her regret and desire to participate in some capacity in this European symposium, which highlights the role of cities and local authorities in addressing this major public health challenge. She extends her gratitude to Réseau Environnement Santé (RES) and its European partners for organising the event, [following up a panel discussion which took place at the Ministerial conference held in Paris on May 11-12, 2022](#), jointly organised by the European Commission and the French Ministry of Environment, during of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

She highlights that the assessment and prevention of the health impact caused by chemical substances, including endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs), pose a significant challenge for all. France, along with Denmark and Sweden, has been at the forefront in addressing this issue, with the Ministry of Health actively working on it since 2009. The 2012 Environmental Conference paved the way for the adoption of [the national strategy on EDCs \(SNPE\)](#), which was established in April 2014, jointly overseen by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Environment. Furthermore, a second national strategy was initiated in December 2019 and is presently being implemented.

Endocrine-disrupting chemicals are suspected to be associated with the rising occurrence of abnormalities in the reproductive system and may also play a role in hormone-related cancers and metabolic disorders. She highlights key measures implemented in the field of health and [emphasises the efforts undertaken to evaluate chemical substances under the supervision of ANSES](#), the national authority for health safety. ANSES collaborates with other European agencies to develop expertise in this area of research on these substances.

[She also mentions the ESTEBAN study conducted by Santé Publique France, which monitors the population's exposure to environmental contaminants, including EDCs.](#) The ESTEBAN study has revealed a decrease in the French population's exposure to certain pollutants like lead, while showing an increase in others such as cadmium, PFAS, PFCs, and certain potentially toxic pesticides. A new study called Albane, set to launch this June, will continue this ongoing monitoring.

[Synergies exist between the national program and European biomonitoring projects conducted through the PARC partnership](#), which focuses on assessing chemical risks and hazards.



Santé Publique France plays a major role in the biomonitoring component and also monitors key indicators and pathologies associated with EDCs within the framework of [SNPE2](#). [The monitoring of pathologies will be further expanded through the PEPS'PE study](#).

Since 2006, ANSES has been responsible for a national research program on environment, health, and work ([PNREST](#)), which has funded over a hundred projects focused on EDCs.

Acknowledges the significance of prevention and raising public awareness, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable individuals. [Santé Publique France has established a website called «The First 1 000 Days» to educate future parents about the impact of environmental factors on pregnancy and child health](#). Efforts are underway to strengthen professional training on chemical hazards, including the expansion of the program to include [pharmacists](#) this year.

Prevention also involves the establishment of dedicated consultations, such as those organised within [the network of «Prévenir» platforms, which assess environmental exposures in couples experiencing difficulties conceiving and provide them with advice on reducing their exposure to environmental contaminants](#).

She emphasises the need for the industry to take proactive measures in reducing the population's exposure by substituting hazardous substances in their products with safer alternatives.

A comprehensive evaluation of the current status of the national strategy [SNPE2](#) will be conducted this year, leading to the formulation of recommendations for the next five years, including prioritising preventive measures, promoting best practices, and fostering new partnerships with regional and local representatives. She underscores the importance of collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders across different European countries.



Photo credit: Abdesslam Mirdass (Ville de Strasbourg)

From left to right: Alexandre FELTZ, Jeanne BARSEGHIAN, André CICOLELLA, Heidrun FAMMLER, Sandra JEN

### **Jeanne BARSEGHIAN, Mayor of Strasbourg, France**

Welcomes the assembly and the speakers, expressing her pleasure in attending this symposium. She thanks the Deputy Minister for her video intervention.

In a period marked by successive crises and societal upheavals that directly impact the daily lives of citizens and question lifestyles, the Mayor's role is to protect the residents while keeping in mind a clear vision of what the city of tomorrow should look like.

Given the public health and social justice challenges highlighted by the fact that vulnerable populations often face multiple factors of vulnerability, action must focus on combating medical deserts and ensuring access to healthcare. It also involves integrating prevention, health, and particularly environmental health, into the policies pursued for everyone.

It took more than thirty years for human exposure to chemical substances to become a prominent topic of public debate and for studies to confirm their harmful effects on health, especially on the hormonal system. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the work of organisations like Réseau Environnement Santé, which have made it impossible to deny these problems. EDCs are now widely recognised as systemic issues that demand concrete actions to prevent exposure to chemical substances at the source. Awareness is growing, and progress is being made at the European level with the reform of the [REACH regulation](#) or [zero-pollution objective](#) of the European Green Deal. However, each individual must make this issue a priority on their own scale, especially considering that solutions exist and are known.

For many years, Strasbourg has been a pioneer in putting environmental health at the forefront of its various public policies. [The city signed the VTSPE Charter from RES in 2018](#). Additionally, [the municipality co-leads the Endocrine Disruptor group of the French network of health cities affiliated with the World Health Organisation \(RfVS-OMS\)](#). These environmental health issues are [also integrated into the city's Climate Plan](#), encompassing air and water quality, greening of public spaces, and reduction of noise exposure, among other aspects.

These issues are at the core of the new [Local Health Contract \(CLS\)](#), which will soon be submitted to the Municipal Council. In the field of food, the city collaborates with the Chamber of Agriculture and Bio Grand Est to improve the quality of food products, ensure access for all to these quality products, promote short supply chains, and highlight farmers who do not use or significantly reduce the use of chemical products.

[The city also considers these issues in its public procurement](#), particularly in school catering, [aiming for 100% plastic-free food containers in school canteens](#). Moreover, a guide for kindergartens without endocrine-disrupting chemicals has been published. In parallel, [the LUMIEAU project has not only identified pollutants in drinking water but also worked on best practices to disseminate among the population](#).

Finally, thanks to the work of Alexandre FELTZ and all the teams involved, the city has embarked on the experimentation of [the «Green Prescription» program \(Ordonnance Verte\)](#). This initiative aims to provide pregnant women in the Strasbourg area with access to awareness workshops on endocrine-disrupting chemicals and their impacts on their health and the health of their future child. It also provides organic products to encourage healthy practices. The objective is to create a virtuous circle within the family unit and their environment, benefiting organic farmers by stimulating new outlets for their locally produced goods.

The Municipality hopes that this successful initiative will encourage national and European public actors to support its systematic implementation across all territories, including financial support. In conclusion, the Mayor emphasises that this advocacy must be carried out at all levels, from grassroots to the highest levels, and to ensure its effectiveness. She firmly believes that this symposium will contribute to the cause, and the establishment of an alliance of cities and territories without endocrine-disrupting chemicals will be a major support in shaping these policies. The Mayor expresses her gratitude to the partners of the triennial contract Agora Strasbourg Capitale européenne for their support and funding.

#### **Dr. Alexandre FELTZ, City Council member in charge of public health and environmental health, City and Eurometropolis of Strasbourg, France**

Welcomes the elected representatives from France, and from other European cities for their involvement in these topics. He highlights the participation of health insurance authorities as evidence of political commitment to the issue. He points out that various forms of cancer can be attributed to EDCs, and environmental factors are contributing to the increasing incidence of breast cancer among young women.

[The Green Prescription program has reached approximately 800 pregnant women](#), surpassing the typical success rate of 10% to 20% seen in many projects within just a few months. The objective is to extend the program to half of the pregnant women in the area. This initiative goes beyond pregnant women and includes whole families, leading to the creation of numerous new professional activities. The project is expected to continue for at least the next three years.

With more than 20 million people suffering from chronic diseases, investment in prevention is necessary, as public health systems will be unable to cope with the consequences otherwise.





From left to right: Alexandre FELTZ, Jeanne BARSEGHIAN, André CIOLELLA, Heidrun FAMMLER, Sandra JEN

## Introduction: why this symposium?

### André CIOLELLA, President, Réseau Environnement Santé, France

Emphasised that Alexandre FELTZ's intervention encapsulates the very essence of this symposium. The Réseau Environnement Santé (Environmental Health Network) has always aimed to place the issue of environmental health at the forefront of public debate.

RES first campaign, launched in 2009, started with convincing local authorities of the City of Paris to avoid using baby bottles containing Bisphenol A (BPA). This first local step then resulted in the Senate's decision to ban BPA baby bottles in 2010, followed by a European Union-wide ban later that year. Subsequently, there was unanimous support from both deputies and senators to extend this ban to all other food containers.

Although a decision by the European Court of Justice clumsily overturned the French ban of BPA in food containers, the message was understood, and the momentum was set in motion. However, [it was not until 2023 that the BPA standard was lowered by a factor of 20 000](#) (instead of the initially planned 100 000), effectively leading to its prohibition.

In 2014, [the National Strategy on Endocrine Disruptors \(SNPE\)](#) was initiated, and its third phase is currently being prepared, with the objective of reducing population exposure.

This was followed by the launch by RES of [the Charter of Commitment for EDC-Free Cities and Territories \(VTSPE Charter\)](#), which seeks maximum involvement from local authorities and the population through the community and association movements.

All of this demonstrates the importance of grassroots action in raising awareness. [The VTSPE Charter](#) does not serve as a label but rather materialises the commitment of local authorities to a comprehensive approach involving awareness, communication, and experience sharing.

This approach was well understood and [mentioned by the European Committee of the Regions in 2019](#), followed by [the European Parliament in 2020, which called on the Commission to support the creation of a European network of EDC-Free cities](#).

[This initiative aligns with the European Commission's roadmap](#), which aims to ban major endocrine disruptors by 2030 and requires the mobilisation of society. [The Green Deal sets even more ambitious goals, aiming for a toxic-free environment by 2050](#).

He concludes his introductory statement by quoting the maxim «*Quid leges sine moribus*» from Cicero, emphasising that laws and sanctions are powerless to govern society harmoniously unless individuals have been educated about the principles underlying those laws. The approach to reducing exposure to endocrine disruptors requires not only regulations but also societal engagement, representing the core challenge for the years to come.

### **Heidrun FAMMLER, Chief Executive, BEF Germany**

Expresses her deep honour to participate in this symposium and collaborate with Réseau Environnement Santé and EDC-Free Europe. She emphasises the importance of involving Members of the European Parliament, elected representatives, administrations, NGOs, and civil society to underscore the significance of local actions and actors in reducing the risks to public health and the environment associated with the daily consumption and use of products containing harmful substances.

[Introduces Bef, the Baltic Environmental Forum](#), a NGO group with offices in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Germany. Several projects in the Baltic Sea region have shed light on the dangers posed by hazardous substances that find their way into the Baltic Sea through sewage systems. A wide variety of everyday products, such as cosmetics, cleaning products, textiles, furniture, and toys, contain environmentally harmful and health-threatening substances that accumulate in both nature and the human body.

While significant progress has been made in understanding the impacts of these products, knowledge in this area remains insufficient. It is essential to develop regulations and control measures while taking localised action. [The NonHazCity project aims to detoxify water in urban areas and demonstrate alternative management approaches that involve all urban actors, rather than investing in complex and costly technologies](#).

NonHazCity assigns key roles to cities, businesses, and households, illustrating that all these actors can play a part and change their habits regarding hazardous substances. The NonHazCity network has embraced the principle stated by G. Söderholm from the Stockholm Environment Administration, which asserts that «*Cities can do more than nations to reduce exposure to hazardous substances*». By identifying the sources of dangerous products, it is indeed possible to reduce water pollution. Cities can set objectives in this regard for themselves, as well as for residents and businesses, underscoring their crucial role in managing hazardous substances.

The approach's philosophy is guided by the understanding that cities have several key roles, including incorporating chemical-related criteria into public procurement tenders and making them mandatory for all entities. This involves substituting all products containing chemical substances with non-toxic alternatives. It is also vital to explicitly address the issue of hazardous substances at all levels, including the development of standards, incentive measures, and the allocation of subsidies.

In conclusion, Heidrun FAMMLER firmly asserts her conviction that it is entirely possible to eliminate these harmful substances.



## [Panel 1]: State of play to strengthen EU regulations on EDCs and necessary complementary actions at (sub)national level



From left to right: Christelle LEHRY Arne JAMTROT, Sandra JEN, Jordane WODLI, MEP Jutta PAULUS



From left to right: Arne JAMTROT, Sandra JEN, Jordane WODLI

### Sandra JEN, Coordinator, EDC-Free Europe Coalition

Explains that [the EDC-Free Europe campaign brings together more than 70 NGOs](#) in the fields of health and environment protection, women's rights, and consumer rights. They are dedicated to safeguarding against EDCs, raising awareness, and urging local authorities to take prompt action based on scientific knowledge to protect against exposure to these harmful substances. The coalition's focus on endocrine-disrupting chemicals is due to [the well-established impact of even small doses](#), making actions at all levels crucial. [Reminds that the estimated annual health costs of exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals amount to at least €163 billion in Europe alone.](#)

As the moderator, she warmly welcomes the panel members and introduces each of them for their opening statements, fostering a dynamic and engaging discussion to exchange diverse perspectives on the topic.



**Jutta PAULUS, Member of the European Parliament, Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI), Greens/European Free Alliance, Germany**

Following up on the [European Parliament resolution of 10 July 2020 on the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability \(2020/2531\(RSP\)\)](#), MEP Jutta PAULUS highlights the symposium's importance in raising awareness about these highly hazardous substances. She notes that toxicologists have long neglected them due to their minimal concentrations in the microgram or nanogram range. This oversight has contributed to the delayed recognition of endocrine-disrupting substances.

[References a plenary exchange during the week on PFAS contamination in Europe and The Forever Pollution Project](#), which received significant contributions from all political parties. The project, the result of years of journalistic research, uncovered over 17,000 polluted sites across Europe contaminated with PFAS, known as «forever chemicals». Studies have detected concentrations of these chemicals above safe levels in the blood of a quarter of young individuals. This alarming revelation emphasises the urgent need to address the issue. As an MEP, her role involves championing ambitious and enforceable legislation. The European Commission's Directorate General for the Environment and the Directorate General «Grow» are currently working on revising the REACH regulation, and MEPs hope to receive the proposal before summer to ensure a seamless legislative process beyond 2024.

Notes the existence of a robust network of cities actively addressing these chemicals and [suggests leveraging the experience gained from initiatives like the Covenant of Mayors for climate and energy](#). This strong network fosters information sharing and the dissemination of best practices. In addition to cities focusing on public procurement, they could engage with local businesses involved in the production and sale of products. She cites examples of German cities joining the Cities for Biodiversity Network, which extends beyond conventional interactions with specific businesses and encourages voluntary awareness-raising efforts to ensure widespread understanding of the issues. MEP Jutta PAULUS believes that public awareness of chemical concerns has grown in recent years due to scandals and media attention. Placing these issues on cities' agendas can significantly impact change. She stresses that legislation in Brussels requires collective efforts for effective enforcement. Member States and their citizens need to support it fully. Engaging in discussions with people, proposing possible changes, and encouraging questions can prompt businesses to take action, marking the first step toward change.

**Sandra JEN, Coordinator, EDC-Free Europe Coalition**

Expresses gratitude to MEP Jutta PAULUS for her encouraging and hopeful message, emphasising the individual power of each citizen, along with NGOs and local cities, in driving the implementation of these changes. Hopes that these developments will lead to an environment free from toxic substances. Trusts the commitment of all MEPs involved in this movement.

**Jordane WODLI, Sustainable Chemicals Unit, DG ENV, European Commission, EU**

The EU legislative framework is currently undergoing major changes, starting with the Green Deal and the [Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability](#).

Highlights the ongoing legislative changes in the field of chemical products and the significant progress achieved so far. [The new criteria adopted in December 2022 for the identification of endocrine disruptors \(EDs\) in the regulation on classification, labelling, and packaging \(CLP\), which was voted on in December 2022, have come into force on April 20<sup>th</sup>](#).

These criteria are intended to apply to all sector-specific regulations (pesticides, biocides, REACH, cosmetics, etc.). Endocrine disruptors are now identified in a unified nomenclature comprising two levels of hazard, addressing both human health and the environment.

Furthermore, the adoption of the REACH regulation, planned for the fourth quarter of 2023 according to the work program, although intensive discussions have been initiated to speed up the process, will encompass three main aspects concerning endocrine disruptors:

- The first aspect pertains to *data requirements*, specifically the information that manufacturers are obligated to provide regarding substances prior to their market placement. The initial phase involves requesting manufacturers to conduct tests to determine whether the substances in question exhibit endocrine-disrupting properties. Subsequently, the obtained results are submitted to the [European Chemicals Agency \(ECHA\)](#) located in Helsinki, which has the authority to request additional tests in case any issues arise.

- The second aspect pertains to the classification of endocrine disruptors as substances of very high concern (SVHCs), as they are not currently directly classified as such under Article 57(f) of the REACH regulation. The aim of the regulation is to address this issue by enabling a more direct identification and categorisation of endocrine disruptors as SVHCs. This will facilitate the implementation of further measures under the REACH regulation.
- The third approach involves the "*generic approach to risk management*" expanding the existing system for carcinogenic and reprotoxic products to include EDCs.

Additionally, discussions are guided by the cross-cutting principle of "*one substance, one assessment*," which aims to strengthen collaboration among different agencies, allowing them to share their expertise and reach a common opinion on a given substance. This collaboration aims to avoid delays and discrepancies that complicate regulatory decision-making.

Moreover, [the EU will propose the adoption of the established criteria for the classification of endocrine disruptors on an international scale within the framework of the United Nations' Global Harmonization System \(UN-GHS\)](#). This effort, initiated in 2023, will take several years to complete, with the goal of achieving globally harmonized hazard classes.

Furthermore, [the EU is currently working on an export ban, ensuring that hazardous chemicals prohibited in the European Union are not produced for the purpose of export](#). A proposal in this regard is expected to be formulated in 2024.

Finally, [mention is made of the next European Stakeholder Forum on endocrine disruptors, which will be held in Brussels on October 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> 2023](#). The program is currently being developed, and a part of this forum will most certainly be focused on synergies at the European level.

#### **Sandra JEN, Coordinator, EDC-Free Europe Coalition**

Invites questions from the audience for Jutta PAULUS, who needs to leave the session due to scheduling constraints, or for Jordane WODLI.

#### **Dr Marike KOLOSSA-GEHRING, Head of section toxicology at the German Environment Agency (UBA)**

Asks how Jutta PAULUS envisions the role of the industrial sector in reducing population exposure and whether there are any examples of industry initiatives supporting the communication of local or regional initiatives to the population.

#### **Jutta PAULUS, Member of the European Parliament, Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI), Greens/European Free Alliance, Germany**

The industrial sector has a dual role. It must not only comply with current legislation but also anticipate substances that are likely to be restricted due to their hazardous properties. This anticipation is necessary because the process of restricting the use of dangerous substances can be slow. The European Commission is currently taking a group approach in the revision of the REACH regulation, considering the large number of substances involved.

Several NGOs have been examining dossiers presented to the European Chemical Agency as part of the REACH process, to highlight problematic substances and the issues they pose based on publicly available data on their properties. This collaborative effort allows for the identification of these substances and their inclusion in a list of products for which substitution is highly desirable even before their usage is officially banned, in order to encourage companies to make a rapid switch. In this regard, the European Chemical Agency plays a crucial role in the REACH process, where NGOs and other stakeholders provide valuable input regarding problematic substances. ChemSec has made a major effort in this regard with [the SIN list \(Substitute It Now!\)](#), which conveys a positive message to the industry, emphasising the best interest for the industry is to phase out these substances before it becomes obligatory.

Furthermore, artificial intelligence could be utilised to thoroughly assess the properties of the vast number of existing substances, identifying those that may pose a potential danger to human health and the environment. This integration of artificial intelligence, along with quantitative structure-activity relationship (QSAR) models, has the potential to be a game-changer.

It is concerning that, until recently, university chemistry studies have not included any teachings on the design of non-toxic molecules and products. Urgent action is required in this area.

**Soraya OULDJI, City Council member in charge of early childhood, Strasbourg**

Inquired about potential measures at the European level to address pollutants in drinking water, specifically hormone by-products from contraceptives.

**Jordane WODLI, Sustainable Chemicals Unit, DG ENV, European Commission, EU**

Clarified that this matter falls outside his area of responsibility. However, he assured that he would provide the relevant contact information for the appropriate services.

**Sandra JEN, Coordinator, EDC-Free Europe Coalition**

Acknowledged the question and assured that they would [ensure a response regarding the contamination of drinking water](#). She highlighted that [the relevant legislation is currently undergoing revision, and the process is being closely monitored by the coalition partners of EDC-Free Europe](#).

**Arne JAMTROT, Head of unit of the Chemicals centre Environment and Health Department, City of Stockholm, Sweden**

[Draws attention to the SIN List \(Substitute It Now!\) established by ChemSec](#), which signals future restrictions and exerts pressure on economic actors.

Legislation also plays a crucial role in information sharing and the right to know. Access to knowledge about the effects of substances and the composition of products is essential for advising citizens and enabling informed choices. This is a key aspect of the REACH regulation.

He further emphasises the role of public procurement regulations in reducing exposure to hazardous substances. Ecological rules in this regard can provide a framework for applying requirements that go beyond legislative restrictions when dealing with suppliers. A regulation on construction materials is currently being developed to go beyond existing strict prohibitions.

Insists on the concept of *leadership* beyond regulations. [The 16 objectives set by Sweden in 1999 to achieve a non-toxic environment have had a significant impact on environmental management in public procurement and industry, indirectly benefiting consumers as well. The EU Chemicals Strategy of October 2020 shares the same overarching goal of achieving a non-toxic environment](#). Cooperation at all levels is crucial to reach this common objective.

[The City of Stockholm has used these objectives as a basis for its environmental program since 2012](#). To address the numerous questions raised by the interim targets for reducing the use of hazardous substances, [a structured Chemicals Action Plan was adopted in 2014 to work towards a non-toxic Stockholm](#). This objective was also integrated into [the second edition of the program launched in 2019](#) and will continue to guide the upcoming program.

**Sandra JEN, Coordinator, EDC-Free Europe Coalition**

Points out the importance of national leadership, exemplified by the 16 objectives set by Sweden in 1999, which have facilitated the action of the City of Stockholm. She also underscores the significance of European regulations, particularly in the realm of “*the right to know*”, which is central to the REACH regulation and [the LIFE AskREACH project](#). Finally, she notes that this example demonstrates concretely that it is possible for states and local authorities to go beyond European regulations.

**Christelle LEHRY, Regional Councillor and Vice-Chair of the Environment Committee, Grand Est Region, France**

Explains that regional decision-makers have a responsibility to present credible alternatives to citizens. This goes beyond questioning lifestyles and modes of production, it also involves supporting concrete and economically feasible transformations, including in the agriculture sector.

The Grand Est region is the only region in France that has established an environmental budget and has [obtained the European label LIFE for its Biodiv'Est program](#). This program is implemented through various initiatives, including the creation or expansion of ten reserves, environmental education for professionals and elected officials, projects related to agriculture, the renovation of schools using low-impact, water-efficient bio-based products, support for decarbonising businesses, and [the ADAGE program promoting sustainable food practices in schools](#), which aims for one-third of organic products and two-thirds of local products in school canteens.



As Chair of [APRONA](#), an association to protect groundwater in Alsace, Christelle LEHRY reflects on the various actions taken to protect water.

She highlights the implementation of solution contracts between 2018 and 2022 to significantly reduce agricultural pollution of groundwater, [following the ERMES program launched in 2016 in collaboration with the Region, the Water Agency, and German and Swiss partners](#). This program aimed to identify pollutants in groundwater. The success of the operation near the 19 most polluted water catchment points in Alsace led to extending the approach to 40 catchments with the goal of improving the overall quality of the aquifer's groundwater.

To go further, it is now important to identify solutions to combat water pollution by PFAS, which are found in certain textiles (such as waterproof materials) or utensils (such as Teflon-coated pans) and cannot currently be filtered by wastewater treatment plants.

She is pleased that APRONA has obtained the approval of the European Union for its second INTERREG program, through which they intend to identify all pollutants present in the water.

Finally, APRONA is working with local authorities to find ways to reduce or even prohibit the use of pesticides and herbicides by municipalities.

**Sandra JEN, Coordinator, EDC-Free Europe Coalition**

The speaker is thanked for providing practical examples.

**Nathalie FERRAND-LEFRANC, Réseau Environnement Santé Occitanie, Dentist**

Asks if there is a regulation on the substances dentists use in their patients' mouths, where the exact composition is unknown because of industrial secrecy.

**Jordane WODLI, Sustainable Chemicals Unit, DG ENV, European Commission, EU**

Explains that they are aware there is a problem, which is sometimes justified for competitive reasons but there is a need for the competent authorities to be given the information. "*One substance – one assessment*" includes the call for the introduction of a data-sharing platform to centralise the information, whether dental materials or those in contact with food. This information can then be given to the authorities that need it to make a full assessment. It is much more complicated to provide this information to the general public.

**Sandra JEN, Coordinator, EDC-Free Europe Coalition**

Asks the panel members to suggest actions that could facilitate synergies.

**Christelle LEHRY, Regional Councillor and Vice-Chair of the Environment Committee, Grand Est Region, France**

Recommends harmonising pollution thresholds at the European level, referring to the differences observed in the [ERMES cross-border project \(Developments in water resources and monitoring of groundwater in the Upper Rhine region\)](#) between France, Switzerland, and Germany.

**Arne JAMTROT, Head of unit of the Chemicals centre Environment and Health Department, City of Stockholm, Sweden**

Recommends providing more information about the chemical contents of products.

**Jordane WODLI, Sustainable Chemicals Unit, DG ENV, European Commission, EU**

Emphasises the core objective of the European Commission's Stakeholder Forum, which is to bring people together for networking and sharing information. The Forum aims to foster collaboration and facilitate a better understanding of who is working on what, with what information and data. Additionally, the forum seeks to provide more training opportunities for professionals and consumers alike. He notes that there is often a lack of awareness about the existing initiatives and actions, so fostering more synergies among stakeholders would be highly valuable in driving progress forward.

## [Panel 2] Prevention and protection: focus on non-persistent endocrine disruptors



Photo credit: RES / BEF DE / EDC-Free Europe

From left to right: Sandrine JOUAN, André CIOLELLA, Aleksandra RUTKOWSKA

### **André CIOLELLA, President, Réseau Environnement Santé, France**

Begins by apologising for the absence of Pr Anne-Simone PARENT. However, Dr Aleksandra RUTKOWSKA will be presenting the viewpoint of the Polish Society of Endocrinology.

He highlights the importance of focusing specifically on non-persistent endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) such as bisphenols, phthalates, and parabens. The significance lies in the fact that action can be taken and relatively quick results can be achieved in addressing adult diseases, which are often the consequence of exposures during pregnancy, as well as childhood diseases.

[A major study published in JAMA Pediatrics concludes that a 50% reduction in phthalate exposure for pregnant women leads to a 12% decrease in the number of premature births. In France alone, this reduction would amount to 7 200 cases annually.](#) Furthermore, a 90% reduction in contamination by these substances could even result in a 35% reduction in preterm births.

Due to the rapid elimination of these non-persistent substances from the body, favourable beneficial effects can be obtained in the short term by removing them from products that contain them, such as [cosmetics, plastics, and ultra-processed foods.](#)

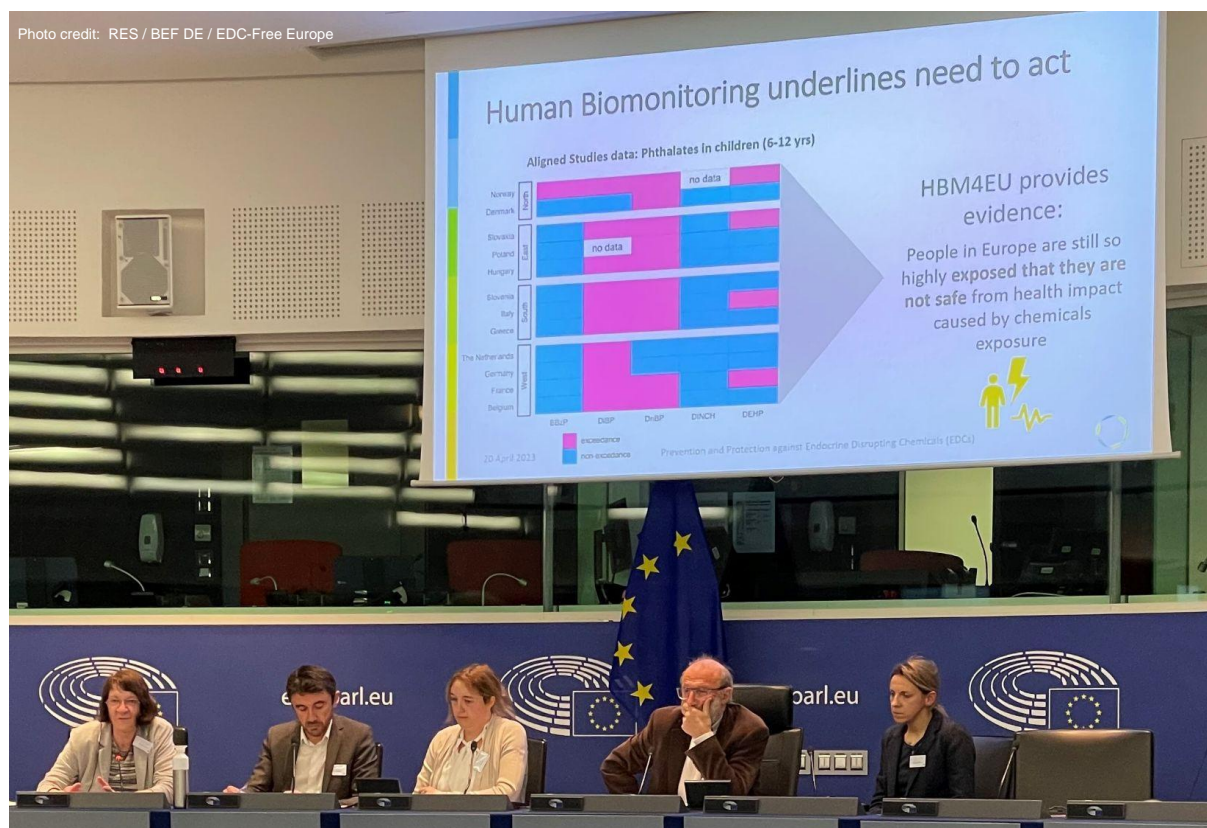
### **Dr Marike KOLOSSA-GEHRING, HBM4EU coordinator, Head of section toxicology at the German Environment Agency (UBA)**

Presents the achievements of the European Human Biomonitoring Initiative ([HBM4EU](#)), which brings together over 100 institutions from 30 countries. The network's objective is to bridge the gap between scientific research and the political sphere. They have successfully provided policymakers with rapid access to results and data on 18 priority substances. She illustrates the example of reproductive toxic phthalates to highlight that despite strengthened regulations, many people still remain exposed to these substances.

This indicates the need for knowledge dissemination, public awareness, behaviour change, and the replacement of old objects, particularly toys, that still contain hazardous substances with safer alternatives. Studies conducted by [HBM4EU](#) also reveal significant variations in exposure levels to reproductive toxic phthalates across European countries, demonstrating the necessity of comprehensive biomonitoring throughout Europe. This also emphasises the crucial role of communication by states to their citizens.

In addition to endocrine disruptors, the [HBM4EU](#) network has also focused on carcinogenic substances, including certain hydrocarbons. The research has shown the excessive risk of developing cancer due to exposure to perfluorinated hydrocarbons and the overall high exposure to these compounds across Europe. Therefore, stronger restrictions on the use of these substances are necessary. However, the evaluation of the effects of exposure to mixtures of substances remains insufficient.

In conclusion, KOLOSSA-GEHRING asserts that the HBM4EU approach has been an undeniable success. It has addressed numerous crucial questions necessary for the development and implementation of effective policies. The network has produced and provided policymakers and citizens with harmonized data that cannot be contested. Moving forward, it is important to continue this effort within the framework of the Partnership for the Assessment of Risks from Chemicals (PARC) program. Over the next years, PARC aims to generate more extensive exposure data throughout Europe to protect citizens and the environment from chemical pollution.



From left to right: Marika KOLOSSA-GEHRING, Yann WEHLING, Sandrine JOUAN, André CIOLELLA, Aleksandra RUTKOWSKA

**André CIOLELLA, President, Réseau Environnement Santé, France**

Emphasises the importance of proving exposure and health data at all levels, including local data, to enable comparisons and inform decision-making in public policies, including locally.

**Dr Aleksandra RUTKOWSKA, Biotechnologist at the Medical University of Gdansk and member of the Polish Society of Endocrinology, Poland**

Stated that more than 30 years of science should lead to action and sincerely hopes that her presentation could inspire practical steps. Grounded in scientific research, her experience in the field of endocrine-disrupting compounds, and a comprehensive body of medical and scientific data, she conveyed the message that change is achievable.



Dr. RUTKOWSKA identified the pervasive issue of constant exposure to thousands of harmful substances, leading to an elevated risk of various lifestyle diseases. This predicament poses a significant challenge for the field of medicine, as a strong correlation exists between endocrine-disrupting compounds and diseases such as obesity, cancers, infertility, atherosclerosis, and Type 2 diabetes, among others, which continue to escalate.

The majority of these substances mimic the normal female hormonal system, potentially heightening the risk of metabolic and reproductive disruptions. The intricate pathways and mechanisms through which toxic substances impact biochemical, metabolic, and genetic levels contribute to the increased risk of diverse diseases.

The need for protection extends to everyone, but it is particularly crucial for vulnerable groups. The prenatal, pregnancy and early childhood are the most crucial periods of concern, as these substances can impede foetal development and elevate the risk of various diseases during the first years or even decades later (*latency*). Animal studies reveal the most perilous aspect to be the potential for these compounds to increase the risk of epigenetic changes in DNA, thereby amplifying the likelihood of developing lifestyle diseases associated with gene expression.

The data unequivocally establishes the heritability of these epigenetic changes, illustrating how our present actions can profoundly impact the next three generations. Taking immediate action can shield future generations from the most severe diseases.

Encouragingly, numerous studies provide hope by demonstrating the feasibility of reducing exposure and, consequently, mitigating the risk of severe lifestyle-related diseases.

To illustrate the effectiveness of preventive actions, she gave the example of a pilot intervention study, carried out in Gdansk within the framework of NonHazCity, [using urine tests that showed a decrease in exposure following simple behavioural changes in daily life](#). After just six months, the concentrations of phthalates and bisphenol in the urine of a significant portion of the participants involved were halved. [The NonHazCity program further demonstrates that small changes in everyday life can lead to significant benefits](#).

These promising results demonstrate that modest behaviour changes can have very positive effects on a large population as well as the environment, for both current and future generations. Therefore, she calls for immediate action in response to these findings.

**André CIOLELLA, President, Réseau Environnement Santé, France**

Underlines that scientific evidence supports the assertion that small daily changes can yield significant benefits.

**Sandrine JOUAN, Senior regulatory toxicologist and coordinator of the Belgian national plan on EDCs (NAPED), SPF Public Health, Belgium**

Reports [that the National Action Plan on Endocrine Disruptors \(NAPED\)](#), adopted in June 2022, draws inspiration from initiatives implemented in other countries. It aims to complement the actions taken at the European level by implementing national-scale measures, thereby accelerating the consideration of issues related to exposure to endocrine disruptors in Belgium.

The development of this plan required intense discussions over a period of two and a half years, involving the federal government, three regions, three communities, ten provinces, 589 municipalities, and various stakeholders already committed to protecting the population from endocrine disruptors.

While this lengthy dialogue phase was necessary, it had the advantage of ensuring that the perspectives of all parties were heard and taken into account in advance. This, in turn, streamlined the implementation of the selected actions by clarifying the roles of each stakeholder within the overall strategy.

The action plan is built upon three major pillars, with the primary objective of addressing the lag in Belgium compared to France in terms of prevention and public awareness regarding endocrine disruptors. These foundational efforts are crucial before additional actions can be undertaken. The key target audiences include competent authorities, healthcare professionals (with a specific focus on encouraging universities to incorporate health-environment modules into healthcare curricula), workers, consumers, and vulnerable populations, particularly pregnant women and children.

## André CIOLELLA, President, Réseau Environnement Santé, France

Suggests that lessons can be learned in France from the consultation process conducted in Belgium to achieve consensus. He highlights, for example, that the world of work remains largely disconnected from the progress made in recent years. The occupational exposure limits are still based on standards from the 1950s, and the exposure of fetuses carried by pregnant workers is not adequately considered



From left to right: Marike KOLOSSA-GEHRING, Yann WEHLING, Sandrine JOUAN, André CIOLELLA, Aleksandra RUTKOWSKA

## Yann WEHLING, Vice-President in charge of the Ecological Transition, Climate and Biodiversity, Île-de-France Region, France

Explains [that the Ile-de-France Region was the first to sign the Charter “Villes et Territoires Sans Perturbateurs Endocriniens” in 2018](#). Since then, several actions have been undertaken to fulfil the commitments of the charter.

One of the key initiatives is the integration of the REACH standard into many public procurement processes for equipment. The region has also been gradually implementing organic food in school canteens and striving for plastic-free collective catering in high schools and in the Regional headquarters. Information and training sessions have been organised for the civil service personnel in charge of cleaning the Regional headquarters to raise awareness about the risks associated with endocrine disruptors.

[To provide information and studies on endocrine disruptors, the region has established an information portal linked to the Regional Health Observatory \(ORS\).](#)

Additionally, [the region has undertaken efforts to raise awareness among high school students through the PELIF project](#). The decision to target high school students is based on the fact that the region manages these educational institutions and recognises that students are the parents and decision-makers of the future.

[The PELIF project consists of raising awareness using biomonitoring](#), presenting the results, and organising workshops to provide advice on reducing daily exposures. By wearing silicone wristbands, students' exposure to 20 out of 24 tested substances was identified in their various living environments. Phthalates were detected in over 99% of students, while triclosan, fipronil sulfone, and permethrin were found in 70%, 65%, and 100% of students, respectively.

There were also differences in exposure between boys and girls, with girls being more exposed to phthalates due to their greater use of cosmetics. Factors such as lack of ventilation, the presence of PVC floors in homes, and the frequency of cosmetic, hygiene, deodorant, and perfume use were identified as contributors to exposure.

Overall, this experience raised awareness among high school students about their exposure to endocrine disruptors, of which many were previously unaware.. It helped them understand the potential impact on their future children and encouraged them to make lifestyle choices that would protect themselves and future generations. The project is further extended in a second phase, involving around 2,000 students from approximately 30 high schools, focusing on nine phthalates.

Yann WEHLING also emphasises the impact of raising awareness among parents through their high school children, further expanding the positive outcomes of this initiative.

## [Panel 3] Local actions, learnings from the Baltic Interreg project NonHazCity



From left to right: Heidrun FAMMLER, Lisa KERN, Esa NIKUNEN, Mairita LÜSE, Véronique BERTHOLLE, Arne JAMTROT

**Véronique BERTHOLLE, City Council member in charge of cross-border, European and international relations, City of Strasbourg, France**

Opened the panel by showing the map of persistent pollutants previously mentioned by MEP Jutta PAULUS, which provides a glimpse into the extent of PFAS pollution in Europe. These everlasting pollutants are omnipresent in the environment.

Quotes Ian Cousins, a professor of chemistry at Stockholm University “*humanity has rendered the Earth inhospitable for human life through irreversible pollution*”.

Despite being arguably the greatest environmental scandal of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the European Union has yet to ban them. However, debates on these persistent pollutants took place the day before within the walls of the European Parliament.

The panel of speakers in this roundtable will explore the possibilities of synergy and networking among local authorities in Europe, with a particular emphasis on ongoing initiatives in the Baltic region, specifically the NonHazCity3 program. As a first step, Arne JAMTROT will be invited to explain how he became involved in the development of the chemical action plan in Stockholm.

**Arne JAMTROT, Head of unit of the Chemicals centre Environment and Health Department, City of Stockholm, Sweden**

Explains that discussions on chemical issues on EDCs started locally in the 1990s and gained momentum with Sweden's national objectives set in 1999 to achieve a non-toxic environment. These objectives also sparked various other initiatives, such as the action plan prepared in 2010 by the Swedish Chemicals Agency, which aimed to create a non-toxic everyday environment with a focus on protecting children.

The action plan provided a detailed description of how national agencies could take action to protect children from chemical exposure in their daily lives through regulations, international cooperation, and public procurement. In parallel, the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation launched the «*Operation Non-Toxic Pre-Schools*» campaign in 2013, which involved analysing premises, furniture, kitchen utensils, and toys to identify hazardous substances.

After years of working on different actions and generating information about the presence of chemicals and pollutants in the urban environment, as well as providing knowledge about their origins to public officials and policymakers to raise awareness, the City of Stockholm adopted an environmental program in 2012. Interim targets had already been set to reduce the presence of hazardous substances, and these targets received significant attention and feedback, particularly regarding the specific actions required to achieve them.

To address these concerns, the City of Stockholm developed a “chemical action plan” that provided strategies for achieving the goal of a non-toxic environment. Concurrently, connections were established with other cities in the Baltic Sea region that were also interested in this topic. Due to local political authorities acting more quickly than the financing mechanisms of the European Union, national authorities have played a significant role in financing this plan.



**Véronique BERTHOLLE, City Council member in charge of cross-border, European and international relations, City of Strasbourg, France**

Asks Mairita LÜSE what the strategy is in Riga to reduce hazardous substances from different product groups, safeguard the aquatic environment, protect human life, and in the end, achieve more sustainable cities.



From left to right: Heidrun FAMMLER, Lisa KERN, Esa NIKUNEN, Mairita LÜSE, Véronique BERTHOLLE, Arne JAMTROT

**Mairita LÜSE, City Council member in charge of the working group on waste reduction and management, City of Riga, Latvia**

[The City of Riga is actively engaged in the NonHazCity project and is currently coordinating its third phase](#), which is in line with the city's climate and sustainable energy action plans.

Similar to Stockholm, [the City of Riga has adopted a chemical action plan](#), but unfortunately, it has not been effectively implemented despite its quality content. Therefore, revising and updating the plan to incorporate the latest knowledge on hazardous substances is a priority to ensure its practical implementation.

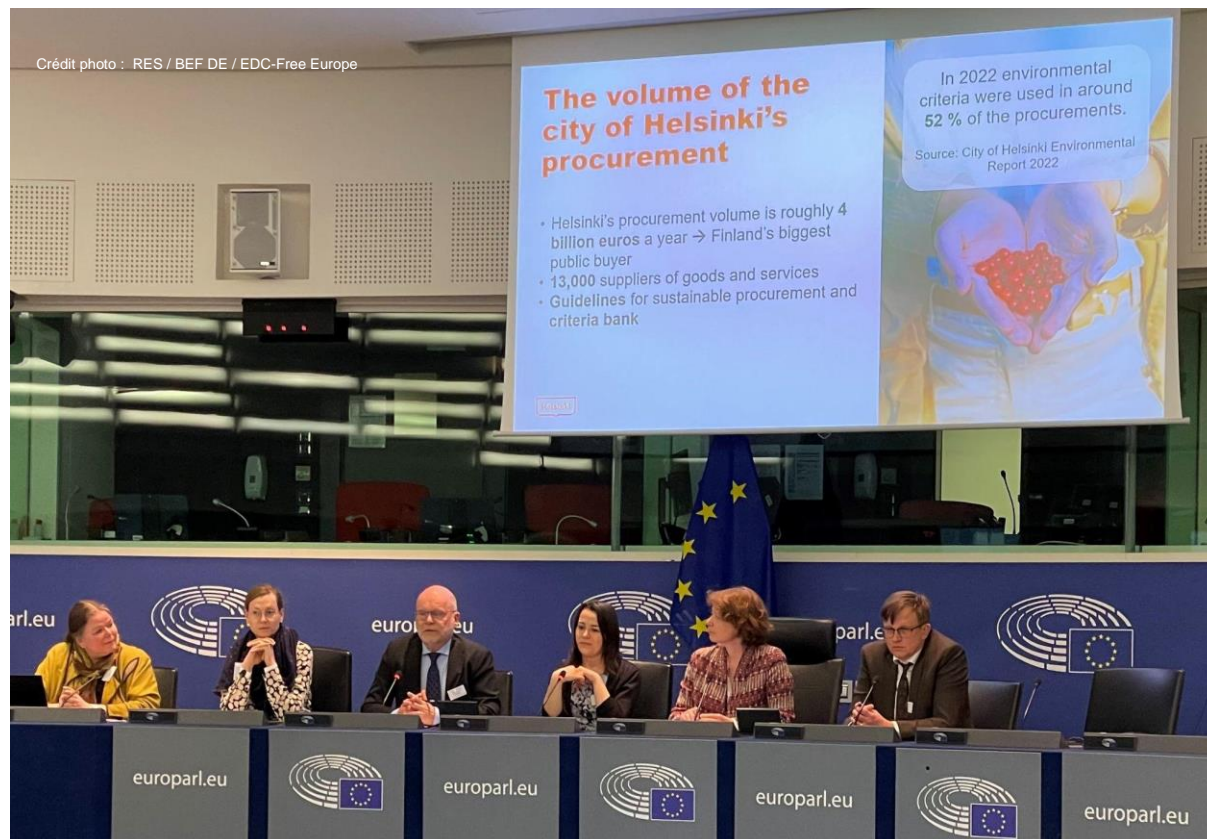
Riga's climate and sustainable energy action plan aims to be ambitious yet realistic for implementation. Through extensive discussions with various stakeholders, including NGOs and different sectors, transportation and construction with a focus on energy efficiency have been identified as the two main priorities of the plan.

Riga acknowledged that it was lagging behind in terms of energy efficiency and the increasing cost of energy further highlighted the importance of addressing this issue. Additionally, the city has established guidelines for public procurement in the construction sector, not only aiming for climate neutrality but also considering other objectives such as safety.

[The Ziepju Street 11 renovation project serves as an example of Riga's efforts to integrate various aspects, including circular economy, carbon neutrality, and chemical safety](#). However, achieving a balance among these objectives presents a significant challenge as some may intersect or clash. Nonetheless, the implementation of this project demonstrates the city's commitment to turning its action plans and objectives into tangible results.

**Véronique BERTHOLLE, City Council member in charge of cross-border, European and international relations, City of Strasbourg, France**

Asks Esa NIKUNEN how the municipality utilises procurement as a practical means to effectively manage the budget and expenses, and how this approach aligns with their contribution to the NonHazCity project.



From left to right: Heidrun FAMMLER, Lisa KERN, Esa NIKUNEN, Mairita LÜSE, Véronique BERTHOLLE, Arne JAMTROT

**Esa NIKUNEN, Director General of environment services, City of Helsinki, Finland**

Explains that he has worked on chemical issues for over 20 years and agrees with Arne JAMTROT's statement that municipalities can take effective and prompt action to reduce exposure to hazardous substances, such as endocrine disruptors. Due to their agility and responsiveness, cities can act faster than states or larger organisations.

Cities can take various actions to reduce exposure to hazardous chemicals, including restricting their use, promoting safer alternatives, creating databases on alternative substances, supporting research, and collaborating with other cities and NGOs. Projects funded by the European Union and other sources provide valuable resources and opportunities to connect with experts and organisations in different cities and countries. Building national and international networks is crucial for knowledge sharing and collective action.

Procurement plays a significant role in reducing exposure to hazardous substances. Helsinki, being Finland's largest public purchaser, spends approximately 4 billion euros annually on goods and services from around 13 000 suppliers.

[In 2022, environmental criteria were used in around 52 % of all of the procurements](#) of the City's divisions and public utilities. Guidelines for sustainable procurement and criteria bank are linked to environmental programs and plans. [Specific guidelines for smart chemical procurement were designed in the framework of the NonHazCity project.](#)

The City has prioritised the reduction of harmful chemicals in kindergarten and preschool environments by implementing measures through public procurement. The main measure was to increase the use of cleaning products with the Nordic or EU eco-label. Specific criteria have been published between 2020 and 2023 for the following product groups : [Detergents and Cleaning Services](#), [Outdoor Playground Equipment and Furniture](#), [Indoor Toys](#), [Indoor Furniture](#), textiles.

These measures contribute to reducing the use of hazardous substances, as current legislation may be insufficient to fully protect human health and the environment from endocrine disruptors and other hazardous chemicals.

**Véronique BERTHOLLE, City Council member in charge of cross-border, European and international relations, City of Strasbourg, France**

Reiterates the approach taken by local authorities and municipalities in France, where the emphasis is often placed on minimising expenditure and opting for the cheapest products, rather than considering how the money is spent to reduce harm.

She then invites Lisa KERN to provide insights into the efforts made by the city of Hamburg in protecting consumers from the impacts of hazardous substances.

**Lisa KERN, Member of the parliament of the City of Hamburg, Spokesperson for consumer protection for the green party at Hamburg, Germany**

Begins by expressing gratitude for the opportunity to participate in this symposium, despite Hamburg not yet being part of the NonHazCity network.

She explains that consumer protection in the state of Hamburg is based on three pillars, which also apply throughout Germany. The first pillar is the state parliament of Hamburg, responsible for legislation. They work towards implementing actions within the administration and also have authority over funding.

The Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection in the state of Hamburg represents the executive branch. Its role is particularly significant because the port of Hamburg serves as a major gateway for products from non-EU countries. Implementing legislation that effectively protects the population from chemical exposures would also extend this protection to all citizens of the European Union.

[The Verbraucherzentrale](#), a consumer association primarily funded by the city of Hamburg, plays a vital role in consumer awareness, information dissemination, and support. They also serve as a channel for conveying consumers' needs and desires to elected officials.

Lisa KERN highlights the obstacles to transparent consumer information regarding chemical substances, particularly the lack of transparency in labelling. She believes that relying solely on consumers to protect themselves from exposures to substances, including endocrine disruptors, is insufficient. Therefore, she emphasises the need to strengthen legislation at the European level, in addition to local actions.

This legislation should include not only a requirement to disclose all chemical substances used on product labels but also the establishment of a European label that clearly conveys this information in a manner easily understandable to consumers. She references the «*Blauer Engel*» (Blue Angel) label managed by the German Federal Environment Agency as a potential model.

In this context, the City of Hamburg is making efforts to address these concerns. They have identified and publicly disclosed local PFAS contaminations. Additionally, they have initiated consumer education and communication projects in schools, with the aim of having children share this information within their households and become informed consumers of the future.

The notion of consumer protection regarding chemical exposure is also integrated into public procurement processes. Hamburg is actively seeking to promote innovation in environmental protection through these initiatives.

**. Véronique BERTHOLLE, City Council member in charge of cross-border, European and international relations, City of Strasbourg, France**

Asks Heidrun FAMMLER about the strategies and approaches to transition from merely protecting consumers to empowering them to become informed consumers. How can a more proactive consumer attitude be promoted?

**Heidrun FAMMLER, Chief Executive, BEF Germany**

Emphasises the potential to reduce human body contamination by 50% simply through changes in consumption habits, resulting in a simultaneous reduction in emissions and personal exposure.



Recognising the need for a better understanding of everyday exposures and habits in order to take action, the initial NonHazCity project relied on a home-based exposure assessment tool called the « [Household Check](#) ». This approach involved offering citizens the opportunity to identify hazardous substances present in their homes, providing them with best practices and encouraging changes in consumption habits to minimise exposure. A follow-up visit was conducted several months later to assess the extent to which these habit changes had been integrated over time.

The initial inventory conducted on personal care and cosmetic products, cleaning agents, kitchen utensils, toys, textiles, interior accessories, sports equipment, and office furniture revealed the presence of 50 to 100 hazardous substances in most households.

The program was further extended and enhanced in Lithuania through the training of voluntary «ambassadors.» These ambassadors were equipped with the necessary knowledge to read product labels, enabling them to review not only the products in their own homes but also those in other households.

[To expand the program's reach throughout the European Union, the LIFE ChemBee project was launched](#), with Réseau Environnement Santé as the partner for France. This initiative aims to go even further in raising awareness and promoting action.

Anyone can become an ambassador and engage in assessing their own exposure, [using the Scan4Chem app to make informed purchasing decisions](#), and avoiding greenwashing by learning how to read labels. A guidebook in English, which will soon be translated into French, enables individuals to undertake this process in their own homes.

**Véronique BERTHOLLE, City Council member in charge of cross-border, European and international relations, City of Strasbourg, France**

Hopes that a chemical ambassador will be identified in Strasbourg soon.

**Mairita LÜSE, City Council member in charge of the working group on waste reduction and management, City of Riga, Latvia**

Fully agrees that the argument of reducing exposure by 50% with simple measures can help shift mindsets.

She shares that urine analyses in Sweden have revealed high contamination levels in an environmentally-conscious woman who worked in the TV industry, which exposed her to PVC and industrial cosmetics. This example highlights the importance of reading labels and making informed purchasing choices for self-protection. Mairita LÜSE advocates for legislative changes to ensure that products available on the market, including cosmetics and construction materials, do not contain harmful substances.

**Martine OTT, Medical Advisor in Indoor Environment at the University Hospitals of Strasbourg**

Raises the concern that PVC flooring is widely used in nurseries, schools, and hospitals. She asks how to identify PVC materials that do not release endocrine disruptors.

**Arne JAMTROT, Head of unit of the Chemicals centre Environment and Health Department, City of Stockholm, Sweden**

Explains that PVC floors produced before 2000 likely contain DEHP, which is now banned. Other phthalates were used between 2000 and 2010, and other endocrine disruptors like DiNP or DINCH are still employed. Sampling is the only reliable way to ensure the absence of endocrine disruptors.

**Sylvie PLATEL, Representative of WECF-France (Women Engage for a Common Future)**

Asks if the NonHazCity project considers focusing on the higher exposure of women, considering their greater use of cosmetics and their involvement in household chores.

**Lisa KERN, Member of the parliament of the City of Hamburg, Spokesperson for consumer protection for the green party at Hamburg, Germany**

Confirms the need for particular attention to women's exposure to endocrine disruptors. She highlights that women's consumption of cosmetics, engagement in household chores, and more time spent at home, a major exposure site, make them vulnerable. Targeting women for prevention and awareness is crucial, as they play a significant role in influencing their families' behaviours.

**Heidrun FAMMLER, Chief Executive, BEF Germany**

Mentions that Dr. Aleksandra RUTKOWSKA, the health advisor for [the LIFE ChemBee project](#), will soon launch a blog providing extensive information, in English and later translated by some project partners into various other languages.

**Lisa KERN, Member of the parliament of the City of Hamburg, Spokesperson for consumer protection for the green party at Hamburg, Germany**

Emphasises the importance of involving all stakeholders, including feminists and midwives, and promoting exchanges among women who are underrepresented in the scientific and political spheres.

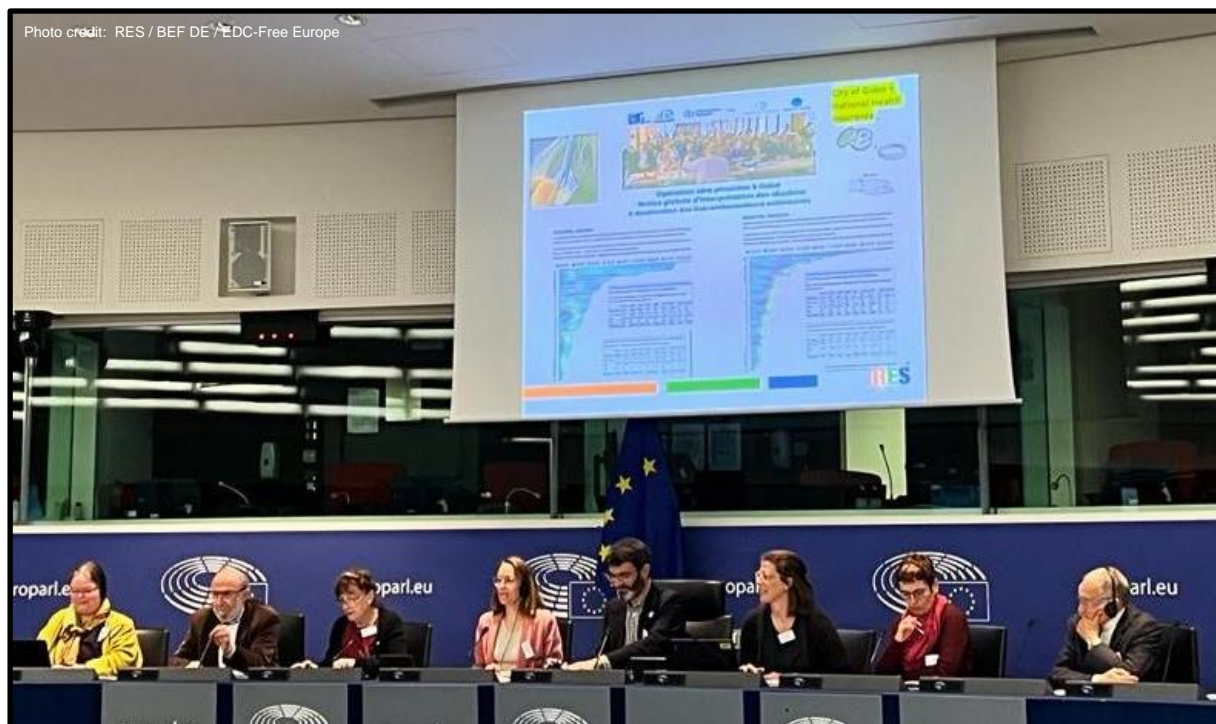
**Arne JAMTROT, Head of unit of the Chemicals centre Environment and Health Department, City of Stockholm, Sweden**

Points out that after talking to an audience including civil service personnel who run elderly homes, they suddenly realised that when it came to protecting the unborn child. Many of civil service personnel working in the homes were young women and the workplace itself is also part of the issue. While the elderly residents would not have long-term exposure, staff could have decades of daily exposure, so it is also important to protect the workers in those entities.

**Véronique BERTHOLLE, City Council member in charge of cross-border, European and international relations, City of Strasbourg, France**

Concludes by expressing hope that the various interventions have demonstrated the ability to identify and implement a wide range of actions at the local level in different European countries.

## [Panel 4] Local actions, learnings from 6 years of implementation of the EDC-Free Charter in France



From left to right: Heidrun FAMMLER, André CIOLELLA, Nadine RIVET, Ludivine QUINTALLET, Jean-François BRIDET, Céline De LAURENS, Pascale ROUILLARD-NEAU, Dr. Richard CHEMLA

### **Heidrun FAMMLER, Chief Executive, BEF Germany**

Introduces the speakers.

### **André CIOLELLA, President, Réseau Environnement Santé, France**

Stresses that [the Charter for Cities and Territories without Endocrine Disruptors](#) (*Charte Villes et Territoires Sans Perturbateurs Endocriniens*) has inspired a wide range of projects and actions.

However, he particularly highlights the significance of [«Operation Zero Phthalates» conducted in Guise, Aisne, which was funded by the Assurance Maladie \(State Health Insurance\)](#). In this operation, exposure analyses of «eco-ambassadors» were conducted using hair samples or silicone wristbands provided to them. The significant differences observed among individuals incidentally demonstrate that it is entirely possible to reduce one's own exposure to phthalates.

[Another similar project, called EXAPH, took place in Strasbourg with the support of the Regional Health Agency \(ARS\) Grand Est](#) and involved forty participants. The results measured after fifteen days revealed a 59% reduction in exposure for the eight most exposed individuals. The person with the highest exposure, a man, managed to reduce his exposure by 82%, particularly by discontinuing the use of cosmetics.

These two examples vividly demonstrate how easily non-persistent endocrine disruptors can be quickly eliminated. This action is crucial for decontaminating organisms, considering that it is much more challenging to eliminate persistent endocrine disruptors like PFAS.

André CIOLELLA also highlights the cost of decontamination operations in relation to the considerable and increasing financial burden of chronic diseases caused by chemical exposures. For instance, by reducing exposure to phthalates, it would be possible to save 100 million euros in healthcare expenses related to premature births annually, without even considering the costs associated with diseases caused by preterm birth. In this regard, the State Health Insurance (*Assurance Maladie*) is an essential and valuable ally, not only from an economic perspective but also because they can reach out to all pregnant women.



### **Heidrun FAMMLER, Chief Executive, BEF Germany**

Reported that discussions have commenced with the German federal health insurance in Hamburg. It is noteworthy that the health insurance authorities view these actions as preventive measures. As a result, Bef Germany has been granted the opportunity to contribute articles to their magazine, which boasts an extensive readership of 10 million individuals.

### **Nadine RIVET, City Council member in charge of public policies towards young children, City of Limoges, France**

Agrees with Mr CICOLELLA that actions promoting health have a positive impact on healthcare expenditures.

In 2015, the City of Limoges signed the Charter Ville Santé Citoyens, which encompassed various measures, including combating endocrine disruptors. One of the initial actions taken was the replacement of allergy-causing trees in school courtyards with less allergenic varieties. Additionally, air quality monitoring was implemented, leading to more frequent ventilation by opening windows between classes. Measures were also undertaken to reduce salt and fat content in school meals, which revealed surprising quantities for those involved in food preparation.

In the fight against endocrine disruptors, the city initiated an audit in 2017 and signed RES' VTSPE charter in September 2018. An audit firm was engaged to identify endocrine disruptors, review practices, inform families, and replicate this anti-endocrine disruptor model in other kindergartens.

A total of 103 items were assessed, resulting in five types of action (modifications in cleaning procedures, emphasising prevention in public procurement processes, implementing more frequent ventilation practices, changing toys, adapting the food prepared as well as utensils used).

As a result, eco-labeled diapers, hygiene products, and cleaning agents are now used for babies and children. The purchase of steam cleaning devices and revision of all cleaning protocols were undertaken. Staff members have been actively involved in these changes and play a crucial role in communicating information to parents. Gradual replacements of toys have been implemented, considering the challenge of obtaining data sheets for toys, many of which come from other countries. A tender process has been initiated for toy procurement.

The most significant action taken was the replacement of multi-compartment melamine trays with porcelain trays, a traditional product of Limoges. This transition allows children to consume their meals not only from inert materials that do not harm their health, but also in high-quality materials providing a sense of luxury. Staff members assist in filling the trays, resulting in minimal breakage as the children do not have to move the trays. Locally sourced organic food in season is provided, and 25,000 porcelain trays have been manufactured, benefiting the local economy.

Nadine RIVET also emphasises the challenges encountered, such as the difficulty in ensuring that toys are free from hazardous substances.

Furthermore, she highlights the importance of involving and engaging civil service personnel in the daily implementation of actions and in persuading parents of the merits of these initiatives.

### **Ludivine QUINTALLET, Councillor of Alsace and founder of the plastic-free canteen initiative in Strasbourg, European Collectivity of Alsace, France**

In 2016 – 2017 in Strasbourg, the introduction of organic meals in school canteens prompted citizens to take control of their health.

However, it was alarming to discover that these meals were delivered in plastic trays and heated up, potentially releasing endocrine-disrupting chemicals. Determined to address this issue, Ludivine QUINTALLET and a group of parents embarked on a campaign "Cantine Sans Plastique" to persuade the City of Strasbourg to replace plastic containers with inert materials.

Their efforts included gathering over a thousand signatures through a petition and providing various reports to raise awareness among the city officials who were initially unaware of the risks associated with EDCs. With the assistance of Marie-Madeleine BRAUD, a representative from the Réseau Environnement Santé in Alsace, information sessions were organised for the elected representatives to shed light on the issue.

The involvement of the media played a crucial role in advancing their cause, as it generated wider public attention and urged the Parliament to take action (amendment in the Egalim law).

[This initiative inspired many people across the country, resulting in the establishment of «Cantine sans Plastique France» as an umbrella organisation for local associations.](#) Parents involved in these associations actively advocated for a law banning plastic in school canteens and reached out to their local Members of Parliament, flooding them with text messages and emails during the parliamentary debate.

As a direct outcome of these collective efforts, plastic containers will be completely phased out from school canteens in Strasbourg by 2025. This success story showcases the impact of information dissemination in mobilising citizens and achieving tangible changes. Ludivine QUINTALLET expresses heartfelt gratitude to the Réseau Environnement Santé for their unwavering support and commitment to safeguarding public health.



From left to right: Heidrun FAMMLER, André CICOLELLA, Nadine RIVET, Ludivine QUINTALLET, Jean-François BRIDET, Céline De LAURENS, Pascale ROUILLARD-NEAU, Dr. Richard CHEMLA

### **Pascale ROUILLARD-NEAU, Head of the Environmental Health and Hygiene Department, City and Eurometropolis of Strasbourg, France**

[Reminded that the City of Strasbourg signed the Charter for Cities and Territories without Endocrine Disruptors in 2018](#) and has since undertaken various actions to combat exposure to endocrine disruptors.

These include awareness campaigns targeting pregnant women and gardeners, as well as a study conducted in a daycare center to identify all sources of exposure, whether related to construction or operation, with the aim of developing a remediation plan, drawing inspiration from the city of Limoges.

[Under the impetus of Alexandre FELTZ's, the city launched the «Green Prescription» \(Ordonnance Verte\) programme in November 2022.](#) This initiative aims to protect the health of pregnant women, their unborn children, and their families from exposure to endocrine disruptors by raising awareness, providing information, and offering support in implementing good practices. A healthcare professional (general practitioner, gynaecologist or midwife) prescribes access to the program. The support includes two workshops on endocrine disruptors and the free distribution of organic, local, and seasonal produce baskets every week during pregnancy (for 7 months).

The initiative, launched with the goal of reaching 800 women, considering that Strasbourg has between 3 500 and 4 000 births per year, has a duration of one year and is open to all pregnant women regardless of income. The budget for the initiative amounts to 355 000 euros, in addition to internal resources estimated at 150 000 euros. With 600 registrations already recorded and high satisfaction among the participating women, the program will be expanded by the end of 2023, aiming to reach 1 500 women and extending the program to include partners. The estimated budget for the expansion is around 650 000 euros.

### **Heidrun FAMMLER, Chief Executive, BEF Germany**

Emphasises the importance of identifying the appropriate target groups for conveying messages and then actively engaging with them. She acknowledges that the topics related to endocrine disruptors are not always easy to comprehend. Therefore, it is crucial to tailor the information and communication strategies to effectively reach and educate the intended audience.

**Jean-François BRIDET, Vice-President in charge of the Ecological Transition, Climate and Biodiversity, Centre-Val de Loire Region, France**

Begins his statement by raising his Carte Vitale (health insurance card) as a symbol of the substances that the petrochemical industry exposes citizens to, along with the public costs and health externalities that it fails to bear. As an architect, he also responds to a question from a participant, emphasising that no PVC material is harmless in terms of chemical exposure. However, there are numerous alternatives such as linoleum or natural rubber that can be used instead. It is crucial to prioritise these alternatives to protect the population. His political engagement aims to reinforce this message through public action.

He further highlights the need for a holistic approach to protect life. In this context, the role of a region is to establish a comprehensive action plan in addition to local initiatives. To address the challenges of issue identification, communication, awareness, and remedial actions, [the Centre-Val de Loire Region has formed a steering committee that includes various stakeholders](#) such as ARS, DREAL, DREETS, local authorities, CPAM, researchers, and associations. This committee aims to ensure the widest possible sharing of knowledge regarding the experiments and innovations of each participant. Additionally, the region provides financial support to projects undertaken by local authorities in this field. All these actions are part of the ongoing development of the fourth version of the Regional Environment and Health Plan, which embraces a transversal approach encompassing waste management, recycling, the development of short circuits, and pollution-related issues.

He concludes by emphasising the crucial importance of individual and local-scale actions. Although they may appear to be drops in the ocean, they are indeed necessary to drive decision-making at the national and supranational levels. It is essential for regulations to evolve significantly and without delay. In this context, he suggests the need for political courage to ban advertisements for ultra-processed food products or cosmetics containing harmful chemicals in order to protect the population. He also draws attention to the fact that social inequalities are reflected in exposure levels, as those with fewer resources may not have the option to choose healthier products, further exacerbating health disparities. Maintaining a balance of power with industry lobbies represents not only a public health issue but also a civilisational challenge, given the multi-generational impacts of current pollution.

**Céline De LAURENS, City Council member in charge of health, prevention and environmental health, City of Lyon, France**

Reports that [Lyon signed the Charter for Cities and Territories Without Endocrine Disruptors in 2021](#). She expresses gratitude to André CIOLELLA and the Réseau Environnement Santé, acknowledging their crucial role in helping shaping the actions of municipalities.

The City of Lyon has developed an internal action plan comprising 23 areas of focus, including schools, nurseries, playgrounds, and public procurement. However, Céline DE LAURENS highlights the presence of certain obstacles. She believes that capitalising on successful experiences from different cities is key to overcoming these challenges. For example, she mentions a case where compostable containers were adopted in a canteen, complying with the Egalim law, but they still had a plastic film that did not eliminate exposure to chemicals. Consequently, it becomes necessary to identify alternative containers, emphasising the potential hurdles faced during such actions. Another important aspect is the replacement of PVC with other materials.

In parallel, an external action plan aims to align all stakeholders present within Lyon's territory on the same path. Céline DE LAURENS advocates for the elimination of PVC in delivery rooms.

Additionally, [the city has established a local health contract \(CLS\) signed by 45 stakeholders and involving over 70 partners](#). This contract revolves around four pillars encompassing 27 actions, [with the primary focus on « One Health »](#). This approach recognises the interdependence between the health of Lyon's citizens, their environment, and animal health.

**Dr. Richard CHEMLA, City Council member in charge of health, City of Nice and Vice president of the French Network of WHO Healthy Cities, France**

Begins by expressing gratitude to André CIOLELLA for his work and for his previous participation in the [Environmental Health Days in Nice on December 10-11, 2021](#).



Dr. CHEMLA highlights that the City of Nice, as a signatory of the Charter for Cities and Territories without Endocrine Disruptors, started its action by establishing a school kitchen that serves 30 000 meals per year without plastic containers. This initiative was driven by the active involvement of Christian ESTROSI, the Mayor of Nice. To further expand these efforts, the city has signed a contract with the University of Nice to reuse bamboo and recycled cellulose trays as 3D printing materials.

In parallel, all nurseries in Nice have been thoroughly examined to identify, limit, and eliminate sources of exposure to endocrine disruptors. Awareness meetings are also organized to inform young parents about these substances and raise their awareness of their impact. In particular, [a conference was organized on November 5, 2022, during the first "Pregnant Women's Day" in Nice](#), bringing together many local stakeholders as part of the national campaign for the first 1 000 days.

Dr. CHEMLA emphasises the importance of continuous education and awareness-raising in this «chemical world,» as the impact of dangerous substances to which today's generations are exposed will likely affect more than three generations. He heavily stresses the need to target the most vulnerable populations, including pregnant women, youth, the underprivileged, and seniors.

He calls on the European Union to adopt stricter regulations on consumer information, including mandatory clear labelling of product compositions by manufacturers.

[He concludes by inviting all attendees to participate in the «Climate Change and Health» forum that will take place in Nice on June 14-15, 2023.](#)

### **Heidrun FAMMLER, Chief Executive, BEF Germany**

Expresses gratitude to the various speakers for their presentations and commitment. She believes that the experiences gained in France through the Charter for Cities and Territories without Endocrine Disruptors and in Northern Europe through the NonHazCity initiative will provide valuable reciprocal insights. She suggests organizing a seminar with dedicated time for more extended exchanges, given the richness of the different interventions.

She further announces the initiatives undertaken by NonHazCity. The project now specifically focuses on construction materials, which have become a significant concern. They also welcome feedback from stakeholders to improve their efforts in this area.

[Finally mentions the ChemClimCircle project](#), which centers around chemicals, climate, and circularity in public procurement. She implies that there are other ongoing initiatives and projects in the pipeline, indicating the continuous efforts needed to decrease exposure to chemical pollution.

## **Conclusion and ways forward**

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### **Sandra JEN, Coordinator, EDC-Free Europe Coalition**

Thanks to everyone for their presence and reminding the participants that this conference is the initiative of three NGOs with the essential support of the city of Strasbourg without which it wouldn't have taken place. It stemmed from a resolution of the European Parliament and an Opinion of the Committee of Regions.

The original idea was to explore the interest and opportunities to develop an alliance of cities and territories free from EDCs and the richness of the discussions today illustrates the importance of this cooperation and exchange of information and best practices. Thanks to all the presentations, the relevance of the project is clear and will hopefully go from strength to strength, with further meetings in other European cities or in Brussels maybe as part of the European Commission stakeholder forum on EDCs.

### **André CIOLELLA, President, Réseau Environnement Santé, France**

Echoes the sentiment of the fruitful exchanges and the promising opportunities they bring. Local and regional authorities have proved that they can act but a lot remains to be done.

Finally underlines that it would be misguided to believe that nothing can be accomplished when confronted with powerful lobbies. The goal of establishing a toxic-free environment in Europe can be achieved, in complementarity of the necessary and urgent EU regulations, by bringing together local authorities in conjunction with NGOs to mobilise a wide range of local stakeholders.

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