

Towards a just, healthy and sustainable world

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Challenges from the Stakeholder Perspective

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WECF is an International Network

150 member organisations in 50 countries

Offices in

the Netherlands, Germany, France and Georgia

3 areas of expertise

- Capacity building
 - Policy advocacy
 - Outreach campaigns
-
- UNEP partner, Co-lead Woman Major Group

Chemical Projects going on /recently finalised



- Sustainable Chemistry from NGO Perspective (global)
- BRS- Gender Action Plan pilot projects Nigeria & Indonesia
- REACH &33: Opportunity for baby & children product sector (NL)
- Nesting: training & website toxic-free children environment (Fr)
- NEHAP: training & publications (Fr)
- SAICM: Beyond 2020 (global)
- SAICM: Innovation non-chemical technologies (Western-Balkans)

Example 3rd NEHAP (2015-2019)

Elaboration:

WG, position papers, public consultation

Implementation:

➤ Working Groups

Exposome concept

Multi-stakeholders WG

➤ Training & information

dedicated working group

National Research Programme on EDCs (PNRPE)

➤ Research & expertise

8 substances assessed/year

WG on EDCs testing methodology

Participation in Anses committees (H&E orientation committee)

➤ Prevention of population's exposures

BPA in receipts voluntary substitution

strengthen EDCs tests in consumer products



Building coalitions

EDC-Free coalition



HBM4EU

A public health tool to inform the transition towards a toxic-free future

Whereas the use and presence of chemicals in our everyday environment have become evident, significant questions and huge gaps remain about their adverse human health impacts and societal costs. Whether we like it or not, we are exposed to a mixture of chemicals, including potentially hazardous substances, everywhere we go on a daily basis, from the parks and gardens our children play in, to the packaging wrapping we use for our food, and the clothes we wear.

“From a public health perspective, the real added value and potential success story of the HBM4EU project will rest in its ability to provide comparable data to answer policy questions and trigger new regulations to reduce people’s exposure, especially those most vulnerable.”

Broadly speaking, these data and results must translate into real health gains, by feeding into impact assessments for new chemical legislation, as well as into the implementation of existing legislation, such as the authorisation of substances under REACH and the authorisation of pesticides under the Plant Protection Products Regulation.

The project has the potential to be highly appealing to the general public, medical and health professionals, and research community across Europe – who are on the front line in responding to the growing concerns from citizens around the health impacts of chemicals and thirst for more information on how we are exposed to them, as shown in a recent European



survey¹. Here it is not only the role of stakeholders like HEAL, but also the role of national hubs to meaningfully engage with stakeholders, researchers and the media to inform, seek input and share developments from the start in 2018.

A human biomonitoring project of the scale of HBM4EU is both unique and instrumental in gaining a better understanding of the potential adverse health and environmental effects of chemicals and most importantly, triggering policy responses, and has been on HEAL’s wish list for over a decade. Harmonised data on these sometimes complex but widespread substances is something we have not managed to gather at the European level so far. Yet, such knowledge is key to identifying mid and long-term trends in human exposure and relationships with health impacts, in order to set up priorities for regulatory actions at the European and national levels, including informing European and national disease prevention strategies.

¹ European Commission, 2017, [Special Eurobarometer 456: Report Chemical Safety](#)



Génon K. Jensen, Executive Director of the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)

- *“From a public health perspective, the real added value and potential success story of the HBM4EU project will rest in its ability to provide comparable data to answer policy questions and trigger new regulations to reduce people’s exposure, especially those most vulnerable.”*
- Génon K. Jensen, Executive Director of the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) featured in HBM4EU March 2018 Newsletter



Opportunities of the HBM4EU



- Hazardous substances and related HBM are explored - delivering of scoping documents of prioritized substances
- The HBM4EU gives a boost for new developments, new models on risk assessments for suspect substances and exposomes
- Analyses methods are harmonised
- A common database with HBM results will be made available and accessible





Opportunities of the HBM4EU



- Linking independent research to a preventive policy, protecting consumers and workers for hazardous substances in their daily life
- Raise awareness on harmful substances in our daily life and their relation with health impacts: factsheets

KEEP YOURSELF SAFE FROM EXPOSURE TO BISPHENOLS

WHAT ARE BISPHENOLS?
Bisphenols are man-made chemicals used in the manufacturing of products used to protect your health and safety. The most widely used bisphenol is bisphenol A (BPA). Products containing BPA are used to make clear plastic bottles, food cans and many other products. BPA is also used to make polycarbonate plastic bottles, food cans and many other products.

WHERE ARE BISPHENOLS FOUND?
BPA is used in:
• Making polycarbonate (PC) bottles. These bottles are used in sports and other activities, such as for water bottles and for sports equipment, automotive parts and more.
• Making epoxy resins. These resins are used to coat the inside of water pipes and the inside of food cans and other food packaging and are also used to get a thin plastic coating on the inside of food cans.
• In thermal paper used for shop receipts, ATM receipts, receipt books, parking tickets and boarding passes.
• Dental fillings.

HOW CAN BISPHENOLS ENTER YOUR BODY?
Bisphenols can enter your body through food and beverages. You may also be exposed through air, dust and water. Bisphenols can also enter your body through skin contact with plastic bottles, food cans and other products. Bisphenols can also enter your body through contact with thermal paper receipts, ATM receipts, receipt books, parking tickets and boarding passes.

HOW CAN YOU GET BISPHENOLS OUT?
The HBM4EU project has worked with the European Commission to develop and promote preventive and regulatory measures to reduce BPA exposure.

HOW CAN YOU GET BISPHENOLS OUT?
www.HBM4EU.eu

KEEP YOURSELF SAFE FROM EXPOSURE TO PHTHALATES

WHAT ARE PHTHALATES?
Phthalates can be found in many products used in our daily lives. They are used to make plastic products more flexible and durable. They are also used to make plastic products more resistant to heat and chemicals. Common phthalates include DEHP, BBP, and DBP.

WHERE ARE PHTHALATES FOUND?
Phthalates may be found in many products used in our daily lives, such as:
• Consumer products with plastic components: plastic packaging, film, inflatable toys, blow-up toys, camping gear, and other plastic products.
• Other consumer products: mobile phones, headphones, air fresheners and fragrances, cosmetics, food packaging and personal care products, toys, children's toys, and car parts, perfumes.
• In the production of concrete: phthalates are used in the production of concrete and are also used in the production of concrete admixtures. Commonly, they are used for their plasticizing effect. Phthalates and their derivatives are used in many other products.

HOW CAN PHTHALATES ENTER YOUR BODY?
Eating and drinking food that has been in contact with containers and products containing phthalates. Using phthalate-containing products such as cosmetics, toys, car parts, perfumes, and other consumer products.
Breathing contaminated indoor air from phthalate-containing plastic products, such as vinyl flooring, wall paper, and other building materials.
Contact with your hands from some toys or car parts.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT EXPOSURE TO PHTHALATES?
1. Read product labels and choose to use phthalate-free products where possible. Many plastic (PCV or PVC) or metal (tin) cans are more likely to contain phthalates.
2. Clean your home regularly to remove dust. Use a damp cloth for dusting or vacuuming (never a power dust) from children's play areas.
3. Wash your hands often, especially before eating.
4. Choose fresh produce over processed and packaged food.

HOW CAN YOU GET PHTHALATES OUT?
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WORKING SAFELY WITH CHROMIUM

WHAT IS CHROMIUM (Cr)?
Chromium (Cr) is a naturally occurring chemical element. It is found naturally in rocks and soils, minerals and metallic ores and alloys. Cr compounds form a large and varied group of chemicals. They can be solid, liquid or gas and have a wide range of uses. The most important forms of Cr are hexavalent chromium (Cr(VI)), trivalent chromium (Cr(III)) and elemental chromium (Cr⁰). Under some conditions, Cr can change from one to another.

HOW CAN Cr(VI) HARM YOU?
The risk related to Cr(VI) exposure is mainly occupational. It is related to the dust of the chemical and may also be related to the exposure to Cr(VI) in the environment. Cr(VI) is a known carcinogen and may cause lung cancer, nasal cancer and leukemia. Cr(VI) is also a known reproductive toxicant and may cause birth defects. Cr(VI) is also a known irritant and may cause skin and eye irritation. Cr(VI) is also a known allergen and may cause allergic reactions. Cr(VI) is also a known neurotoxicant and may cause neurological damage. Cr(VI) is also a known immunotoxicant and may cause immune system damage. Cr(VI) is also a known developmental toxicant and may cause developmental delays. Cr(VI) is also a known reproductive toxicant and may cause reproductive damage. Cr(VI) is also a known carcinogen and may cause lung cancer, nasal cancer and leukemia. Cr(VI) is also a known reproductive toxicant and may cause birth defects. Cr(VI) is also a known irritant and may cause skin and eye irritation. Cr(VI) is also a known allergen and may cause allergic reactions. Cr(VI) is also a known neurotoxicant and may cause neurological damage. Cr(VI) is also a known immunotoxicant and may cause immune system damage. Cr(VI) is also a known developmental toxicant and may cause developmental delays. Cr(VI) is also a known reproductive toxicant and may cause reproductive damage.

IN WHICH INDUSTRIAL PROCESSES AND PRODUCTS CAN Cr(VI) BE FOUND?
• Manufacturing of stainless steel and numerous alloys (and during welding, coating of these)
• Leather tanning
• Plating equipment
• Paints, primers and other surface coatings.
• Electroplating/finishing

HOW CAN Cr(VI) GET INTO YOUR BODY?
1. Inhalation of Cr(VI) contaminated dust, fumes or mist
2. Skin contact through handling Cr(VI) contaminated solutions, coatings and paints
3. Ingestion by using hand-to-hand Cr(VI) contaminated food or your hands

WHAT MUST YOU DO IF YOU WORK WITH PROCESSES INVOLVING Cr(VI)?
1. Read the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) and understand the hazards and risks associated with Cr(VI).
2. Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as respirators, gloves and eye protection.
3. Avoid eating, drinking or smoking in the workplace.
4. Wash your hands thoroughly after handling Cr(VI).
5. Report any spills or leaks immediately to your supervisor.

HOW CAN YOU GET Cr(VI) OUT?
www.HBM4EU.eu



Reflections on HBM4EU



The project is complex and challenging: it is a mammoth project.

This makes it difficult for NGOs to get insight and to give input.

Who keeps the overall overview on activities and outputs of all WP, on a safe and reliable data management?

How are the results translated into actions and policies on national and international level?

FIGO: International Federation of Gynecologists and Obstetrics



“We are drowning our world in untested and unsafe chemicals and the price we are paying in terms of our reproductive health is of serious concern.”

Gian Carlo Di Renzo, MD, PhD
Honorary Secretary International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO)

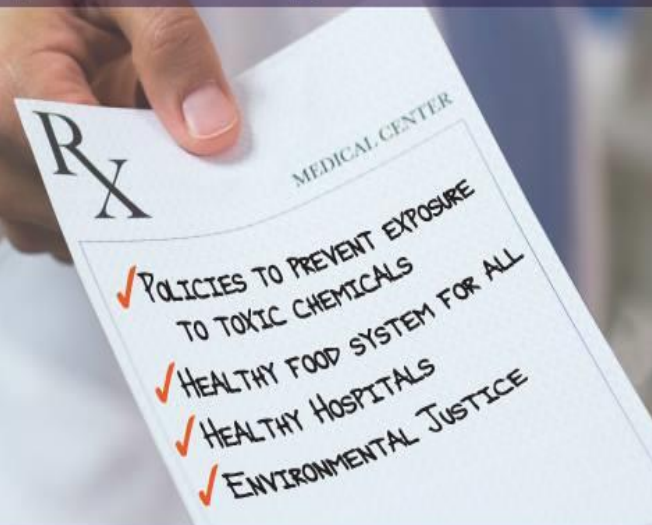
“Given accumulating evidence of adverse health impacts related to toxic chemicals, including the potential for inter-generational harm, FIGO has proposed a series of recommendations...to reduce the burden of unsafe chemicals on patients and communities.”



Professor Sir Sabaratnam Arulkumaran, MD
President, British Medical Association
President, International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO)

International Doctor's Statement on Chemicals – Oct 2015

Doctors are now
prescribing...



#HealthNotToxics

Ob-gyns from 125 countries say...



"exposure to toxic chemicals is damaging your health."



Tell policymakers to listen.

#HealthNotToxics



Challenges



The prioritised substances have evidence or are suspected carcinogens, repro-toxic compounds or hormone disrupters

- For a risk assessment the scientists will depend on models and face many uncertainties
- Is the dose-effect relationship known for all substances?
- Is there a safe dose for persistent and bio-accumulative toxic substances and endocrine disrupters?
- Is there a safe doses for hazardous mixtures and their metabolites?
- How can consumers and workers health be protected being exposed to a daily varying mixtures of toxics? -> *ILO study: every 30 seconds a worker dies from exposure the pollutants.*

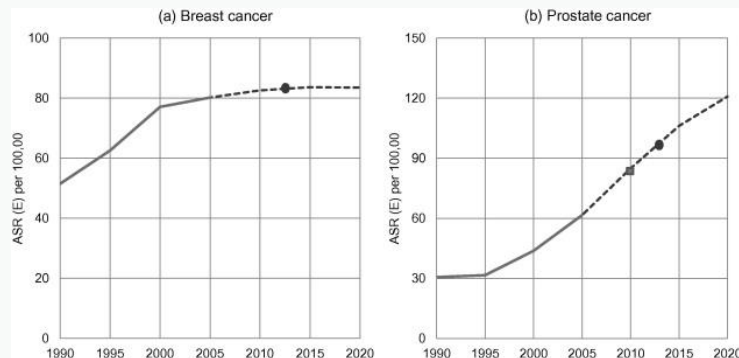


Reflections



Something went wrong within the industry and the authorising institutions

- Public concern about chemicals in our daily life has increased
- Active substances are authorised e.g. for plant protection, however after 10 or 20 years there is evidence that the substance have extremely negative effect on the environment
- Research shows evidence of several hormone related health impacts: decreased fertility, increased rate of breast and prostate cancer, obesities, neurotoxic effects, etc.



Source: Ferlay et al. 2013. Cancer incidence and mortality patterns in Europe. Estimates for 40 countries in 2012. European Journal of Cancer

Not only human are affected by the current industrial environment – even the mass and diversity of insects declined with 75% during the last 25 years (monitoring results from Germany and Netherlands).



Reflections



Something went wrong within the industry and the authorising institutions

- Annual economic costs of EDCs: some estimates up to € 200 – 300 billion in EU

*Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food
Human Rights Council Thirty-fourth session, 27 February-24 March 2017 :*

Reliance on hazardous pesticides is a short-term solution that undermines the rights to adequate food and health for present and future generations.

While scientific research confirms the adverse effects of pesticides, proving a definitive link between exposure and human diseases or conditions, or harm to the ecosystem presents a considerable challenge.

This challenge has been exacerbated by a systematic denial, fuelled by the pesticide and agroindustry, of the magnitude of the damage inflicted by these chemicals, and aggressive, unethical marketing tactics remain unchallenged.



Reflections



How will the project ensure that political actions are undertaken?

- We know already that for example Phthalates, BPA, Per- and polyfluorinated compounds, numerous pesticides have harmful health impacts
- Still those substances are intentionally or un-intentionally contaminating consumer products and enter our bodies via food, inhalation or skin contact
- Their substitutes often have similar health risks
- Experiences in the past did not confirm the safety of chemical products as indicated by the producer
- Hence independent science and urgent political actions are required to face out harmful substances in consumer products.



Our requests



- The HBM4EU project should go beyond the focus on a quantity of reports to prioritizing substances and urgent policy measures
- The HBM4EU should not be considered as an early warning tool but rather as a late warning tool.
- The scoping documents and factsheets on the prioritised substances should be translated into the EU languages and disseminated.
- The result of this project should be a tool for urgent policy action based on the precautionary principle:
 - promote non-hazardous and non-chemical safer alternatives
 - phase-out hazardous chemicals in our daily food and in consumer products.
 - ensure transparency and social & environmental responsibility



What can we do?



- Following the process of the HBM4EU project
- Raising awareness on the project within our civil society networks
Disseminating scoping documents and factsheets
- Policy advocacy at all levels for the precautionary approach to hazardous substances and suspected hazardous chemicals

Thank you for your kind attention