

The Liberal Mutual Societies committed to the fight against endocrine disrupting chemicals

Now more and more evidence comes to light of the damages caused by endocrine disrupting chemicals, AIM (International Mutual Association) has urged the European Commission to adopt more measures. The Liberal Mutual Societies regret the lack of reactions on the part of the Commission.

Endocrine disrupting chemicals, internationally defined as EDCs (*endocrine disrupting chemicals*), is a collective name for over 1,300 chemicals capable of interfering with the hormonal regulation.

The increasing trend of endocrine related diseases in humans can no longer be neglected: reduced fertility, genital malformations, adverse pregnancy outcomes, obesity and type 2 diabetes, paediatric asthma, childhood leukaemia, and global rates of endocrine-related cancers have dramatically increased over the past decades.

First, the European Commission published, in June 2016 – that is, three years later than legally required, a proposal for a set of scientific criteria to identify chemicals with endocrine disrupting properties. The aim is to use this set to ban EDCs in pesticides, biocides and cosmetics, but also to protect water's quality.

But then, where is the rubbish? The problem is that, before recognizing a product as an endocrine disruptor, the Commission requires a high level of proof and proposes so many exceptions that most EDCs can continue to be used.

For this reason, AIM requests that the European Commission applies the precautionary principle and defines a set of criteria to identify endocrine disruptors that is based on sound scientific evidence – both toxicological and epidemiological studies. Then AIM also demands categories to enable ranking the substances according to the different weight of evidence (endocrine disruptors, suspected endocrine disruptors, endocrine active substances). This would help the adoption of appropriate regulations.

Finally, working on a transversal basis is key, in all policy areas, and not only in the environmental theme.

The Belgian Liberal Mutual Societies fully endorse this statement. They therefore regret that Europe continues to put at risk the health of 508 million inhabitants.

Although it is impossible to completely ban EDCs from our environment, reducing them through the use of less harmful products would benefit people's health and reduce the cost of the health insurance. Rather than demanding intangible evidence of adverse effects, the Commission should conduct research on the health benefits that would already be provided by proscribing the most harmful products.

Geert Messiaen
General secretary
National Union of Liberal Mutual Societies