



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 17.5.2019  
C(2019) 3606 final*

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions “Towards a comprehensive European Union framework on endocrine disruptors” {COM(2018) 734 final}.*

*In adopting this Communication, the Commission has delivered on the commitment taken in 2017, when working on the criteria to identify endocrine disruptors in the areas of pesticides and biocides, and confirmed in its 2019 Work Programme. The Communication provides a comprehensive strategy to deal with these substances across policy areas in the future, building on the knowledge, experience and results of the past twenty years.*

*Despite all the progress achieved, endocrine disruption remains today a global challenge and a source of concern for many citizens. This is why it is important to step up the efforts of the European Union. The Commission remains committed to protect citizens and the environment from these dangerous chemicals and, at the same time, to preserve an internal market which delivers for consumers and where all European Union’s business can thrive. In this context, the Communication announces a number of concrete actions aimed at minimising overall exposure to endocrine disruptors, accelerating the development of a thorough research basis and promoting an active dialogue between stakeholders.*

*The Commission welcomes the broad support of the Camera Deputaților for the approach outlined in the Communication and agrees, in particular, on the importance of research and on the application of the precautionary principle to protect citizens, particularly vulnerable consumers. The Commission is also pleased that the Camera Deputaților agrees on the need to assess whether the existing legislative framework on*

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*endocrine disruptors remains fit for purpose and on the importance to explore possibilities for the inclusion of endocrine disruptors in the Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals.*

*The Commission has carefully considered all the issues raised by the Camera Deputaţilor in its Opinion and would like to offer the following observations.*

*The Camera Deputaţilor requests more information on the use of the European Union's Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development in the area of endocrine disruptors. The Commission considers that continued support to research is essential to constitute a strong basis for effective policy-making. In the area of endocrine disruptors, since 1999 these Framework Programmes have allowed to fund over 50 relevant projects for an amount of over €150 million from the European Union. These projects have improved our understanding of the endocrine mechanism of action, the identification of adverse effects on human health and wildlife from exposure to endocrine disruptors, and the development of tools for identification of endocrine disruptors and exposure assessment. The Commission allocated further €50 million under Horizon 2020, allowing the funding of eight projects, including two that address specifically the metabolism disrupting potential and modes of actions of endocrine disruptors<sup>1</sup>. These projects combine experimental investigations with epidemiological surveys. In its future framework programme for research and innovation, Horizon Europe, the Commission will continue to ensure the necessary support to research on endocrine disruptors, focusing on areas where knowledge gaps still exist. Participation to European Union funded projects is open to both public and private entities.*

*As regards the recommendation of the Camera Deputaţilor to analyse data on presence and exposure to endocrine disruptors, the Commission would like to note that the 'European Human Biomonitoring Initiative' includes substances of concern for endocrine disruption. Within the framework of this large-scale initiative, the past and current exposures of the European populations to chemicals, including those with endocrine-disrupting properties, are being investigated in various European regions and in different exposure settings. This will contribute to the development of the necessary knowledge basis for analysing long-term exposure to these substances.*

*The Commission has taken note of the suggestion of the Camera Deputaţilor to develop guidelines for healthcare providers to inform citizens about endocrine disruptors. It however notes that public health protection remains primarily a competence of Member States and that different sensitivities exist among Member States on endocrine disruptors. The development of European Union's guidelines would therefore be at odds with the subsidiarity principle as enshrined in Article 5 of the Treaty on the European Union. The Commission considers that the European Union's efforts should focus on areas where there is a real EU-added value, and this is primarily the provision of full information on European Union's actions on endocrine disruptors to all citizens who are interested in the topic. This is why the Communication announces the launch of a one-stop shop web portal on endocrine disruptors. At the same time, the Commission will of course*

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<sup>1</sup> [OBERON](#) and [GOLIATH](#)

*encourage exchange of best practices among national authorities in this field, for example in the context of the annual Forum on endocrine disruptors announced in the Communication.*

*As regards the suggestion of the Camera Deputaților to establish mechanisms to facilitate the exchange of information between national competent authorities, the Commission would like to recall that a system already exists that is relevant in this respect: the Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products. The system allows Member States' authorities to share information on products detected posing a serious risk for consumers and the measures taken to eliminate such risks. This ensures a European Union wide response as well as consumers' information about the potential threats. The notified risks also include those due to endocrine disrupting chemicals. For example, in the last ten years, the Rapid Alert System alerted and allowed the removal from the European Union's market of 1835 products containing parabens or phthalates, known to have a negative effect on the reproductive system of children.*

*As regards the recommendation of the Camera Deputaților to pay particular attention to chemicals produced in large quantities, taking into account the danger of their accumulation in the body, the Commission would like to refer to the REACH Regulation<sup>2</sup>. This Regulation applies to a broad range of chemicals to which we may be exposed, including those which are persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic, and provides tools to protect human health and the environment from the risks that these can pose.*

*The Commission takes this opportunity to inform the Camera Deputaților that its services have already started working on the different actions announced in the Communication. The cross-cutting Fitness Check to review the existing legislative framework on endocrine disruptors should be finalised in the first half of 2020. In 2019, the Commission aims at organising the first meeting of the Annual Forum on endocrine disruptors and at launching the web portal on these substances. Other actions, for example in the area of research or international cooperation, necessarily have a longer timeframe.*

*The Commission is also engaging in a constructive dialogue with all European Union's institutions, for example in the Environment Council, where an exchange of views on the Communication took place on the initiative of the Romanian Presidency on 5 March 2019. In this context, the Opinion of the Camera Deputaților is very timely and will provide useful input to our work.*

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<sup>2</sup> Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH), establishing a European Chemicals Agency, amending Directive 1999/45/EC and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 793/93 and Commission Regulation (EC) No 1488/94 as well as Council Directive 76/769/EEC and Commission Directives 91/155/EEC, 93/67/EEC, 93/105/EC and 2000/21/EC; OJ L 396, 30.12.2006, p. 1–849.

*The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Camera Deputaților and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*

*Jyrki Katainen  
Vice-President*