

Contribution by Michael Warhurst to Thematic Session 4

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VISION for the EU chemicals policy by 2030

By 2030 the EU has transformed its economy away from the most hazardous synthetic chemicals, including those that disrupt the endocrine or immune system or brain development, and those that are persistent and bioaccumulative or mobile or damage wildlife. Regulations address exposure to mixtures, and susceptible groups are protected, including children and those with genetic susceptibilities. Reductions in exposure have led to decreasing level of pollutants in the environment, drinking water and the general population, in particular children. Mechanism have been established, and sufficient resources are available to monitor contaminants in the environment, and a human biomonitoring programme has been put in place as a safety net.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

By 2030 the EU has policies, informed by research, that are successfully:

- 1) Improving and validating test methods for identification of hazardous properties, including in vitro and in silico approaches. Priority areas include endocrine and immune system disruption, neurodevelopmental effects and impacts on the wider environment. Companies are being required to use these tests to characterise their chemicals.
- 2) Generating understanding of how to protect particularly susceptible groups, including developing foetus, children, those with genetic susceptibilities (e.g. less effective breakdown enzymes) and ecosystems and individual organisms.
- 3) Developing effective approaches to identify and remove legacy chemicals, including developing a producer responsibility approach to apply the polluter pays principle to help pay for this removal, focussing on removing legacy chemicals from the human environment ('technosphere'), including during recycling.
- 4) Improving the relevance of research by linking it closely to policy needs, e.g. to identify priority substances of concern, key environmental contaminants, grouping approaches and 'real world' exposure analysis.

POLICY ACTIONS, INCLUDING DRAFT TIMELINE, MILESTONES AND PARTNERSHIPS

2020:

Acceleration of development of tests for neurodevelopmental impacts (see <http://chemtrust.org/brain>) and immune system impacts, focussing on rapid in vitro and in silico approaches.

Start implementing known mixture assessment techniques in regulation, while developing new approaches.

Initiation of research into gaps in understanding of chemical impacts on susceptible groups, particularly focussed on genetic susceptibilities (in humans) and on key organisms.

Initiation of research to establish an effective producer responsibility approach for past contamination, and technologies to monitor and remove contamination

2022:

Results of HBM4EU and other environmental analysis are used in regulatory processes
Regulatory systems improved to allow the results of in vitro and in silico tests to lead to classifications, restrictions etc.

Producer responsibility approach into draft legislation, passed into law by 2024.

Enforcement of clean circular economy increased, using improved monitoring.

2025:

Regulatory action being taken on a range of persistent chemicals as analysis continues
A thorough screen of chemicals in use for immune and neurodevelopmental impacts is initiated, followed by regulatory action. Mixture assessment approaches expanded

Process begins to take results of research on susceptible groups and use it in regulation, while research continues to better understand susceptibilities
Legislation on Producer responsibility approach starts to be implemented, assisted by new techniques to remove contamination

2028:

Regulatory action has been taken on chemicals identified by new tests
All chemical-related regulations are actively working to protect those with known genetic susceptibilities and susceptible ecosystems
Clean-up of legacy materials well underway

2030

Analysis confirms reducing levels of chemicals of concern
All groups, including susceptible groups, protected against the most hazardous chemicals
Major legacy sources of contamination addressed

Partnerships

- EU agencies, Member State governments, scientists, other stakeholders
- International partnerships, in particular with the developing world, to ensure nature and sources of contamination are understood and that regulatory and other solutions are shared.