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For immediate release: 14 October, 2020

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Endocrine Society welcomes European Commission's chemical strategy

Framework offers opportunity to protect public health from endocrine-disrupting chemicals

WASHINGTON—The Endocrine Society welcomed the European Commission's new Chemical Strategy for Sustainability and its measures to protect the public from endocrine-disrupting chemicals. The communication was released Wednesday as part of the European Green Deal.

The strategy is designed to be the foundation for the biggest update to Europe's chemical regulations in more than a decade. The chemical strategy commits to a hazard identification for endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs), including strict measures to prevent them from being used in consumer products. In addition, the strategy calls for stricter data requirements for EDCs across all relevant legislation and to accelerate the development and adoption of better test methods.

"EDCs are linked to serious health problems, such as infertility, diabetes, obesity, cancer and issues with brain development," said Barbara Demeneix, B.Sc., Ph.D., D.Sc., chair of the Society's Endocrine-disrupting Chemicals Advisory Group. "We are pleased to see the European Commission has taken this significant first step towards further protecting the public from EDC exposure with its new chemical strategy. We now need further details and concrete actions to protect public health and minimize consumers' exposure to these hazardous chemicals."

The Commission also committed to introducing provisions for evaluating unintentional mixtures and will assess how best to address combination effects in the future.

In addition, the chemical strategy prioritizes control measures for poly- and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and addresses them with a group approach. These man-made endocrine-disrupting chemicals have leached into waterways and foods, and they can persist in the environment as well as our bodies. PFAS exposure is linked to health problems such as high cholesterol, disrupted thyroid function and altered immune response.

We are pleased the European Commission has announced its intention of adopting a hazard-based approach to regulating these harmful chemicals. However, the practical features and implementation steps will be important, and the Society urges the Commission to clarify these details to permit concrete actions without further delay.

The Society has dedicated years to pressing for science-based policies to regulate [EDCs](#), which mimic, block or otherwise interfere with the body's hormones. EDCs are commonly found throughout our environment in consumer products, food containers, personal care products, pesticides and furniture. EDCs contribute to serious health problems such as diabetes, obesity, neurodevelopmental disorders and reproductive problems. Children, unborn children and adolescents' developing bodies are particularly vulnerable to exposures.

A [series of economic analyses](#) found EDC exposures may be costing the EU upwards of €157 billion (\$177 billion) a year. Society experts led the effort to quantify the public health impact of EDCs on the economy.

The Endocrine Society will continue to monitor progress on legislative proposals to ensure that they are effective in minimizing exposure to EDCs.

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Endocrinologists are at the core of solving the most pressing health problems of our time, from diabetes and obesity to infertility, bone health, and hormone-related cancers. The Endocrine Society is the world's oldest and largest organization of scientists devoted to hormone research and physicians who care for people with hormone-related conditions.

The Society has more than 18,000 members, including scientists, physicians, educators, nurses and students in 122 countries. To learn more about the Society and the field of endocrinology, visit our site at www.endocrine.org. Follow us on Twitter at [@TheEndoSociety](#) and [@EndoMedia](#).