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**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

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Subject: Endocrine disrupters

- Information from the French delegation, supported by the Danish and Swedish delegations

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Delegations will find attached an information note from the French delegation on the above subject, which will be discussed under "Any other business" at the Environment Council meeting on 12 June 2014.

**Endocrine disrupters**  
**Information from the French delegation**

In view of the human health and environmental issues posed by endocrine disrupters, and on the occasion of the French government's adoption of a national strategy on endocrine disrupters, France requested that this item be added to the agenda of the Council of Environment Ministers of 12 June 2014 under "Any other business".

In line with the seventh Environment Action Programme and the European Parliament's 2013 own-initiative report, France stresses the need to act now at European level in order to prevent risks and limit exposure of individuals and the environment.

Certain everyday products and articles, such as detergents, plastics, cosmetics, textiles and paints, contain substances with endocrine-disrupting properties. Endocrine disrupters include many chemicals that can interfere with hormonal regulation in living creatures and affect reproduction, growth, development and behaviour, *etc.* Given the now-documented effects on human health and the environment, action must be taken to prevent risks and limit exposure, in particular of vulnerable individuals such as pregnant women and young children.

Yet the subject of endocrine disrupters, and in particular the issue of defining criteria, has taken a backseat at European level. More specifically, neither the regulatory criteria required for the identification of endocrine disrupters nor a draft new strategy has been proposed to date.

Warnings from the scientific community and civil society prompted the French government to establish a national strategy on endocrine disrupters. That strategy is the result of broad consultation with stakeholders and the public, who have been involved in the government's work since early 2013. The national strategy can be consulted on the [website of the French Ministry of Sustainable Development](#).

The strategy's primary objective is to reduce exposure of individuals and the environment to endocrine disruptors, making use of all available means of action: scientific research, application and monitoring, substance expertise, substance regulation and alternatives, training and dissemination of information.

It will provide the framework for the French government's actions and positions over the coming years.

The national strategy must also drive innovation: industry has a major role to play in terms of research, disseminating information and implementing viable alternatives.

1. Research, application and monitoring

The government would like the topic of endocrine disruptors to be a key component of environmental health research: the Minister for Education, Higher Education and Research will include it in the national research strategy, and in particular in the "health – well-being" component;

- the Minister for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy (MEDDE) will step up interdisciplinary exchanges in the scientific community under the national research programme on endocrine disruptors (PNRPE). The MEDDE issued a call for research projects in 2013, undertaking to support eight projects over three years for a total of EUR 750 000;
- in 2013, the National Research Agency funded five projects on endocrine disruptors following the 2012-2013 call for projects.

It is also necessary to speed up substance testing. The industry must secure the development of new products and processes by targeting innovation at solutions whose safety can be assessed at an earlier stage and by methods which are better recognised internationally. In order to speed up the validation of these methods, the MEDDE has therefore launched a study on the feasibility and value of a "public-private platform for the evaluation and validation of substance testing methods", the results of which should be available in the summer of 2014. If this study is conclusive, the government will help public and private developers to structure the mechanism, its governance and its financing. This platform aims to enhance the competitiveness of the French economy while contributing to the ecological transition process. This measure will also strengthen the French laboratory sector.

Finally, particular attention will be paid to the results of population impregnation surveys (Esteban, etc.), health and environmental monitoring cohorts (Elfe, Constances, E4N, etc.) and epidemiological monitoring programmes, in close coordination with research and expertise.

## 2. Substance expertise

The government is developing the procedure for evaluating the dangers and risks associated with substances which may be endocrine disruptors or which are used by vulnerable individuals, via an assessment programme entrusted to the National Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety (*Agence nationale de sécurité sanitaire, de l'alimentation, de l'environnement et du travail* – ANSES) and the National Agency for the Safety of Medicine and Health Products (*Agence nationale de sécurité du médicament et des produits de santé* – ANSM). From 2014, the government is also giving the ANSES responsibility for assessing around 15 chemicals over a three-year period. The ANSM's work on endocrine disruptors will also be speeded up in order to evaluate each year at least three substances suspected of being endocrine disruptors within its area of responsibility and in particular in cosmetics.

### 3. Regulation of and alternatives to endocrine disrupters

Depending on the outcome of the assessments, the substances concerned must be subject to appropriate regulatory measures, as a priority at European level, with the aim of reducing exposure of individuals and the environment. France will be heavily involved in adapting European rules to the specificities of endocrine disrupters.

France calls for a European definition which is consistent with the toxicological and ecotoxicological specificities of endocrine disrupters, is based on the intrinsic hazardous properties, without taking into account the potency, and establishes three categories ("known", "presumed" and "suspected") depending on the degree of certainty about these properties. The definition must be geared to the modes of action of endocrine disrupters (action at very low dose, exposure window, etc.).

France will call for full implementation of the exclusion clauses in respect of endocrine disrupters in the regulations on plant protection products and biocidal products, and for the adoption of progressive measures depending on the evidence available for substances in the "presumed" or "suspected" categories.

France will also make use of the power of initiative provided by the European regulations to propose any measures which seem necessary. In 2014, a French proposal restricting the use of bisphenol A in thermal paper (till receipts) is already being examined at European level. In 2013, France also proposed that the approval of 21 active plant protection substances be re-examined owing to their hazardous properties.

In addition to the regulatory measures, France's innovation support schemes will assist manufacturers in their efforts to find alternatives to dangerous substances.

#### 4. Training and dissemination of information

This strategy aims to develop the way in which professionals and the general public are informed and made aware of the issue of endocrine disruptors, so as to enable everyone to make informed choices and limit their exposure.

Information on bisphenol A exposure will be made clearer, and the arrangements for broadening the work of occupational health clinics (*centres de consultation de pathologies professionnelles* – CCPP) to include treatment of illnesses relating to environmental exposure will be set out in detail.

The content and methods of training aimed at the professionals concerned will be the subject of discussions and of an action plan integrated into the third national environmental health plan and into the third occupational health plan, which will be drawn up in 2014.

The third national environmental health plan will also include specific strategies for informing early childhood professionals and people planning to become parents of the potential risks associated with certain types of exposure during foetal and early childhood development, as well as information campaigns on exposure in certain places and on product labelling.

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