

Water Matters

EurEau 40th Anniversary Conference

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See: http://eureauevents.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=featured&Itemid=106

Panel: Water Matters for Food

Speaking notes for Michael Warhurst, Executive Director, CHEM Trust

- Water is a key environmental resource – we need to keep it as clean as possible, and use it efficiently; this isn't just about our use of water in Europe, but also our global water footprint, through the supply chains that produce products for the European market¹
- Focussing on water pollution: this comes through a range of routes, CHEM Trust is particularly concerned regarding pollution from chemicals, medicines and pesticides
- Our report on pharmaceuticals found a range of pollution problems, and identified some key recommendations, including improvements in regulation, information to doctors and consumer information²
- Endocrine disrupters are a particularly important issue, whether from pesticides, industrial chemicals or other sources. These are chemicals that can disrupt hormone systems of people and wildlife – affecting development and disease. Very disappointed that Commission didn't meet the end 2013 deadline to define criteria, vital to get action now – we've been talking about this for >20 years.
 - EDC serious issue, authoritative research found >€150 billion in health care costs in EU³
 - Concerned re some business associations pushing for approaches to EDC criteria that will not be protective, for example, based on claimed 'potency'⁴
 - Problem of very misleading impact assessments, exaggerating the number of pesticides included. Rather like REACH IA where Business Europe, BDI, CEFIC claiming several % off GDP.

¹ <https://www.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/four-footprints-45569.pdf>

² <http://www.chemtrust.org.uk/medicines-in-the-environment-a-growing-threat-to-wildlife-and-drinking-water/>

³ <http://www.chemtrust.org.uk/health-impacts-from-hormone-disrupting-chemicals-cost-eu-countries-billions/>

⁴ <http://www.chemtrust.org.uk/should-a-potency-cut-off-be-included-in-the-criteria-for-identification-of-edcs/>

- We have big concerns re REACH effectiveness – quality of registration dossiers, slow action on restriction, authorisations proposed when safer alternatives are available⁵ - also regulation and enforcement of chemicals in imported articles, where textiles are a proven source of endocrine disrupting water pollution.
- There is also a problem of regulatory holes, where EU harmonisation not in place – notably non-plastic food contact plastics⁶, and also pipes and other water carrying materials⁷.
- One other area of concern is fracking, where the possibilities for water pollution are very considerable – not to mention climate and other concerns.
- It's clear we need to move to a low carbon, resource efficient future – time to add 'pollution free' to that list. Pollution needs to get back up the agenda – whether air pollution, water pollution, or pollution of products by undesirable chemicals.
- Getting rid of pollution is part of the green economy agenda, focussing on innovation towards better products and techniques⁸.
- But we have major concerns re strong vested interests in chemical and pesticide industries pushing for ineffective measures in REACH and EDC criteria
- Current Commission not looking promising on promoting innovation through safer chemicals

⁵ <http://www.chemtrust.org.uk/replacing-chemicals-with-safer-alternatives-or-protecting-dirty-industry/>

⁶ <http://www.chemtrust.org.uk/chemicals-in-food-packaging-a-can-of-worms/>

⁷ Materials and products in contact with drinking water: Challenge, limitations, opportunity and recommendations, Jelka Appelman Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment The Netherlands, Round table in the European Parliament, 3 March 2015, Brussels

<http://www.anec.org/attachments/Jelka%20Appelman%20-%20materials-products%20in%20contact%20with%20drinking>

⁸ Green economy or January blog post