



Revision of the EU toy safety legislation

An opportunity to further protect our children's health and well-being by banning all endocrine disruptors from toys

ESPE Statement in the context of the ongoing trilogue negotiations

ESPE urges the Council and European Parliament to ensure the new Toy Safety Regulation will reflect the latest scientific findings in relation to endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs). Numerous peer reviewed studies have shown that children's exposure to EDCs, also at small quantities, can severely impair their growth, neurological development and overall health and well-being. The continuous presence of endocrine disruptors in toys clearly stands at odds with the general purpose of toys which is to entertain, educate and contribute to children's development. It is high time to address this paradox and ensure all toys within the European Union (and beyond) becomes safe for children to play with.

Existing peer-reviewed studies provide ample evidence for the association between child exposure to Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs) and the onset of numerous illnesses including endocrine cancer, obesityⁱ, disturbed timing of pubertyⁱⁱ, impaired fertility, neurodevelopment alterationsⁱⁱⁱ and numerous rare diseases.

Children's toys continue to be a key source for exposure with 25% of children's toys containing harmful chemicals^{iv}. A recent study conducted by a Danish consumer organisation analysed 121 children's products, including toys, blankets and drinking bottles and found that more than 60% of them contained or released at least one, but in many cases two or more bisphenols^v.

Hence, better measures to protect our children's health are urgently needed including a group ban for PFAS in children toys as proposed by the European Parliament in March 2024^{vi}. On the basis of the available scientific evidence available, these and other EDCs should be banned entirely without exemptions and with limited transition periods.

While the Parliament has shown a progressive stance in this key legislative file for children's health and well-being, this same ambition has not been shared yet by the Council. According to the Council position from May 15^{vii}, only substances classified at EU level as carcinogenic, mutagenic or reprotoxic (CMR) under the Classification, Labelling and Packing Regulation should be banned from toys. This position worryingly diverges from the generic ban procedure under REACH, the main EU chemicals safety law. This implies that a wide range of substances, including CMR substances and endocrine disruptors, would require to go through a protracted classification process and therefore continue to be present at harmful levels in toys.

Lastly, the Council restricted the Commission's proposal to remove only endocrine disruptors that have direct impact on human health from toys. This restriction allows harmful endocrine disruptors to be released in the environment and ignores the fact that these disruptors will enter and ultimately impact human health^{viii}.



The Council's position is clearly insufficient to effectively protect children from harmful chemicals. ESPE urges the co-legislators to strive for an ambitious agreement during the trilogues, which should be as close as possible to the Parliament's position to the benefit of children's health and well-being.

END

About ESPE

The European Society for Paediatric Endocrinology (ESPE) is an international society registered in Europe that promotes the highest levels of clinical care for infants, children and adolescents with endocrine problems throughout the world, including in less advantaged areas. At the EU level, it works with the EU and partner organisations to create a healthier environment for children and adults.

ⁱ Averina M, Brox J, Huber S, Furberg AS. Exposure to perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and dyslipidemia, hypertension and obesity in adolescents. The Fit Futures study. *Environ Res.* 2021;195:110740. [Exposure to perfluoroalkyl substances \(PFAS\) and dyslipidemia, hypertension and obesity in adolescents. The Fit Futures study - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

ⁱⁱ Ernst A, Brix N, Lauridsen LLB, Olsen J, Parner ET, Liew Z, Olsen LH, Ramlau-Hansen CH. Exposure to Perfluoroalkyl Substances during Fetal Life and Pubertal Development in Boys and Girls from the Danish National Birth Cohort. *Environ Health Perspect.* 2019 Jan;127(1):17004. [Exposure to Perfluoroalkyl Substances during Fetal Life and Pubertal Development in Boys and Girls from the Danish National Birth Cohort - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ Braun JM. Early-life exposure to EDCs: role in childhood obesity and neurodevelopment. *Nat Rev Endocrinol.* 2017;13(3):161-73. [Early-life exposure to EDCs: role in childhood obesity and neurodevelopment - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

^{iv} Aurisano N, Huang L, Milà I Canals L, Jolliet O, Fantke P. Chemicals of concern in plastic toys. *Environ Int.* 2020; 106194 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160412020321498?via%3Dihub>

^v <https://taenk.dk/kemi/visit-our-english-version/bisphenols-should-be-banned>

^{vi} [Parliament backs tighter EU rules for toy safety | News | European Parliament](#)

^{vii} [Toy safety: Council adopts position on updated rules - Consilium](#)

^{viii} Li X, Gao Y, Wang J, Ji G, Yang D, Shen H, Dong Q, Pan L, Xiao H, Zhu B, Exposure to environmental endocrine disruptors and human health. *Journal of Public Health and Emergency*, Vol.1 (2017). <https://jphe.amegroups.org/article/view/3669/4423>