



Frans Timmermans, Vice-President of the European Commission

Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

Virginijus Sinkevičius, Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries

Stella Kyriakidis, Commissioner for Health and Food safety

Thierry Breton, Commissioner for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

Nicolas Schmit, Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights

European Commission

B-1049 Brussels

Paris 21/08/2020

Open Letter: Human Biomonitoring as a tool to support Europe's Chemical Strategy for Sustainability

Dear Vice-President Timmermans, Commissioner Gabriel, Commissioner Sinkevičius, Commissioner Kyriakides, Commissioner Breton and Commissioner Schmit,

We write on behalf of [HBM4EU](#) to express our strong support for the forthcoming Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability and the zero pollution agenda in the frame of the European Green Deal.

HBM4EU is a European-scale human biomonitoring initiative under Horizon 2020 that includes 30 countries and the European Environment Agency. HBM4EU supports chemical policies by building knowledge on the exposure of the European population to chemicals and subsequent impacts on health.

Zero pollution applies as much to people as to the environment. The bodies of European citizens are contaminated by hundreds of chemicals. To attain zero pollution, Europe needs human biomonitoring to measure chemicals in the bodies of European citizens and to assess the associated health impacts.

Europe needs a human biomonitoring surveillance system grounded in European Union legislation.

Populations in countries such as the USA, Canada and Korea already benefit from national human biomonitoring systems, a cornerstone of risk assessment and sustainable chemical management. Several Member States also have systems in place, including France, Germany, Belgium, Sweden and Czech Republic.

European citizens are extremely concerned by the presence of thousands of chemicals in their environment and in consumer products. Citizens have the right to know what they are exposed to, what chemicals are in their bodies and how their health is affected. Understanding citizens' concerns, raising public awareness and making science accessible forms part of the HBM4EU initiative.

HBM4EU bridges science and policy. Working with the European Chemicals Agency, the European Food Safety Authority, the European Environment Agency and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, as well as relevant Directorate-Generals, our research answers concrete policy questions.

We are assessing human exposure to **pesticides, pharmaceuticals**, and hazardous substances in consumer products, such as **endocrine disruptor compounds**, as well as the **combined exposure to mixtures of different chemicals**. Our researchers use cutting edge science to identify **emerging**

substances in the human body and to assess the exposure of **workers** in key industries, including recycling. We produce concrete evidence of **how chemical exposure impacts human health**.

The HBM4EU Management Board responded to the consultation on the Commission roadmap on the Chemical Strategy for Sustainability with reflections on key directions and how human biomonitoring can contribute going forward. In particular, we fully support the “**one substance – one assessment**” process, coupled with approaches to explicitly avoid regrettable substitution. In addition, **chemical grouping** offers a means for accelerating risk assessment and risk management, in a context where risk management lags behind the rapid emergence of new chemicals.

Looking forward, work is ongoing to develop a future [European Partnership for the Assessment of Risk from Chemicals](#) (PARC), to be implemented under Horizon Europe. This European Partnership will enable the ongoing generation of high-quality science-based evidence to support implementation of the Chemical Strategy for Sustainability.

To conclude, the zero pollution agenda must be based on an understanding of **how the bodies of European citizens are polluted with chemicals**. Reducing the chemical body burden and associated health impacts must be a key priority. In practice, this requires a human biomonitoring surveillance system to monitor chemicals in the European population, such as we have for the environment.

We urge you to include human biomonitoring in the toolbox for sustainable chemicals management in Europe.

Yours sincerely,

HBM4EU Management Board:

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