

European descent into Dark Age ignorance continues apace

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When the EU adopted the anti-science precautionary principle as its guiding paradigm a decade or more ago, we don't think anyone (except perhaps its anti-progress advocates) had any idea how low the regulatory process would stoop in service of its ideology. This misguided concept asserts that any process or substance which has not been proven safe should be restricted or banned out of an excess of precaution, until such time as such proof can be obtained. The fact that proving a negative is impossible and unscientific is not taken into account, nor is the fact that if the principle is stringently applied, essentially all progress must come to a screeching halt.

The individual nations as well as the EU Parliament and its various bureaucratic commissions seem to be competing to outdo one another on how far to kowtow to superstition-based fears of chemicals, devices and technologies whipped into frenzies by agenda-driven activist groups. The current target of concern is the so-called endocrine disruptor group of chemicals, [especially phthalates](#) ^[1] (plasticizers, softeners of PVC plastics in consumer and medical products). As we here at ACSH have often pointed out, the whole concept is fraught with the conflation of pseudo-science and politics, as in the worst-case scenario, these chemicals might impact the endocrine system of certain rodents at extremely high exposure levels. No human health effects have been documented, but fears of such has generated extreme anxiety among regulators over there.

This anti-science ferment has provoked (finally!) a group of almost 100 scientists, including journal editors and academics, to write an [open letter to the Chief Science](#) ^[2] Advisor to the President of the EU Commission, castigating their science regulators seeming abandonment of well-known scientific principles and precepts of risk assessment and weight-of-evidence, in favor of pre-ordained hyper-precautionary agenda, on the subject of endocrine disruptor regulation.

The letter is entitled, *Scientifically unfounded precaution drives European Commission's recommendations on EDC regulation, while defying common sense, well-established science and risk assessment principles, where EDC represents endocrine disrupting chemicals*. It is a scathing commentary on the sad state of science in Europe, to which anyone who has been following their policies on matters as variable as GMO agriculture and e-cigarettes will attest. The link here will

take you to the journal, where the letter can be purchased, and it s expensive. If you want a copy for personal use, email us here and we ll send you one.

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Links

[1] <http://www.plasticstoday.com/articles/broad-based-assault-phthalates-coming-eu0711201301>

[2] <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0887233313001665>