

## Science does not support association between phthalates exposure and obesity

Brussels, 29 January 2016 - ECPI, the European Council for Plasticisers and Intermediates is following closely the unsubstantiated claims that exposure to certain phthalates may contribute to obesity, fed by a number of articles which have appeared in several European media outlets in the past few days. Media reported about a study conducted by the *Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research* in Germany which asserts that some phthalate plasticisers can affect human hormones with a potential increase of the body weight.

ECPI is committed to the safe and sustainable use of plasticisers; therefore it regularly monitors, conducts and sponsors studies and researches on these substances. “There is no evidence that exposure to phthalates contributes to obesity – claiming that one single substance can lead to obesity is simply scaremongering and far from reality. Lifestyle factors including diet, exercise, smoking and alcohol consumption are major factors in determining the health of human populations” stated Stéphane Content, ECPI’s manager.

While many studies report associations on a wide range of topics, including obesity, this does not mean causation. Some of those studies only report in-vitro findings which cannot be confirmed in-vivo i.e. at the whole body level (Kloting, 2015). Moreover, a systematic review of the epidemiological literature (Goodman et al., 2014) clearly states that no causative link between phthalates exposure and obesity can be proven.

Consumers’ safety can only be assured through knowledge and sound science. Making unjustified, generic claims when referring to the effects of any substance should be avoided. In public and media debates, scientific rigour and factual accuracy are essential to ensure consumer safety and avoid creating unnecessary fears.

“ECPI fully supports a science-based approach as the guiding principle for chemicals regulation and communication”, concluded S. Content.

**About ECPI:** The European Council for Plasticisers and Intermediates is a Brussels-based trade association representing the common interests of European manufacturers of plasticisers, alcohols and acids. Member companies are BASF, Deza, Evonik Performance Materials GmbH, ExxonMobil, and Perstorp. ECPI is a sector group of Cefic, the European Chemical Industry Council, which represents the interests of the European chemical industry.

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