

Minimising the impact of chemicals on health and environment

"Over the last 20 years, science has shown the negative impact of chemicals on the hormone system, underscoring the need for improved legislation"

Dirk De Rijdt
Director of Strategic Partnerships
at European Society of Endocrinology

For the first time, the European Society of Endocrinology (ESE) and the European Society for Paediatric Endocrinology (ESPE) held a joint congress in Copenhagen. Under the theme "Connecting Endocrinology Across the Life Course", the event brought together more than 7,800 delegates from across the world and featured sessions tailored for both paediatric and adult endocrinologists.

Regulatory gap

A key focus at the congress was the growing evidence from the past 20 years on the harmful effects of endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs). These chemicals can imitate, block, or interfere with the body's hormonal system. EDCs are commonly found in everyday products such as plastics, cosmetics, and toys, making it difficult for individuals to avoid exposure. They have been linked to serious health conditions,

including obesity, infertility, certain cancers, as well as an increased risk of reduced IQ and ADHD. Vulnerable groups, particularly children and pregnant women, are at greater risk due to the sensitivity of their developing hormonal systems.

As a result, healthcare systems face a financial burden estimated at hundreds of billions of euros annually in the EU. Combined with the health and environmental impacts, these costs are an unsustainable burden on society. Although Denmark and the EU regulate EDCs, current legislation has not been updated to reflect the latest scientific evidence, increasing the risk of continued exposure.

To address this regulatory gap, Copenhagen Legacy Lab partnered with ESE, ESPE, the Danish Society for Paediatric Endocrinology, and the Danish Endocrine

Society to host a high-level scientific and policy event the day after the congress. With REACH and other key EDC legislation under review by European policymakers, the event provided an opportunity to present the latest scientific findings to a broad range of stakeholders and directly link them to the ongoing EU legislative debate. Under the theme "Minimising the Impact of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals on Health and Environment", the event aimed to:

- Create more stringent legislation around EDCs in Denmark and the EU.
- Increase national and international research funding around EDCs.
- Empower the general public and sensitive groups on how to reduce exposure to EDCs

ESE and ESPE Unite to Urge Enhanced National and EU Measures Against Endocrine Disruptors

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Article about the event

Connecting scientists and policymakers

The hybrid event had more than 280 attendees in person and online, including policymakers, clinicians, scientists, industry representatives, patient organisations, journalists, and NGOs. The event, which had registrations from 79 countries, featured two sessions:

- **Session 1:** A research-oriented session where leading European scientists presented the latest cutting-edge EDC research and outlined future research needs.
- **Session 2:** A public health and policy session with representatives from the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Danish Parliament, a Danish community organisation, and EDC experts discussing health impacts and necessary policy actions.

Each session ended with a panel discussion, allowing in person and online attendees to engage with the speakers. The event concluded with a networking lunch to foster new connections among the involved groups of stakeholders. In parallel with the networking lunch, a press briefing gave national and international journalists the opportunity to question selected speakers on political actions and practical steps to reduce EDC exposure.

Throughout the event, compelling evidence highlighted the harmful effects of EDCs. Scientists and patient groups called for immediate action, including stronger regulations, enhanced testing methods, sustainable alternatives, and greater public awareness. Danish and European policymakers acknowledged these concerns and expressed their commitment to work toward updating regulations based on current scientific evidence.

"I feel very inspired right now about doing something special to solve this problem. Of course there is already a lot of political action, but I think that we can do even more. So, I hope that my colleagues who are here today can do something, to put even more pressure on the subject from the EU side."

Karen Liltorp
Member of The Danish Parliament

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Karen Liltorp, Member of
The Danish Parliament



Photos from the event



Legacy process

Objective

Strategic alignment

Endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) pose significant risks to both human health and the environment in Denmark and across Europe. Due to their widespread presence in everyday products, it is extremely difficult for individuals to avoid exposure. This contributes to serious health consequences and places a significant financial burden on national healthcare systems.

Addressing this challenge requires coordinated political action at both national and European levels, including the implementation of science-based legislation and efforts to raise public awareness. The health and economic impacts of EDCs make this a strategic priority for Denmark, as well as for ESE and ESPE, who are committed to raising awareness, reducing EDC-related health risks, and promoting a healthier, less toxic environment.

Objective

- The objective of the legacy project was to update Danish and European stakeholders about the health risks of EDCs and advocate for stricter regulations at both the European and national levels.

Stakeholder involvement

- The European Society of Endocrinology (ESE) and the European Society for Paediatric Endocrinology (ESPE) organised the high-level event.
- The Danish Endocrine Society and The Danish Society for Paediatric Endocrinology contributed to designing the scientific program and involving relevant speakers.
- Copenhagen Legacy Lab facilitated the legacy process and offered strategic guidance on how to enhance the event's long-term impact, oversee follow-up actions, as well as securing local political engagement.

Activity

The day after the joint congress, a high-level scientific event was organised to address the urgent need to develop stricter chemical regulation in Denmark and the EU.

Legacy process

Evaluation

Outputs (immediately after the activity)

In total, more than 280 stakeholders attended the event in person or online. The list of participants included stakeholder groups such as policymakers, clinicians, scientists, industry representatives, patient organisations, journalists, and NGOs.

After the event, an online survey was conducted among 86 of the participants to evaluate the potential of the event:

- Over 70% believe the event will likely help increase funding for EDC-related research.
- Over 75% think the event will help strengthen regulations in Denmark and the EU to limit EDCs.
- Over 85% found the event informative for organisations that represent groups more sensitive to EDC exposure.
- Over 90% believe the event helped raise awareness and understanding of EDCs among policymakers, NGOs, and the public.
- Over 75% expect their organisations to use new ideas or knowledge gained from the event.

Outcomes (after 6 to 12 months)

Since the congress, the high-level scientific event has contributed to raising political awareness of EDCs in Denmark and Europe.

For instance, Danish Parliament member Karin Liltorp has continued the discussion on EDC legislation in Denmark. As an example, see this [LinkedIn post](#) from after the event.

On a European level, ESE/ESPE has continued the process of influencing the European legislation. As an example, ESE and the Endocrine Society have issued a [joint statement of PFAS](#) and actively campaigned against some of the proposed simplification procedures proposed by the European Commission related to EDCs (e.g., see [proposal](#) "Simplification of certain requirements and procedures for chemical products").

Impact and legacy (after a year)

Copenhagen Legacy Lab will assess whether the event has influenced legislation on EDCs at the national and European levels, as well as its effectiveness in raising awareness of EDCs among the Danish and European public.



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Copenhagen Legacy Lab is an award-winning strategic initiative under Copenhagen Convention Bureau that drives positive long-term impact from congresses and events.

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