



At its Board meeting, Brussels, 11 September, 2004, the CPME adopted the following policy : Policy statement of the CPME on environmental pollution (CPME 2004/101 Final EN/fr)

Policy statement of the CPME on environmental pollution

In its white paper of 2001, the European Union lamented the inefficiency of procedures for examining the toxicity of chemicals marketed in EU Member States. This resulted in the implementation of the REACH (Registration Evaluation Authorisation of Chemicals) programme, which consisted of directly obtaining information from manufacturers about their products, of which there are more than 100,000 in circulation.

Over a period of 11 years, 30,000 chemical products must be registered starting with those already on the market, at a rate of more than 1,000 tonnes per year. European manufacturers belonging to the CEFIC organisation complained about the additional costs of such a programme and the project is still yet to be approved.

The CPME in Vienna on 7 and 8 November 2003 produced a document on 'environment and health' which expressed its resolutions on the topic of environmental pollution.

During a colloquium at UNESCO, numerous members of the research community launched the 'PARIS APPEAL' on 7 May 2004, in which they solemnly stated that many current diseases are caused by environmental decay, which presents a particular danger for children and future generations.

European physicians, principal players in primary, secondary and tertiary prevention, ask the CPME to extend their assertion of 7 and 8 November 2003 in Vienna in order that, with regard to the precautionary approach, information on industrial products (the REACH programme) be recorded and also that the risk evaluation procedures and the adoption of provisional and proportionate measures be implemented in order to prevent damage occurring to communities.

The use of chemicals demands a carefully balance between risks and benefits.

The WHO states that the environment is responsible for the death of one child in three worldwide. Physicians should be better trained and informed to be able to participate in the dissemination of information to communities.

European physicians, aware of this serious threat and of the damage taking place, the extent of which is still unclear in the current state of scientific knowledge, which could affect the environment in a serious and irreversible fashion, request, by means of representation by the CPME, the adoption of the REACH programme and the encouragement of research to better evaluate risks and causalities.

CPME call upon national governments to protect scientists working on these issues from any improper pressure, including political, financial or physical attacks. Physicians especially note physical attacks from the animal liberation movements when it is necessary to use animals in research.