



## Luxembourg: Animal Contamination

**We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to have safer chemicals and a healthier future for wildlife and people. The draft REACH regulation offers a chance to identify and phase out the worst chemicals. New markets for safer products, and increased trust, should make it good news for the chemical industry too.**

Wildlife and people are exposed to thousands of chemicals that lack basic safety information. Eighty-six per cent of the 2500 chemicals used in large quantities do not have enough safety information publicly available to do a basic safety assessment. Many are known to be potentially dangerous. Some can interfere with the hormone systems of animals and humans. Others do not break down in nature, but accumulate in our bodies. Chemicals are increasingly suspected of being linked to cancers, allergies and reproductive problems.

**Ten ‘animals’ came to Luxembourg to greet Environment Ministers arriving for the EU Environment Council meeting – and a first policy discussion about the proposed new chemical law, REACH. The ‘animals’ had an angry message ‘Your chemicals are invading my body’.**

**But what were the animals complaining about?** Animals living in remote places, such as the Arctic and the Antarctic, and far removed from sources of pollution, are contaminated with industrial chemicals. Here are some facts about the ‘animals’ that greeted the Environment Ministers.

**Polar bear** – Deca BDE – a brominated flame retardant – was recently found by Norwegian Government scientists in polar bears on the remote Arctic archipelago of Spitsbergen. It is believed to be a developmental neuro-toxicant. [http://www.panda.org/campaign/detox/news\\_publications/news.cfm?uNewsID=13399](http://www.panda.org/campaign/detox/news_publications/news.cfm?uNewsID=13399)

**Mouse** – PFOS – a breakdown product of water and stain resistor chemicals (including chemicals once used in Scotchgard) – was found in the highest known levels in wild wood mice in a nature reserve near Antwerp. It is considered to be carcinogenic.

[http://www.panda.org/campaign/detox/news\\_publications/news.cfm?uNewsID=11362](http://www.panda.org/campaign/detox/news_publications/news.cfm?uNewsID=11362)

**Trout** – Brominated flame retardants found in trout from remote mountain lakes in six European countries and Greenland [http://www.panda.org/campaign/detox/news\\_publications/news.cfm?uNewsID=12343](http://www.panda.org/campaign/detox/news_publications/news.cfm?uNewsID=12343)

**Penguin** – Adelie penguins in the Antarctic have been found to be contaminated with PCNs: chemicals once used in paints, lubricants and preservatives.

**Dolphin** – PFOS found in bottlenose, common and striped dolphins in the Mediterranean. PFOS is considered to be carcinogenic

**Falcon** - High levels of brominated flame retardants found in eggs of peregrine falcons in Sweden. Peregrine falcons were the first wildlife found to be contaminated with the deca.type of brominated flame retardants. Deca is believed to be a developmental neuro-toxicant.

Bird populations in Europe and North America were badly hit by the now-banned pesticide DDT.

**Alligator** – Florida alligators have suffered reproductive disorders and population declines – generally accepted as being due to pesticides. Bisphenol A, used to make polycarbonate plastics including some babies bottles, can cause sex reversals in caymans (an alligator relative from South America).

**Frog** – Frogs around the world have suffered catastrophic declines in populations, as well as malformations including extra limbs and limbs growing in the wrong places. Atrazine, a herbicide now banned in the EU, is a suspected culprit.

Info on penguin, dolphin, falcon, alligator and frog from WWF Report ‘Causes for Concern’  
[http://www.panda.org/campaign/detox/news\\_publications/news.cfm?uNewsID=10921](http://www.panda.org/campaign/detox/news_publications/news.cfm?uNewsID=10921)

**Human** – WWF/Co-operative Bank tests of 47 Europeans (including 39 MEPs) found 76 different chemical from 101 looked for. The highest number of chemicals found in any one person

was 54, while the median number detected was 41. At least 13 of the same chemicals were found in everyone tested – including phthalates, perfluorinated compounds (PFCs), brominated flame retardants, PCBs and organo-chlorine pesticides.

[http://www.panda.org/campaign/detox/the\\_problem/blood\\_testing.cfm](http://www.panda.org/campaign/detox/the_problem/blood_testing.cfm)

Chemicals are increasingly suspected of being linked to cancers, allergies and reproductive problems

A recent opinion poll found that Eighty three per cent of Europeans are concerned about the build up of chemicals in the bodies of people and wildlife – see

<http://www.panda.org/campaign/detox>

**Panda** – not been tested for chemicals! Came along as WWF’s symbol and in solidarity with the rest of the animal kingdom.

<http://www.panda.org/detox>