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CLOSING SPEECH

CONFERENCE ON ENDOCRINE DISRUPTORS:

"CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFICATION AND RELATED IMPACTS"

1 JUNE 2015

BRUSSELS

Check Against Delivery

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to start by thanking you all – speakers, moderators and participants - for taking part in this conference on "*Endocrine disruptors: criteria for identification and related impacts*". This event was organised following the commitment taken by EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Mr Andriukaitis, to be fully transparent on the impact assessment to identify criteria for endocrine disruptors.

The conference aimed, and I hope it succeeded, at informing you on the progress made and the upcoming activities on the impact assessment on criteria to identify endocrine disruptors that the Commission is currently carrying out. It also aimed at providing a platform for further exchanges of views: the opinions and concerns that you voiced today will be carefully considered in the on-going impact assessment.

I believe that the high number and variety of participants – NGOs, representatives from Member States and third countries, industry, journalists, trade associations, scientists were present today, as well as the quality, but also intensity of the discussions you had show how important you think the issue of setting scientific criteria to identify endocrine disruptors is.

As we could see during the day, the task of this impact assessment is a very complex one and it is important that the Commission gets it right. It is complex because of various

aspects. First, because diverging views still exist on important points within the scientific community and regulators worldwide as you have seen it this morning, in session I that focused on science. Secondly, because of the potential impacts, be they positive or negative, the different options for setting criteria to identify endocrine disruptors could have on industry and consumers, on agriculture and trade but also on health and the environment.

You have debated on these topics during the afternoon sessions. You identified challenges and proposed approaches to address these. You discussed advantages and disadvantages of the different ways to set criteria. And you have seen that in some areas, impacts are very difficult to assess. It is therefore important that the Commission carries out an impact assessment as comprehensive as possible in order to be able to take an informed decision. And I would like to re-iterate that this decision will be taken in a collegiate way. As was stressed this morning by Commissioner Andriukaitis, I would like to emphasise that DG SANTE – who is now

responsible for the impact assessment, is not working in isolation: the relevant services of the Commission - DG ENV, AGRI, TRADE, GROW just to mention a few, are closely following this issue and are fully involved at all stages.

Now, to update you on the next key steps: the JRC presented this morning the methodology it has developed for the screening of the chemicals. A contractor started working in early May. As already explained this morning, the contractor will start with a pilot study to test the methodology. It will then firstly screen all approved substances for plant protection products – approximately 400 chemicals – and subsequently all approved substances for biocides, about 100 chemicals. Thirdly, the contractor will screen a subsample of substances falling under REACH, the Cosmetics regulation and the water framework directive –about 200 chemicals. In order to ensure maximum transparency, the JRC methodology will be published together with the results of the screening **before the publication of the**

impact assessment report. This implies in practice it is expected to be published in not less than 10 months from now. At that time you will have both the methodology and the results of the screening. However, the Commission realised that you would like to have as soon as possible information on the applied methodology for screening the chemicals. Therefore, in the autumn of this year, when the contractor has finalized the pilot study on 5% of the 700 substances and, based on this pilot study, has possibly refined the draft methodology, an information session for experts will be organised on the methodology chosen for the screening. This will enable interested parties to get more information than already received today on the work done by the JRC.

The first results of the screening, i.e. the ones concerning plant protection products, will be available in the autumn of this year. This will enable to start with the second study, the one assessing the health, environmental and socio-economic impacts. This study is at the moment in an early planning phase: the Commission services are discussing on how best to

conduct it. But in any case, let me once again reassure you: all significant impacts – be they positive or negative, quantifiable or not – will be analysed and considered in the impact assessment. The impact assessment will not only assess the impacts on industry. There will be no compromise on health and the decision we eventually make will ensure the highest level of protection for human health and the environment.

According to the current planning, these studies are scheduled to be concluded in 2016. They will serve as an input to the impact assessment report, which will be submitted to the Regulatory Scrutiny Board. This board will check whether the impact assessment is based on the best available evidence and analyse and assess the quality of the impact assessment. Finally the Commission will publish the impact assessment report and take a decision concerning the criteria.

As you can see, the work package ahead of us is big but the Commission services are working hard to complete the

assessment as soon as possible, with the goal that the Commission can decide for criteria that are fit for purpose. We count on your support to do so !

Thank you.

(937 words)