

Formula for a European Health Deal

Essential recommendations for policymakers

We're not reinventing the wheel here. The EU needs to honour its 2020 Chemical Strategy for Sustainability. These existing commitments should protect our health, safeguard the environment, and boost innovation in Europe's chemical industry. It's time for the next Commission to deliver on these promises.

Therefore, the EU should put forward a **"Health Deal"** at the heart of its new legislative term. This should be a well-defined package of policy initiatives aimed at fulfilling existing commitments and setting the EU on a path to a safer, healthier, and more resilient continent.

Present a new EU Action Plan to protect citizens from pollution: to improve materials and products' safety and circularity, the EU should update timelines for legislative proposals and amend existing laws as outlined in the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability and the Farm to Fork Strategy.

Optimise current legislation: the EU should ensure ambitious implementation and enforcement of existing rules including REACH, General Product Safety Regulation, Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation, Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation, Industrial Emissions Directive,

Adopt and enforce evidence-based policy frameworks: implement evidence-based, precautionary, and transparent standards. Ensure polluters pay, remove harmful subsidies, and control waste management facilities, particularly via a moratorium on incinerators and promotion of alternative non-combustion end-of-life treatment, to reduce hazardous emissions.

Make the circular economy toxic-free: as sustainable solutions are developed, the EU needs to prioritise chemical safety by phasing out the most harmful chemicals in everyday products and solutions. Reuse and recycling must go hand in hand with well-proven safety from a chemical perspective.

Revise relevant product policies: focus on childcare and womencare articles and food contact materials, and introduce sorely lacking rules for chemicals in textiles and hygiene products, and alongside that, address increased human exposure to microplastics.

Apply a preventative approach across all legislations: the so-called 'generic approach to risk management' (hazard-based approach) is still the best to ban most harmful substances from consumer products, particularly for vulnerable groups, such as the unborn, infants, children, women, and the elderly. Concrete precautionary actions also mean effective application of the "no data, no market" principle.

Increase overall transparency: policymakers should adopt, where needed, implementing acts to ensure authorities have the right information on what enters the market and enforce transparency and traceability of chemicals and materials. All products in the EU Internal Market must comply with relevant EU legislation.

Continue implementing the EU's Restrictions Roadmap: swiftly ban the prioritised harmful substances and groups of hazardous chemicals, unless their use is essential for society.

Enhance safety assessments: help guarantee that all consumer products are truly safe. Support ECHA's Integrated Regulatory Strategy to accelerate data generation, identify substances of concern, and take regulatory action.

Recognise the need to rethink chemistry for a circular economy: simplifying the number of chemicals used in materials will promote safer, essential uses and help minimise the industry's toxicity footprint.

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Zero Waste Europe (ZWE) is the European network of communities, local leaders, experts, and change agents working towards a better use of resources and the elimination of waste in our society. We advocate for sustainable systems; for the redesign of our relationship with resources; and for a global shift towards environmental justice, accelerating a just transition towards zero waste for the benefit of people and the planet. www.zerowasteurope.eu



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