

Our hair, testimony of our overall exposure to pesticide residues

Pesticides

Pesticides are ubiquitous in our environment, including our homes, and in our food. After conducting tests on the presence of glyphosate in urine, ecologists in the European Parliament are launching a campaign on pesticide contamination. They used an independent institute that performed capillary tests for 30 pesticides reported as endocrine disrupters.

Between the end of July and October 2018, 148 hair samples were collected in 6 EU countries: Germany, Denmark, United Kingdom (Wales), Italy, France and Belgium. The samples were analyzed for the presence of one or more of the 30 pesticides (insecticides, fungicides and herbicides).

The laboratory detected one or more of these 30 pesticides for two thirds of the samples. Children and adolescents (10-20 years old) are the most exposed (73.7% of this age group). All pesticides detected are endocrine disruptors (according to EU, US EPA or Pesticides Action Network classifications).

Statement by **Bart STAES**, Member of the Health and Environment Committee:

"These initial results, because we have only been able to explore 148 samples at this stage, including 25 in France, show that banned pesticides persist in our familiar environment. This is all the more serious as they are all known or suspected endocrine disrupters and the European Commission does not make the protection of populations a priority. Its new strategy on endocrine disrupters does not provide answers to the specific health hazards of these substances that do not correspond to the linear dosing scheme valid for conventional toxic substances."

The other lesson of our exploratory analysis is that our exposure to pesticides is not exclusively through food. In France, Fipronil, banned as a pesticide, remains authorized for, in particular, flea and tick control treatments and collars for our domestic animals. It is therefore not surprising to find them frequently in the hair. Contamination also occurs through wood preservation treatments such as permethrin insecticide. There are many sources of exposure. The contamination of our environment therefore goes beyond the simple framework of our plate. This global contamination shows that there are still too many loopholes in our regulations. Worse, the inconsistency of regulations (the same substance can be banned under pesticide legislation but allowed under biocides legislation) does not protect citizens. A complete review of the legislation is needed as well as a comprehensive ban on endocrine disrupting substances".

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