

Sweden to sue EU for delay on hormone disrupting chemicals

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Sweden on Thursday said it would sue the European Commission over a delay in identifying harmful chemicals in everyday products, which it blamed on chemical industry lobbying.

"This (delay) is due to the European chemical lobby, which put pressure again on different Commissioners," Swedish Environment Minister Lena Ek told AFP.

The Commission was due to set criteria by December 2013 to identify [endocrine disrupting chemicals](#) (EDCs) in thousands of products—including disinfectants, pesticides and toiletries—which have been linked to cancers, [birth defects](#) and development disorders in children.

"Hormone disrupters are becoming a huge problem," said Ek, explaining that Sweden and Denmark had written to the Commission to demand action but to little avail.

"In some places in Sweden we see double-sexed fish. We have scientific reports on how this affects fertility of young boys and girls, and other serious effects."

European health and environment groups have also argued that the Commission has bowed to pressure from the [chemical](#) industry, which is insisting on a consultation and more analysis before setting criteria, despite calls from scientists and the European Parliament for urgent

action.

"What upsets me is that by doing this they are putting people and especially children at risk in a way that is not acceptable... By withholding the scientific criteria the Commission is stopping us from improving things," said Ek, adding that she hoped the public would put pressure on Brussels to act.

In May 2013, leading public health scientists from around the world presented a declaration to the Commission, demanding strict testing of the chemicals and rejecting the EU policy that low level exposure to the chemicals is safe.

Joe Hennon, spokesman for EU Environment Commissioner Janez Potocnik, said the delay was justified due to the "complexity of the issue, evolving science, and the diverging views existing among scientists and among stakeholders."

"We take the issue very seriously and are doing our best to address the issue," he said in an email to AFP, adding that temporary measures to protect public health were in place.

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