



## Press Release

Yerevan Aarhus Center, June 2, 2016

### **The Problem of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals**

Recent studies show that there are a large number of chemicals capable of disrupting the endocrine system. Penetrating into the human body by different routes of exposure, the endocrine disruptors (EDCs) act in an irregular manner, mimicking, blocking, or altering the natural hormones and their signaling systems. Endocrine disruptors are linked to a wide range of health effects, such as obesity, cancer, reproductive system diseases and disorders. Endocrine disruptors may be found in many everyday products that come into contact with our bodies or our environment, be it at home or in the workplace.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2016, a seminar was held at the Yerevan Aarhus Center to discuss the problem of endocrine disrupting chemicals. It was organized by the “Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment” (AWHHE) NGO within the framework of the “Protecting women's health from the impact of endocrine disruptors” project supported by the Global Green Grants Fund. The seminar was attended by the representatives from state authorities, environmental NGOs and the media.

Dr. Elena Manvelyan, President of AWHHE NGO, presented the issue of EDCs and the situation in Armenia, and particularly stressed the devastating impact of endocrine disruptors on the reproductive system, noting that the impact of these chemicals leads to males’ feminization, both in animals and in humans. She mentioned the huge economic burden of EDCs in EU.

Dr. Lilik Simonyan presented the work done under the project, in particular, the results of laboratory studies of breast milk sampled from nursing mothers in several villages of Ararat and Armavir provinces. The laboratory analyses showed that some samples contained DDT, HCCH and 2,4 D pesticide residues. Dr. Lilik Simonyan noted that breast milk should not contain them at all. She drew the attention of participants to the fact that the 2.4 D herbicide residues were found in breast milk for the first time. This herbicide is among the widely used pesticides, included in the list of pesticides approved for use in the Republic of Armenia. 2,4 D herbicide which is classified as an endocrine disrupting chemical is imported into Armenia under 11 trade names.

Dr. Heghine Gharibyan from the “Republican Center for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Laboratory Services” SNCO of the Ministry of Agriculture of Armenia presented the “Modern methods of detection of chemical contaminants in food products”



The seminar focused on the impact of endocrine disrupters on human health. The participants developed recommendations for further submission to the relevant stakeholders.

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