

PRESS RELEASE

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*Chemicals / Health***Further progress in human biomonitoring**

Jointly with the chemical industry, the German Ministry of the Environment (BMUB) pursues the development of methods for the measuring of chemicals in the human body. Human biomonitoring (HBM) focuses on substances whose burden on the population may be increasing or which could be of particular relevance to health. It is planned to have analytical methods available by 2020 for up to 50 of such selected substances. Cooperation partner of the BMUB is the German Chemical Industry Association (VCI).

The burden of major industrial chemicals on the population can be appraised precisely only when analytical methods are in place for the largest possible number of chemical substances. So far, it is all too often necessary to resort to model assumptions where health risks can be easily over- or underestimated. The toxicological-health assessment of the detected concentrations is made by the HBM Commission, an independent expert body at the Federal Environment Agency (UBA). The presence of a substance in the organism alone does not automatically mean that this substance can be deemed relevant to health.

Within the cooperation with the VCI, every year new substances are selected for which HBM detection methods are to be developed for the first time. The substances currently selected for 2015 are climbazole, ethylhexyl salicylate, 7-hydroxycitronellal and UV-328. These are used as anti-dandruff agent, sunscreen, fragrance and UV absorber in plastics. The selection of substances is based on recommendations by a high-ranking panel of experts from science and research, industry and relevant public authorities.

In total, ten new methods have been developed since 2010 for ten substances: DINCH, DPHP, MDI, HBCD, 4-nonylphenol, 4-tert-octylphenol, NMP, NEP, 2-MBT and 4-MBC. Work is in progress on further methods. The new analytical methods are validated by the independent organisation Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG). All chemical substances selected in the project are used in consumer products, e.g. as plasticisers for polymers, UV filters in cosmetics, solvents or flame retardants.

Now the new measuring methods are being put into practice in two serial testing exercises: the German Environmental Survey (GerES) by the UBA and testing on specimens from the German Environmental Specimen Bank (ESB). First results are likely to be available in 2018 after completion of the study. The VCI has the responsibility for developing the detection methods; the earlier mentioned high-ranking expert panel supports and advises the association in this effort. Cooperating closely with the UBA, the Ministry of the Environment (BMUB) is responsible for the application of the methods. For some individual methods, scientific publications have already come out.

More information:

Human biomonitoring provides scientifically sound data on burdens on the population of chemicals from consumer products. The following can be answered by way of measuring: are substances taken up by the human body and, if so, to what extent; are there population groups with particularly high burdens; have the rules under the chemicals legislation resulted in the intended burden reduction.

Details on human biomonitoring (in German and English language):

<http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/themen/gesundheit/belastung-des-menschen-ermitteln/human-biomonitoring>

The VCI represents the politico-economic interests of over 1,650 German chemical companies and German subsidiaries of foreign businesses. For this purpose, the VCI is in contact with politicians, public authorities, other industries, science and media. The VCI stands for over 90 percent of the chemical industry in Germany. In 2014 the German chemical industry realized sales of more than 190 billion euros and employed ca. 444,800 staff.

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Please note: VCI news about the chemical industry is also available via Twitter (<http://twitter.com/chemieverband>)