

Session 2 speaker:

The EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability and the Safe and Sustainable by Design Concept - overview of focus areas and related activities

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Urban Boije af Gennäs has a background in biology from the universities of Lund and Uppsala. He has been working in the field of environment and health related topics in NGO:s and public authorities since the early 90's, in including in the Swedish Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and the Swedish Chemicals Agency (KemI). Since 2002, Chemicals policy has been his main line of work. Between 2014 and 2020 he was Seconded National Expert to the Directorate-General for the Environment of the European Commission, mainly involved in the development of the EU Chemicals Strategy (CSS). He is currently back in KemI, in the Unit for Strategies and Assignments, working with the implementation of the CSS and the revision of EU legislation. He is also involved in the EU Partnership for Chemicals Risk Assessment (PARC).

Short abstract

The presentation will provide an overview of core aims of the EU Chemicals Strategy (CSS). These include the objective to make chemicals management more proactive through addressing chemicals related health and environment problems before they arise or are widespread, and hence gradually move away from the current situation, focusing on the management of problems that have already materialised.

The CSS seeks to achieve this through a range of measures in different areas. One core area is the strengthening of chemicals legislation, to make it faster, more efficient, and coherent. This involves e.g. broadening of the generic approach to risk management to further hazard classes. It also means addressing emerging issues like combination effects of chemicals, endocrine disruptors as well as persistent and mobile chemicals. Further measures focus on achieving non-toxic material cycles.

In addition to legislative measures, a priority of the CSS is to stimulate and support innovation, production and uptake of chemicals which are safe and sustainable by design. Actions set out include knowledge building, supportive networks and financial support. The presentation will provide a brief update on the European Commission's Joint Research Centre's ongoing work on defining the concept of Safe and Sustainable by Design (SSbD). Further, it will briefly cover some activities aiming to strengthen the scientific knowledge base and the science-policy interface, including the European Partnership on Chemicals Risk Assessment (PARC) and the EU Strategic Research and Innovation Plan for Chemicals.