

Brussels, 13 April 2023

Concerns: Take the test – would you want to know your exposure to toxic chemicals?

Dear President Von der Leyen,

I am writing to extend an invitation to you as a high-level politician to participate in our initiative to test levels of hazardous chemicals, specifically PFAS, in blood samples. Our goal is to raise awareness about these chemicals to the general public. We believe that the Commission leaders can play a crucial role in this effort.

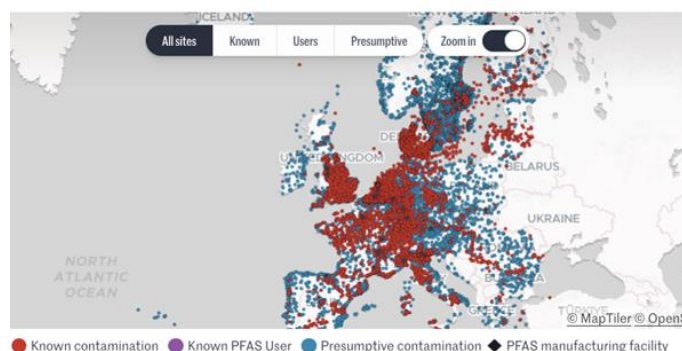
Following the recent revelations of widespread contamination of EU citizens across Europe with toxic ‘forever’ chemicals, reported in [Le Monde](#) and [the Guardian](#), the European Environment Bureau (EEB) is offering you, as President of the European Commission with a leadership responsibility for this Commission’s commitments to tackle chemicals pollution, an opportunity to be tested for PFAS¹ in your own body.

The opportunity:

We are offering this test as an educational activity to learn, confidentially, about your personal PFAS ‘load’. We invite you to be blood-tested for the presence of 13 key PFAS chemicals, joining the many thousands of citizens already tested under the EU-wide [human biomonitoring HBM4EU project](#). These citizens have taken the brave step of finding out about their PFAS exposure, and we now offer you the opportunity to follow their example.

PFAS are widely used chemicals which are toxic, do not degrade and accumulate over time in humans and the environment. They are linked to cancer and infertility, among a dozen other diseases. The PFAS load on European health systems is estimated to be between [52 billion EUR and 84 billion EUR](#) per year.

The investigation ‘[Forever Pollution](#)’ by 18 European news agencies reveals that PFAS are a serious EU-wide problem and found over 17,000 sites across Europe which have been contaminated by PFAS. Belgium was found to have the highest pollution levels across the EU; however, polluted ground and drinking water is also affecting villages in the Gendorf area and elsewhere in Germany.



Why should I take the test?

PFAS is on the EU agenda following a series of national PFAS pollution scandals, with the most recent example being the serious groundwater pollution in [Flanders](#). EU level action to restrict the production and use of

¹ per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances

European Environmental Bureau

• Rue des Deux Églises 14-16, 1000 Brussels, Belgium • ☎ +32 228 91090 • eeb@eeb.org • www.eeb.org

*International non-profit association • Association internationale sans but lucratif (AISBL) • EC register for interest representatives:
ID number: 06798511314-27 • BCE ID number: 0415.814.848 • RPM Tribunal de l'entreprise francophone de Bruxelles*

PFAS in the EU has been proposed by the Commission's chemicals strategy for sustainability and five countries² have [proposed](#) a wide restriction.

Compare your results with EU citizens: You will be able to compare your personal levels of PFAS with the average for your fellow citizens in your country and across Europe. This gives you the opportunity to understand your own levels of contamination, and that of the citizens you serve, in the context of this Commission's ambition for zero pollution and a toxic-free environment.



How will my test be taken?

The blood sample collection process is simple, safe, and will only take a few minutes of your time.

The tests will be conducted by [Eurofins](#), a company with long experience of testing for PFAS in water, food, and human beings. Eurofins is currently conducting blood tests on the Flanders residents affected by PFAS pollution and was also responsible for Covid tests in the European Parliament.

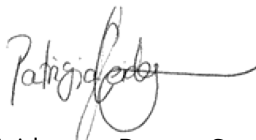
Participants will receive a confidential result from a medical doctor of their levels of the 13 PFAS chemicals tested. It will be your choice whether or not to share or publicise your test results. The EEB will have no access to the individual test results.

We hope you will accept this invitation to participate in this educational initiative among top EU policy-makers. Similar offers are made to some relevant national Ministers³ and members of the European Parliament⁴. We appreciate your commitment to reducing chemical pollution across the EU in order to improve the health of all EU citizens.

If you accept in principle, or would like to know more, we will send you further information about the procedures and confidentiality. Meanwhile, I am happy to respond to any questions you may have.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,



Patrizia Heidegger, Deputy Secretary General



Tatiana Santos, Head of Chemicals Policy

² Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Norway

³ WWF, "EU Ministers give blood for chemical check up", 12 July 2004, available at: https://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?14132/EU-Ministers-give-blood-for-chemical-check-up

⁴ WWF, "European Parliamentarians participate in WWF chemicals check-up", 02 December 2003, available at: <https://www.wwf.eu/?10002/European-Parliamentarians-participate-in-WWF-chemicals-check-up>