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International PFAS Conference: Key findings and recommendations published

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large group of more than 21,000 persistent industrial chemicals. PFAS are difficult to break down and can be detected in the environment, the food chain and human blood. Due to their impact on humans and nature, far-reaching restrictions are currently being considered in the European Union (EU).

To highlight the latest advances in research on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances and to identify priority steps for risk assessment in consumer protection, the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) organised an international PFAS conference in Berlin in October 2025. The findings from the meeting and the recommendations derived from them have now been published in the scientific journal “Archives of Toxicology”.

Following the European Food Safety Authority’s (EFSA) 2020 opinion on PFAS, research into these substances is now being conducted more intensively worldwide. At the international PFAS conference, attended by around 200 experts and scientists from 18 countries, key challenges and future prospects for the health risk assessment of PFAS were discussed.

Link to the study: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00204-026-04523-8>

The conference resulted in five overarching recommendations for the future health risk assessment of PFAS:

- **Focus on specific PFAS** – development of objective criteria for prioritising substances, for example based on production volume and human intake of the substances
- **Improving analytical methods** – further developing sensitive techniques and new approaches for identifying and quantifying PFAS
- **Filling data gaps** – systematically collecting and collating reliable data on, amongst other things, exposure and toxicity

- **Promoting open science** – establishing shared data infrastructures and fostering cross-institutional knowledge exchange
- **Strengthening risk communication** – developing clear and consistent communication strategies for the public and decision-makers

The recommendations aim to strengthen the scientific basis for the health risk assessment of PFAS. An improved data base and refined analytical methods can reduce existing uncertainties and enable more robust risk assessments. These, in turn, form an important basis for measures to protect consumer health.

Frequently asked questions on PFAS:

<https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/service/frequently-asked-questions/topic/here-to-stay-per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-in-food-and-in-the-environment/>

About the BfR

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