



## Summary

### **Understanding MCS: A Global Perspective**

**EHAC-ASEC; ASEQ-EHAQ** (Canada), **SOS MCS** (France), **CONFESQ** (Spain), **MCS-Aware** (United Kingdom), **AMICA** (Italy), **MCS Rosenheim** (Germany), **Kato Yasuko** (Japan), **Janice Foster** (Scotland), **AESSRA** (Australia)

The MCS video presentation brought together voices from multiple countries to highlight the global challenges, advocacy work, and lived experiences surrounding Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS). Here is a comprehensive summary of its key messages:

The video is centred around Rohini Peris, President & CEO and Michel Gaudet, Executive Director, of the Environmental Health Association of Canada and the Environmental Health Association of Quebec, who outline the scale and urgency of MCS as a public health and human rights issue in Canada. She shares how over a million people in the country are diagnosed with MCS, yet face barriers in employment, housing, and healthcare due to inadequate policy recognition and a lack of scent-free environments. She highlights initiatives such as the Empowering Community and Removal of Barriers (ECRoB) project and collaborative research with Accessibility Standards Canada, aimed at creating healthier indoor environments and educating decision-makers. The video emphasizes Canada's efforts to promote systemic change, scale advocacy efforts nationally, and influence international policy, including through engagement with the United Nations.

The MCS video featured testimonies from international advocacy groups revealing a shared global struggle for recognition, safety, and dignity for those living with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity. The MCS video features voices from national and international organizations and



advocates, including SOS France, CONFESQ (Spain), MCS Aware (UK), AMICA (Italy), MCS Rosenheim represented by Heidi Wagner (Germany), Kato Yasuko (Japan), Janice Foster (USA), AESSRA (Australia), and Canadian civil society - Maureen Haan, President & CEO, Canadian Council on Rehabilitation & Work; Dr. Jennifer Armstrong, Environmental Health Clinic Ottawa; Melanie Langille, President & CEO NB Lung; Freda Uwa, National Executive Director, Independent Living Canada; Rosa Iacono, Board Member ASEQ-EHAQ; Dr. John Molot, Environmental Medicine; Robert Lattanzio LLB, Executive Director, ARCH Disability Law Centre; Ian Kuster, Lived Experience of MCS, Yukon. Together, they highlight the global scope of MCS and the shared challenges faced by individuals living with MCS worldwide, as well as a call from Canadian civil society for change in accessibility and inclusion for MCS.

Despite regional differences, all speakers highlighted a common pattern: MCS remains largely misunderstood and marginalized within medical, legal, and social systems. Across all testimonies, speakers underscored how MCS affects nearly every aspect of life—from health and employment to social participation and financial security—while sufferers continue to be met with skepticism, misdiagnoses, and a lack of accommodations. In response, these organizations are building coalitions, lobbying for policy reform, raising public awareness, and promoting the urgent adoption of fragrance-free and chemical-safe environments. Their unified message called for global solidarity and policy action, grounded in the belief that clean air and safe public spaces are fundamental human rights.

Across all testimonies, several common themes emerge:

- Lack of official recognition of MCS in medical, legal, and social systems.
- Widespread stigma and misunderstanding, often resulting in the mislabeling of MCS as psychological rather than physiological.
- Housing and employment barriers, with many forced to leave their jobs or live in unsuitable conditions.
- Inaccessible healthcare, particularly in facilities that use fragranced cleaning agents or lack staff trained to recognize MCS.
- Urgent need for policy change, including the adoption of fragrance-free protocols and clearer disability protections.



Despite these challenges, the video conveys a shared sense of resilience and determination among advocates and individuals with MCS. Speakers emphasized the importance of collaboration, education, and political advocacy as key strategies for driving change. The video concludes with a unifying message: that clean air is a human right, and true accessibility must include freedom from harmful chemicals. It calls on the international community to recognize, respect, and protect people with MCS through inclusive laws, healthcare, public spaces, and long-term partnerships.