



**Pesticide
Action
Network**
Europe

NEWSLETTER FLASH NEWS

Welcome to this PAN Europe's newsletter flash focused on the 10th edition of the pesticide action week. Highlighting some of the activities that PAN Europe and our members have done to increase aware of pesticides and the many alternatives.

2015 Pesticide Action Week: 10 years of promoting alternatives to pesticides!

Launched in 2006 by the French Organisation Générations Futures and ACAP, a group of 170 Organisations Citizen Action for Alternative to Pesticides, the Pesticide Action Week is now supported by 50 national and international organisations.

Since its creation in 2006, the operation has been coordinated by the Organisation Générations Futures, which is a specialist on pesticides. During the first 10 days of Spring, the public is invited to find out more about the risks linked to pesticides for both the environment and their health as well as on the existing alternatives. This is facilitated through hundreds of events throughout France and in more and more countries throughout the world.

This year, the Pesticide action week was a great success with more than 20 participating countries and over a thousand events organised. In France it now has 40 national partners, NGOs, unions, corporations, farmers with more than 400 local partners organising events. So now among journalists and decision-makers the Pesticide Action Week has become the major event regarding alternatives to pesticides on the public agenda.



The Pesticide Action Week is an international annual event taking place from March 20th to March 30th which aim is to inform the public about the impacts of pesticides on health and the environment and to promote alternatives.

PAN Europe celebrates the Pesticide Action Week by establishing a home page for voices of pesticides in Europe

Pesticides are found everywhere: in the air and soil, in food, drinking water, even in our blood. Bees are disappearing at an alarming rate. Pesticides destroy the balance of biodiversity. Diseases related to pesticide exposure are multiplying. Citizens are increasingly concerned about the impact of pesticides on their health and the environment.

PAN Europe is regularly contacted by citizens from all backgrounds expressing their concern about pesticide use in towns.

Parents worried about pesticide use in: playgrounds, schools, sports fields, public gardens, dog owners worried about pesticides sprayed on the sidewalk, local tourist guides concerned about spraying of historical monuments, the list goes on...

These stories have up until now gone largely unheard, ignored with those

telling them being left feeling isolated and alone. Aiming to change this and to give a voice to the victims of pesticides PAN Europe decided to use the 10 years Pesticide Action Week to launch the Voices of Pesticides website so that these people need be silent no more:

See: **www.voicesofpesticides.info**

We are encouraging people to share their stories so that the world will know the damage being done to their environment. We want the victims to be heard and we want to use those stories to assist us in stopping or at least reducing, the use of pesticides in all areas.

Voices of Pesticides
around Europe



France celebrates the Pesticide Action Week, by organising a tour de France

The French initiative taker of the Pesticide Action Week, beyond the overall activation of partners also organised a "Tour de France" themed event where each day during the week, one of the French partners organised an event related to a symbolic date in the last ten years. ! For example, they went to Poitiers for a film-showing of '**Death is in the Meadow**' - the testimony of some pesticide victims, to Mouans-Sartoux for the Botanic Shop and their operation removing old pesticides. This event was really symbolic, not only because the Botanic Shops removed pesticides from their departments in 2008 but also because MouansSartoux is a city which has banned pesticides and has a public company for institutional catering using only organic products.

The focus was then on Emmanuel Giboulot's vineyard in Beaune (Burgundy). Emmanuel refused to spray pesticides in his organic vineyard last year when the local authorities had passed a decree forcing wine-growers to use pesticides against a vine illness. This visit and the following conference are organised by our friends from Nature & Progrès.

The Tour de France also took us to Brussels with our European partners regarding the symbolic date of 2009 and the adoption of the Pesticide package by the European Commission, to Lille for a conference with Generations Futures' spokesman François Veillerette on the "French Grenelle de l'Environnement" discussing its successes and its failures.

We also went to Brittany for a press conference with our partners from Eau & Rivières de Bretagne about decrees taken by the prefects to ban spraying pesticides near ditches. We ended in Toulouse for an animated film by Greenpeace, France about bees and the ban of three Neonicotinoids by the European Commission.

On the 30th of March we came back to Paris and had the closing event in the Paris city hall with our partners from Reporterre where we organised a conference with animation and music with impressive speakers and great audiences. This closing event was also a good opportunity to launch our proposals for the next ten years and to send a clear message to decision-makers to take real action to protect human health and the environment.



The whole French territory covered

Through the diversity of the events The Pesticide Action Week is able to appeal to broadly different people and organisations. This year in France, we had many organic farms opening their doors, workshops on how to garden without pesticides, visits and walks around organic farm showing people how to recognise different plants, film-shows, most shown being **“Death is in the Meadow”** by Eric Gueret, in particular in the Bordelais - a region famous for its wine, a musical show about medicinal natural plants used in the past to heal people took place in the Brittany region, organic wine testing in Burgundy and many more.

This year, events were organised in almost every French region with four of them being the most active, launching events nearly every day of the week. The PACA region for example organised a whole regional pesticide action week including an opening scientific conference on the links between pesticides and health, a visit to a military cemetery where they do not use any chemical treatments and several film showings. Alsace was also really active in promoting the alternatives to pesticides since more than 80 events were organised in the region over the 10 days. They had different workshops on how to heal with natural plants, how to make our own compost and they also had a whole day dedicated to raising awareness on the bees issue. Over the 10 days more than 500 people participated showing the importance and value of the event to the public.



Belgium celebrates the Pesticide Action Week, by organising a range of activities across Wallonia and Brussels

The 8th Pesticide-Free Week was held from 20 to 30 March 2015. This campaign took place at the same time as the "Pesticides Action Week" organised mainly in France. Since 2008 Adalia, a non-profit association, has coordinated the campaign in Wallonia, Belgium.

The United Nations General Assembly designated 22 March as the World Water Day. So this year, we decided to invite local authorities and associations to discuss the impact of pesticides on the environment and to focus on water pollution.

This Spring 157 activities were organised such as conferences, exhibitions, visits, demonstrations and debates. Adalia organised an opening event, inviting all the people that made this Pesticide-Free Week possible. The event included a funny "one-man show" performance that discussed pesticides and their impact on our lives.

During the campaign, a photo contest was organised on our website. People could publish pictures with a positive or negative aspect on the subject. Everyone could vote for their favourite pictures and the most famous photos were rewarded with special prizes.

We are very happy to see that the Belgian Pesticide-free week has strong public support and is expanding each year. We hope that one day this campaign will no longer be needed since everyone has gone pesticide-free!



Foundation Vivo Sano, Spain celebrates the Pesticide Action Week, by organising a call to Spanish politicians on introducing pesticide reduction targets

Foundation Vivo Sano and 12 other organisations: WWF, Greenpeace, Ecologistas en Acción, SEO Birdlife, Asociación Vida Sana and Fodesam, have asked a number of political parties to include detailed pesticide reduction programmes in their local and national political campaigns.

The proposal includes a minimum initial reduction of 30% of pesticide use in the first five years, with continuing cuts in subsequent years. The strategy follows successful plans such as Ecophyto in France, which proposed a reduction in pesticide use by 50% by 2015, and the Pesticide Danish Strategy, which achieved a reduction in pesticide use of 40% between 2011 and 2014.

Adding to this, the group, led by Foundation Vivo Sano, asked political parties to propose national policies that support ecological agriculture. These should include such measures as the doubling of organic agricultural area as a percentage of the total at least every five years, the setting up of professional criteria for integrating pest management in organic and nonorganic farming, training schemes for farmers and measures to encourage the use of environmentally friendly products in public premises such as schools and health centres.

At a municipal level, the undersigned organisations call on political parties to support the elimination of the use of synthetic pesticides in parks and urban green areas, the restriction of their use in private gardens and the reduction of their use domestically and the prioritising of non-chemical alternatives.



Fundación
Vivo Sano



PAN Italy celebrates the Pesticide Action Week, by organising a conference on pesticide use in towns

During the tenth edition of the international pesticide action week, PAN-Italia organised an interesting event with some special guest speakers. The event, which took place in Verona on the 28th of March 2015 titled: Alternatives to Pesticides: the moment of the villages.

The first presentation was about the Italian village of Malles Venosta, in which the first referendum in Italy against the use of pesticides took place in 2014. Koen Hertoge and Friedrich Haring, both active supporters of the referendum and members of the promotion team for a Pesticide-Free Village Malles Venosta, had the opportunity to present the village with their referendum results and it's current implementation. The citizens of Malles Venosta voted against the use of chemically-synthetic pesticides in their village.

Patrizia Gentilini, a medical doctor and Member of ISDE, made an impressive impact on the audience with some interesting insights on how the health of people, mainly children, is negatively impacted by the growing use of chemically-synthetic pesticides. During her more than 30 year long career, Patrizia Gentilini did in-depth scientific research on the long-term effects of pesticides published in medical journals worldwide.

After a short-break, Fabio Taffetani, President of PAN-Italia and Professor at the University Ancona, informed us about the effects of pesticide on nature and the problems caused by the decline

of biodiversity. His statement was well-supported by visuals shown during his presentation, creating a deep awareness of the huge problems relating to that decline.

In the end, it was Tiziano Quaini from the Association of Organic Producers in Veneto, who showed us one possible solution. His presentation consisted of a comparison between industrial and organic farming, both from a financial and non-financial point-of-view. Organic agriculture could give better returns to the farmers whilst at the same time contributing to nature and biodiversity.

For this event the audience consisted mainly of Italians, with also visitors from Austria, Germany and Belgium attending who were all convinced that an agricultural system based on the intensive use of pesticides is a dead-end street and the only solution is organic farming. The European policy makers should re-think their agriculture strategy in order to cope with the needs of the citizens and the environment.



Germany celebrates the Pesticide Action Week organising an PAN Appeal for a ban of Highly Hazardous Pesticides

PAN Germany strengthened it's activities to support the PAN International Appeal for a ban of Highly Hazardous Pesticides (see: <http://tinyurl.com/pan-project>)

Meanwhile (7 May 2015) 288 organisations from 80 countries signed this important Appeal. This initiative will continue. Therefore PAN Germany wants to encourage all those organisations who did not sign the appeal yet, to also sign. You just need to send the following information to:
carina.weber@pan-germany.org:
full name of the organisation,
country, name of the contact person,
email of the contact person.

