



**Pesticide
Action
Network**
Europe

To: Siim Kiisler
Minister of the Environment
President of the EU Environment Council
Narva mnt 7a
15172 Tallinn, Estonia

Cc: Tarmo Tamm
Estonian Minister of Rural Affairs
President of the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council
Lai tn 39// Lai tn 41 15056 Tallinn, Estonia

Brussels, 24 October 2017

Open letter: A contribution to the flagship conference ‘Nature-based Solutions: From Innovation to Common-use’

Dear Mr President,

Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN-E) is a Brussels based NGO, which, together with 38 national members, works to replace hazardous pesticides with sustainable alternatives.

First of all, we would like to congratulate You and the University of Tallin for having taken the initiative to organize the conference on ‘[Nature-Based Solutions \(NBS\): from Innovative to Common Use](#)’, starting today in Estonia.

We are pleased to notice that in the section on ‘**Blue Green Infrastructures in Smart Cities**’ you mention the concept of smart towns. Over the past two decades, some Member States (i.e. Denmark and Netherlands) have begun the transition toward pesticide-free towns, and this tendency is now spreading widely (Germany, France, Belgium and Luxemburg). Many cities across Europe, notably in Spain, Germany, Italy and the UK are also engaging in this strategy. What is smarter than making towns pesticide-free? All towns going pesticide-free are going through the same phases, from having to think short-term to having to start thinking long-term. Every town going pesticide-free needs to move from killing to *managing* pests, and as a result to start working with nature (rather than against it), ensuring the uptake of nature-based solutions. Being a pesticide-free town is therefore not only a good example of how nature-based solutions can improve citizens’ well-being and prevent degradation of ecosystems, it is, also, inextricably intertwined with other efforts for nature-based use of urban systems.

We are very pleased also to see that the session on ‘**Ecological Restoration Through Eco-Innovation**’ also calls on the agricultural sector to apply nature-based solutions by making reference to alternative methods like pheromones (as a replacement to insecticides). We

would like to remind you that Member States are already allowed to offer farmers financial support for the uptake of pheromones and other non-chemical techniques as part of the current Rural Development Program. [A few Member States](#) have already been doing so since 2000, particularly encouraging the uptake of alternatives to insecticides and herbicides. However, to ensure real 'ecological restoration of natural ecosystems through natural methods' what is needed is a holistic approach, meaning the uptake of real Integrated Pest Management (IPM), especially as the EU Directive on Sustainable Use of Pesticides (SUDP) foresees that farmers apply good agronomic practices. Despite the fact that such an approach would allow for a significant reduction of pesticide dependency, is it however far from the model that the [Common Agricultural Policy](#) is currently promoting.

We would like to conclude by calling on the Estonian, Bulgarian and Austrian presidencies to give the NBS the highest priority in the environmental and agricultural policy agenda, as well as in research and innovation while ensuring adequate funding. Thank you in advance for your consideration of our contribution.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping, fluid strokes that form a stylized, somewhat abstract shape.

Francois Veillerette
PAN Europe