



## PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 14 February 2019

### **EP's Environment Committee CAP vote is a Valentine's Day letter encouraging the sector to work WITH nature!**

The European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (COM ENVI) has today adopted an opinion on the reform of EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). PAN Europe welcomes the vote and emphasises that by lifting the environment, health and climate ambitions of the CAP reform, COM ENVI has contributed to create longer term perspectives for both farmers and all EU citizens and taxpayers.

EU agriculture should work with nature not against it. This is the main message of COM ENVI's opinion on the CAP strategic plan voted today. COM ENVI proposes to reinforce the conditionality that farmers need to comply with to receive 100% CAP direct payments in the future. The opinion emphasises some of the best alternatives to using pesticides: good agronomic practices.

The opinion proposes opening up several instruments allowing farmers to finally start applying Integrated Pest Management as foreseen in the EU's Directive on Sustainable Use of Pesticides (1).

Specifically, the opinion updates the so-called Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC) and the Statutory Mandatory Requirements (SMRs) which are conditional on receiving full CAP direct payments to farmers, but also proposes to upgrade the CAP-funded Farm Advisory Services so that they offer independent assistance to farmers taking up alternatives pest control techniques (2).

The GAEC rules adopted by COM ENVI foresee: applying four years' crop rotation with legumes, while encouraging farmers to build up functional biodiversity (pollinators, predators of pests) by integrating nature aspects into their fields, and protect water bodies from pesticides. It also foresees that farmers receiving direct payments need to prepare input management plans (3).

The SMRs adopted by COM ENVI foresee that payments will be conditional upon keeping records of pesticide use for three years (4). This is key to measure progress in reducing pesticide dependency, allowing member states to set objectives for pesticide use reduction in their CAP plans.

*"Negotiations in the lead Agriculture Committee (COM AGRI) are ongoing; because of shared competence over environmental aspects, COM AGRI is obliged to take these issues on board. By introducing a planning aspect and putting focus on functional biodiversity and crop rotation, COM ENVI is contributing in farming becoming part of the solution to our nature crisis (5) driven by pesticide use. We urge COM AGRI to follow COM ENVI's ambitious line."* says Henriette Christensen, PAN Europe's Senior Agriculture Advisor.

#### **Notes:**

- (1) The Directive 2009/128/EC on sustainable use of pesticides Directive (SUD) foresees that Member States set up systems to assist farmers financially and technically in uptake of non-chemical alternatives and agro-ecological practices, and in this way encourage farmers to apply Integrated Pest Management and reduce their dependency on pesticides. A European Commission report (COM(2017) 587 final) on implementation of the SUD says: *Integrated Pest Management is a cornerstone of the Directive, and it is therefore of particular concern that Member States have not yet set clear targets and ensured their implementation, including for the more widespread use of land management techniques such as crop rotation.*
- (2) The following compromise amendment was adopted in article 15 of the CAP strategic plans, including:



- The farm advisory services shall cover at least the following: transition to and maintaining agro-ecological practices, including agroforestry; Farm Sustainability Tool for Nutrients and Input Reductions
- (3) The Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC) have been updated adding the part in bold to the European Commission text:
- GAEC 4: Establishment of buffer strips along water courses **with a minimum width of 3 m and on which no fertilisers and plant protection products may be used**  
Reason: Protection of river courses, pollinators, water supplies and aquatic species or ecosystems against pollution, toxicity and run-off
- GAEC 5: Use of Farm Sustainability Tool for Nutrients **and Input Reduction**  
Reason: Sustainable management of nutrients, pesticides and veterinary products, as appropriate to the size and intensity of the holding
- GAEC 8: Minimum **four years** crop rotation **including a leguminous crop**  
Reason: Preserve the soil potential
- GAEC 9: Minimum share of **7 %** of agricultural area devoted to non-productive features or areas **where no synthetic pesticides and fertilisers are used**  
Reason: Maintenance of non-productive features and area to improve on-farm biodiversity including functional biodiversity and beneficial species
- (4) The opinion updated the Statutory Mandatory Requirements (SMRs) so that now SMR 12 is respect of articles 55 and 67 of Regulation 1107/2009 on placing of plant protection products on the market, meaning farmers need to apply legal pesticides and record pesticides use for three years. Adding this aspect to SMR 12 is crucial in building up EU indicators on pesticide use: The European Commission has proposed to add a new SMR, SMR 13, relating to Directive 2009/128/EC on sustainable use of pesticides (SUD), see [here](#), but failed to include Integrated Pest Management, which according to the SUD is mandatory as from January 2014. Instead, the Commission proposed to add other aspects (Art.5(2), Art.8(1-5), Art.12 and Art.13(1) and (3)). COM ENVI has added article 14 to the list of articles covered by SMR13.
- (5) “Plummeting insect numbers ‘threaten collapse of nature’” Guardian, 10 February 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/feb/10/plummeting-insect-numbers-threaten-collapse-of-nature>

#### CONTACT :

**Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN Europe)**, Henriette Christensen, +32473375671, [henriette@pan-europe.info](mailto:henriette@pan-europe.info)

**BeeLife European Beekeeping Coordination**, Andrés SALAZAR, +32 492 53 99 77, [comms@bee-life.eu](mailto:comms@bee-life.eu)

**ARCHE NOAH (Noah’s Ark) Seedsavers’ Association**, Goncalo Macedo, + 32 (0) 497 068 396, [goncalo.macedo@arche-noah.at](mailto:goncalo.macedo@arche-noah.at)