



POSITION PAPER

A STEP FORWARD FOR PESTICIDE-FREE TOWNS:

Enacting a Europe-Wide Full Ban on Non-Agricultural Use of Pesticides

In May 2017, the French Senate approved an EU resolution¹ calling on the European Union (EU) to ban all non-agricultural use of pesticides. The resolution also asked the EU to examine the extent to which European legislation could prohibit the use of pesticides by public bodies as well as the sale of pesticides to private individuals²³.

During the event “Pesticide Free Towns: European policies, local strategies and future perspectives” held on 27th September 2018 in the European Parliament, Members of the European Parliament and Mayors of European cities and towns signed a joint declaration asking the European Institutions and Member States for a Europe-wide full ban on non-agricultural uses of pesticides. In line with the latter, PAN Europe calls on the EU institutions to seriously consider the French Senate’s resolution and enact a Europe-wide full ban on non-agricultural uses of pesticides.

Pesticide-free towns across Europe are on the move with an ever increasing number of European cities and towns deciding to ban the use of chemical pesticides in public areas. While some European cities have decades of experience⁴, more progressive governments in France, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands have developed national regulations for

¹“International Press Conference calling for an EU-wide non-agricultural pesticide ban” <https://www.pan-europe.info/press-releases/2017/05/international-press-conference-calling-eu-wide-non-agricultural-pesticide-ban>

² Proposition de résolution Européenne présentée en application de l'article 73 quinquies du Règlement, visant à limiter l'utilisation des produits phytosanitaires au sein de l'Union, <http://www.senat.fr/leg/ppr16-477.html>

³ In France, pesticides are banned in all green public spaces since January 2017 with the exception of on railways, airports and roadways. The same law called "Labbé Law" will prohibit the use of pesticides in private gardens as well as selling of pesticides to non-professional users as of January 2019.

⁴ See the pioneer pesticide free towns <http://www.pesticide-free-towns.info/pioneers>

a zero use of pesticides in public areas while some Member States have introduced bans on non-professional uses for private gardens⁵.

Taking a further step in the Pesticide-Free Towns Campaign that PAN launched back in 2015⁶, PAN Europe has recently kicked off a European Network of Pesticide-Free Towns⁷, to bring together a critical mass of towns committed to becoming pesticide-free and to raise political awareness at all levels (local, national, regional and EU).

Against this background, PAN Europe calls on the European Commission to develop a regulatory framework ensuring a full ban on non-agricultural uses of pesticides while setting up a financial instrument to accompany the non-toxic transition both at local, regional, national and EU level.

While working towards a full EU-wide ban on non-agricultural uses of pesticides, PAN Europe calls for the following measures to be established at the EU and at national levels (including but not limited to):

1. **A favourable political context for towns to ban pesticides:** The EU Directive on Sustainable Use of Pesticide calls in article 11 for pesticides to be minimised or banned in specific areas, including towns. An accompanying legal mechanism should be established at EU level to protect towns enacting a total ban on pesticide use to improve urban biodiversity, protect citizens' health, and/or protect water⁸. It is not acceptable that in many cases where a city decides to protect its citizens' health, the environment or the quality of its groundwater by banning pesticides, it is automatically sued either by the pesticides industry or farmer's unions. It is a matter of democracy!
2. **Restrictions for pesticide use in public areas and private use:** the European Commission should set restrictions when authorising pesticide active substances, except basic substances and some permitted in organic agriculture, for their use in

⁵ See the national policies and strategies www.pesticide-free-towns.info/policy-strategies

⁶ <http://www.pesticide-free-towns.info>

⁷ See the current members of the European Network www.pesticide-free-towns.info/towns-network

⁸ <https://www.low-impact-farming.info/non-toxic-areas>

public areas and for their use by non-professional users in private gardens (with no exception).

3. **Pesticide-free EU Green Capital:** The European Commission should build on the already integrated questions on pesticide use in public areas and make a special part with specific questions on pesticide-free management of public areas for laureates of the Green Capital and Green leaf awards. PAN Europe's campaign on pesticide-free towns⁹ presents many inspiring stories of EU Green Capital Laureates, where pesticides are banned and mayors together with citizens have been dynamically taking actions to achieve a city where nature and well-being are a priority. EU Green Capital Award should seriously promote these progressive actions, and pesticide free should become a selection criteria.
4. **A strategy for a non-toxic environment:** The European Commission should proceed with its communication on a non-toxic environment foreseen for publication in 2018¹⁰ as put forward in the 7th European Action Programme and set clear targets and timetables to achieve a non-toxic urban environment with measures including banning pesticide uses in public areas and for private use.

Finally, it should not be forgotten that urban uses of pesticides are not the only source of exposure for citizens. Pesticide residues in food as well as exposure through drift from pesticide-dependent industrial agriculture are major causes of exposure¹¹. There is an urgent need for a European approach to adequately protect citizens against pesticide exposure. These issues should therefore be seriously considered in the current Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) discussions.

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⁹ www.pesticide-free-towns.info

¹⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/non-toxic/index_en.htm

¹¹ See the recent playground study conducted in South Tyrol/Italy www.pan-europe.info/press-releases/2017/11/new-report-reveals-playgrounds-are-contaminated-south-tyrolitaly