



**Pesticide  
Action  
Network**  
Europe

Brussels, 20 November 2023

**Subject: Call upon Members of the European Parliament to support a Strong SUR at Plenary Vote, for the future of our farmers, citizens and biodiversity**

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

We write to you in view of the plenary vote on the proposal for a Regulation on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides (SUR), on 22nd of November. The SUR is of very broad public interest, and can have far-reaching impacts on the well-being and welfare of current and future generations. **Sustainable farming practices and a healthy environment are the essential foundation of a prosperous future for EU citizens, ecosystems and agricultural areas.**

An effective SUR is needed to tackle the shortcomings of the current Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive (SUD). Despite the urgent challenges and demands of citizens and scientists, the SUR has faced major opposition and watering down through pressure from the agro-chemical industry. **It is essential that your votes reflect science and the public interest, and that the provisions of the SUR proposal are not further watered down.** Therefore we respectfully ask you to:

- Support the compromise amendments put forward by the European Parliament's **Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI)**
- Support the **precautionary principle (Amendments 2, 63 and 263)**
- **Support amendments 454 and 455**, to ensure that also the **retail sector**, which has an important position in the food chain, takes responsibility in reducing pesticides. It is key that meaningful engagements are established between the retail sector and farmers, to swiften the transition towards sustainable food production practices.
- **Support amendments 456-458** on the importance of **promotion of practices based on the principles of agroecology and other practices focusing on more sustainable and effectively resilient production systems**, on the **use of resistant or tolerant cultivars** and high quality, not genetically modified organisms, or certified seed and planting material, and enforcement of **measures to ensure that the volume and width of watercourses and channels are not reduced as a result of this Regulation.**
- **Support amendment 302 on monitoring of PPP residues and their metabolites in the environment and in humans.**
- **Support amendments 376, 377 and 378 on Trade and cooperation with third countries** (import, export, dialogue)

- **Not support amendment 395**, as this amendment would delete the option of using funds of the Common Agricultural Policy to during a transition period support farmers in implementing requirements of the SUR. CAP funds comprise about one third of the EU budget, and should be above all used to support public goods such as ecosystem services, by changing to sustainable practices.
- **Support amendment 660** on Transparency requirements for manufacturers of plant protection products.
- **To not support amendments 429-453, 459-659 and 661-681, 684-687.** .

A large and growing body of scientific research underlines the harmful effects of pesticides on the **health of citizens and biodiversity**. The large group of pesticides which were authorised and later banned show that legislation has not been able to protect citizens and the environment from harmful pesticides.

Farmers, children and women are at particular risk, but all citizens are vulnerable. We are not only exposed to pesticides through food; exposure through skin and inhalation is prevalent (Annex 1). Scientists acknowledge these impacts are greatly underestimated, as also cumulative effects and the synergistic effects of pesticide cocktails and the interaction with other environmental pollutants are largely overlooked in risk assessment. Recently published research of the EU Sprint Project shows that **pesticide residues are pervasive in both agricultural environments and residential settings**. 86% of samples contained pesticides residues, while 76% contained mixtures of pesticides. **In total, 197 different pesticides were found in the dust of houses.**

The **collapse of biodiversity<sup>1,2,3</sup>** as well as the high level of pesticide pollution in **water bodies and other ecosystems**, are of great concern. **Healthy ecosystems and the services they deliver are a prerequisite for human well-being, resilient food production systems and a healthy economy.**

**Successful examples of farmers applying IPM**, in diverse cropping systems across Europe, show that the EU has the know-how to carry out the needed system change towards sustainable practices.

**The costs of not tackling health impacts and environmental degradation, far outweigh any predicted costs related to pesticide reductions<sup>4</sup>.**

**Citizens have repeatedly sent you a clear message:** they don't want you to gamble with their health and the environment, when it comes to pesticides, as shown by a recent poll. The results of this poll confirm the demands and concerns that citizens have expressed before, such as in the Conference for the Future of Europe, through multiple Eurobarometer surveys, public consultations and 2 European Citizens Initiatives (ECI's) (Annex 2).

**Scientists confirm citizens' concerns:** Recently, 6000 scientists have again expressed their support for the EU's Green Deal, and rejected the arguments against the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation and the Nature Restoration Law. (Annex 2).

<sup>1</sup> Hallmann et al., 2017. More than 75 percent decline over 27 years in total flying insect biomass in protected areas

<sup>2</sup> Brühl et al., 2021. Direct pesticide exposure of insects in nature conservation areas in Germany

<sup>3</sup> Rigal et al., 2023. Farmland practices are driving bird population decline across Europe

<sup>4</sup> UBA, 2022. Towards sustainable plant protection. Alliot et al., 2022. The social costs of pesticide use in France. Basic, 2021. Pesticides. A model that's costing us dearly.

**Given all of the above, we respectfully though urgently ask you to support an ambitious SUR, to engage in science-based decision-making, and to fulfil your duty to represent the public interest of current and future generations.**

Your Sincerely,

Kristine De Schamphelaere, PAN Europe

Natalija Svrtan, PAN Europe

## **Annex 1**

Farmers, farmworkers and inhabitants of agricultural areas are at particular risk of adverse health impacts by pesticides<sup>5,6</sup>, with data showing higher concentrations of pesticides in their blood and increased genotoxicity. Pesticides are shown to drift over far distances, up to several kms. Links have been shown between pesticide exposure and many illnesses, such as forms of cancers (e.g. Non-Hodgkin lymphoma, multiple myeloma, skin melanoma, ovarian, breast, brain, lip and prostate cancers) and neurodegenerative disorders (Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease). Particularly vulnerable are also women and children, with pesticide exposure related to disturbances of the reproductive system<sup>7,8</sup>, fertility disorders as well as neurodevelopmental alterations in newborns. Even low levels of pesticide exposure can interfere with the neurological and behavioural development of children (neonatal reflexes, psychomotor and mental development and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder).

## **Annex 2**

In the [EU public consultation](#) on the Common Agricultural Policy in 2017 respondents showed a concern for environmental challenges, such as the prevention of biodiversity loss and prevention and reduction of water pollution (pesticides, fertilizers). Also in 2017, more than 1 million citizens asked the European Commission and the Member States, through a successful [ECI for a ban on glyphosate](#). The [final report of the Conference for the Future of Europe](#) (2022) included the need to drastically reduce pesticide use. The 2022 [Eurobarometer survey on Food safety in the EU](#) listed pesticide residues in food as the most frequently selected concern related to food safety. In 2022, more than 1 million citizens raised their voice again, through the [ECI 'Save Bees and Farmers'](#), for phasing out 80% of pesticides by 2030 and 100% by 2035. Of the 9 successful ECI's that have been submitted to the European Commission, 2 were focused on pesticides. Civil Society organizations also gathered important demands for a strong SUR [in a Joint Statement](#).

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<sup>5</sup> [Figueiredo et al., 2019](#). Spatio-temporal variation of outdoor and indoor pesticide air concentrations in homes near agricultural fields

<sup>6</sup> [Dereumeaux et al., 2020](#). Pesticide exposures for residents living close to agricultural lands: A review

<sup>7</sup> [Bretveld et al., 2006](#). Pesticide exposure: the hormonal function of the female reproductive system disrupted?

<sup>8</sup> [Farr et al., 2004](#). Pesticide use and menstrual cycle characteristics among premenopausal women in the Agricultural Health Study,

### Annex 3

In 2022, [668 scientists](#) warned that “political efforts to abandon the sustainability targets of the Farm to Fork strategy (including pesticide use) do not shield us from the current crisis, they rather worsen it and make the crisis permanent”. Soon after, [739 scientists](#) called for an ambitious Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation, as “The heavy use of pesticides in agriculture is strongly linked to declines in insects, birds, biodiversity in terrestrial and aquatic systems and detrimental impacts on global public health”. Recently, [6000 scientists](#) expressed their support for the EU’s Green Deal, and rejected the arguments against the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation and the Nature Restoration Law. They highlight that restoring nature and reducing the use of agrochemicals is essential for maintaining long-term production capacity and enhancing food security.

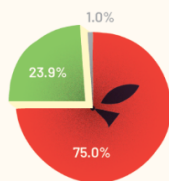
# PESTICIDES: PLAY IT SAFE!

Opinion poll shows Europeans are opposed to gambling with pesticides.

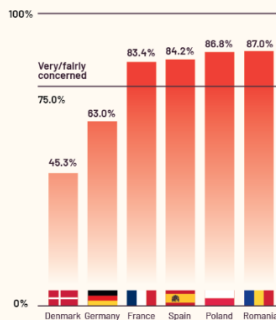
Citizens of Denmark, France, Germany, Poland, Romania and Spain representing the EU population, send these messages

## HEALTHY FOOD AND FARMING

How concerned, if at all, are you about the healthiness of food items

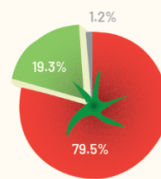


Very/fairly concerned  
Not very/not at all concerned  
N/A or DK

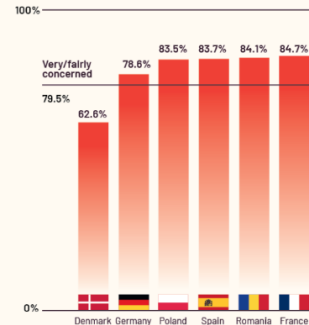


## ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY FARMING

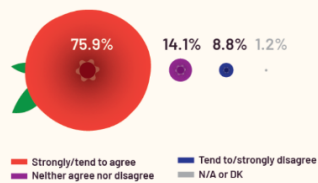
How concerned, if at all, are you about environmental impact of farming and food production methods



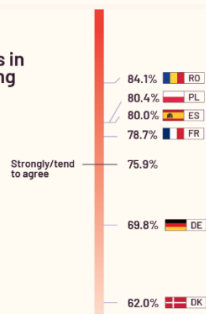
Very/fairly concerned  
Not very/not at all concerned  
N/A or DK



Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree? I worry about how the use of pesticides in farming and food production is affecting my health/my family's health



Strongly/tend to agree  
Neither agree nor disagree  
Tend to/strongly disagree  
N/A or DK



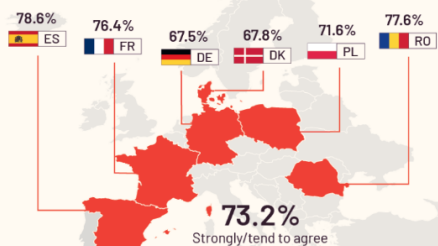
How concerned, if at all, are you about environmental impact of pesticides use in farming and food production

Very/fairly concerned  
Not very/not at all concerned  
N/A or DK



## ENSURE MANDATORY IPM

Do you agree or disagree that IPM rules should be mandatory for farmers in the EU?



## PUBLIC MONEY ONLY FOR PUBLIC GOODS NO FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR HARMFUL PRACTICES

Which of the following statements, if any, comes closest to your own view?

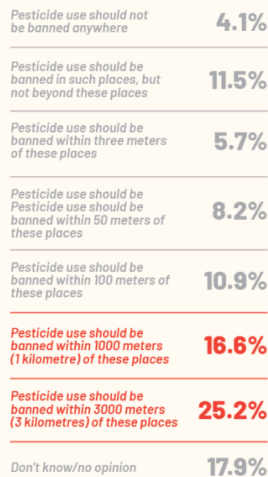


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## PROTECT CITIZENS AND NATURE FROM PESTICIDE DRIFTS

Which of the following statements, if any, comes closest to your own view?

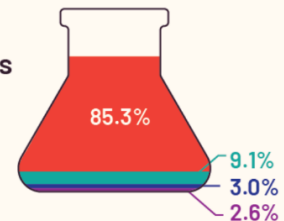


## RESPECT PRECAUTIONARY APPROACH

Imagine that new scientific evidence emerges indicating that a particular pesticide may cause harm to human health and/or the environment.

Do you agree or disagree that the use of that pesticide should be halted by public authorities until more is known?

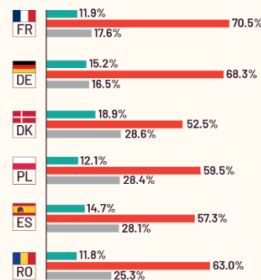
Strongly/tend to agree  
Neither agree nor disagree  
Tend to/strongly disagree  
N/A or DK



## NO GLYPHOSATE

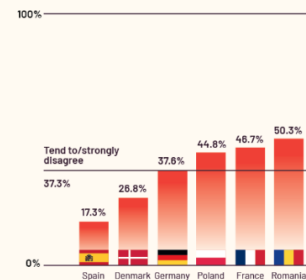
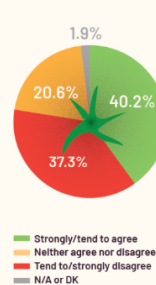
Given these different opinions, which of the following comes closest to your own view?

The use of glyphosate should continue to be allowed in the EU  
The use of glyphosate should be banned in the EU  
Don't know/no opinion



## CAN WE TRUST OUR GOVERNMENTS?

Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree? When it comes to making decisions about the use of pesticides, I trust the government to prioritise protecting the health of citizens and the environment



## CLIMATE-NEUTRAL AGRICULTURE

How concerned, if at all, are you about impact of climate change on farming and food production

Very/fairly concerned  
Not very/not at all concerned  
N/A or DK



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