

Open letter

To:

MEP Pierfrancesco Maran, Chair of the Committee on Environment, Climate, and Food Safety
MEP Veronika Vrecionová, Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

Cc:

MEPs Herbert Dorfmann and Michele Picaro, Rapporteurs on the Food and Feed Safety Simplification proposal
MEPs Biljana Borzan, Gheorge Cărciu, Benoit Cassart, Carlo Fidanza, Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, Anja Hazekamp, Jessica Polfjård, Anna Strolenberg, Tilly Metz, Shadow rapporteurs

Brussels, 20 August 2026

Subject: Serious concerns regarding the conflicts of interest and the lack of expertise on health, water and environment of the speakers invited to the 2 September ENVI-AGRI hearing on the Food and Feed Safety Omnibus

Dear Chairs,

I am writing to express PAN Europe's significant concern about the composition of the speakers selected for the joint ENVI-AGRI public hearing on 2 September 2026 concerning the Food and Feed Safety Omnibus. The hearing provides representation to organisations whose roles or affiliations are linked to pesticide-intensive farming models, yet lack experts in human toxicology, environmental health, or pesticide risk assessment.

For example, the Institute of Sugar Beet Research's sole sponsor, the Verein der Zuckerindustrie e.V. (VdZ), and its closely linked sister organisation the Wirtschaftliche Vereinigung Zucker (WVZ), have a documented track record of lobbying German federal and state governments for emergency neonicotinoid authorisations in sugar beet cultivation¹. Likewise, the Südtiroler Beratungsring für Obst- und Weinbau is advising fruit and wine growers on pesticide use within intensive, largely monoculture production systems in South Tyrol. Official Italian statistics show that South Tyrol has among the highest levels of pesticide sales and pesticide use per hectare in the EU². This raises questions about the relevance of giving

¹ [Neonicotinoids | Sugar associations](#); [BVL grants emergency use authorisation for neonicotinoid beet dressing | agrarheute.com](#)

² [Sprayed apples for all of Europe | oekom Verlag](#); [Active substances - provinces \(ISTAT\)](#)

prominent space to a speaker representing a highly chemical-intensive agricultural system. Finally, Copa-Cogeca has been documented as actively coordinating lobbying activities with CropLife Europe, the pesticide industry's own European lobby³. Its Cereals Working Party is chaired by the French wheat producers' association (Association Générale des Producteurs de Blé), which represents the interests of large-scale, export-oriented grain producers. Their speaker is a member of the French agrocooperative union (Fédération nationale des syndicats d'exploitants agricoles), which has close ties to major agricultural cooperatives, several of which make substantial profit from pesticide distribution⁴.

Inviting speakers with such blatant conflicts of interests is particularly concerning given that the primary objective of EU pesticide legislation is to ensure a high level of protection of human health and the environment, in line with the Treaty of the Functioning of the EU. This objective must remain the guiding principle for MEPs when assessing the Omnibus proposal, including in the context of this public hearing.

Only one of the six speakers is an actively publishing scientist with expertise in pesticide risk assessment. This lack of expertise in pesticides' impacts on human health is all the more striking given that many independent scientists and experts have already scrutinised the Omnibus proposal and published analyses⁵. We therefore see no reason why such expertise should not be represented in the hearing.

We would also like to recall that public concern about pesticides is both strong and long-standing. A recent IPSOS poll found that around 80% of respondents are concerned about the impact of pesticides on human health and the environment and support significant reductions in pesticide use⁶. This is also consistent with the priorities expressed by citizens during the Conference on the Future of Europe, under the first von der Leyen Commission.

³ [A loud lobby for a silent spring | Corporate Europe Observatory](#)
[Leak: industrial farm lobbies' coordinated attack on Farm to Fork targets | Corporate Europe Observatory](#)
[Scandal exposed: targeted undermining of the farm to fork strategy by US PR firms | Corporate Europe Observatory](#)

⁴ [Pourquoi la FNSEA est-elle accro au glyphosate ? - Basta!](#)

⁵ Joint Scientific Statement on Pesticides in the Omnibus Package (December 2025). Available at:
<https://sites.google.com/view/scientificstatementpesticides/home>.

Douhaire, Caroline and Haug-Jurgan, Yannis, The Lawfulness of the Planned Amendments through the "Food and Feed Safety Omnibus" (January 2026). Available at:
https://www.pan-europe.info/sites/pan-europe.info/files/public/resources/press-releases/Legal%20Opinion%20Food%20and%20Feed%20Safety%20Omnibus_final2.pdf.

Wintermantel, Dimitry et al., "EU Omnibus Proposal Increases Pesticide Risks," Science 392 (2026), 1348–1351. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aeg8744>.

Teppe, Kim and Backhaus, Thomas, Simplification and the Level of Protection: Primary Law Limits and Legislative Discretion in the Food and Feed Safety Omnibus (June 2026). Available at:
https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=6994578.

Leopoldina, Planned Amendment to the Authorisation of Plant Protection Substances: EU Commission Proposals Reduce the Level of Protection for Humans and the Environment (Halle (Saale), 2026).
https://doi.org/10.26164/leopoldina_03_01416.

⁶ [IPSOS Poll_Play it safe!](#)

Moreover, concerns about pesticide residues and contamination of food have consistently featured among citizens' priorities in successive Eurobarometer surveys⁷. These concerns should be reflected in the composition of the hearing panels, yet in our view they are currently insufficiently represented.

Given that the proposed amendments would directly affect the level of risk to citizens and the environment, we believe that it is essential that MEPs, as representatives of European citizens, have access to a sufficiently broad range of independent scientific expertise. This would help ensure that the Parliament is able to assess the Commission's proposals on the basis of the best available scientific evidence and take decisions that are scientifically sound and appropriately informed.

We therefore urge the ENVI and AGRI Chairs to reconsider the hearing programme before 2 September, in particular by adding recognised independent scientific and public-interest speakers, and removing those with conflicts of interest. We also ask that the relevant institutional affiliations and funding relationships of invited speakers be made transparent, so that MEPs and the public can properly assess the perspectives presented.

PAN Europe remains at your disposal to increase the expertise and the relevance of the hearing.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Martin Dermine
Executive Director
Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN Europe)

⁷ [Citizens' Demands for Pesticide Reduction in Europe](#)