

Subcommittee on Human Rights
Delegation for relations with South Africa
The Chairs

D 203050 01.07.2026

EXPO-A-DROI D (2026)17336

Ms Jessika Roswall
Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy
European Commission

Dear Commissioner,

We are writing concerning the human rights implications of exporting pesticides that are prohibited in the European Union because of their harmful effects on human health and the environment. These substances are still legally manufactured in EU Member States and exported to third countries, with less stringent regulations.

In an exchange we held on 18 March in the DROI Subcommittee, in association with Parliament's Delegation for Relations with South Africa, we heard from top-level experts, including former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights from 2008 to 2014 judge Navanethem Pillay, how this practice endangers local communities and agricultural workers, who continue facing exposure to hazardous chemicals that affect their human right to health and a healthy environment.

South Africa is an unfortunate example that illustrates the consequences of this situation.

In recent years, the European Commission has acknowledged the urgency of this issue and has taken steps toward regulating the export of banned pesticides. The 2020 Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability included a commitment to address this matter, and an impact assessment was launched to this end. Then followed announcements of legislation planned for 2023 and, more recently, the reaffirmation of this commitment in the 2025 Communication on the Vision for Agriculture and Food.

However, we regret that despite these repeated commitments, no concrete action has yet been implemented and no legislation proposed. The status quo persists, allowing the continued export of hazardous pesticides to South Africa and other countries.

This delay undermines the European Union's credibility as a global leader in human rights, environmental protection, and sustainable development. A policy that protects European citizens while exposing populations in other regions to the same harmful substances represents a serious double standard and cannot be justified over strategic economic interests.

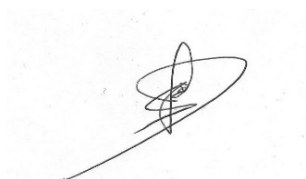
The European Union has the responsibility and the opportunity to lead by example. Strong and decisive action would demonstrate a genuine commitment to universal human rights, global environmental justice and public health.

Therefore, we encourage the European Commission to take the necessary measures to address the following issues as a matter of priority and would be pleased if the European Commission would take steps to enter into further dialogue with the European Parliament regarding the implementation of appropriate measures:

- Deliver the results of the impact assessment at the earliest opportunity and where appropriate, related legislation announced by the Commission to prohibit the production and export of pesticides banned within the European Union.
- Ensure coherence between EU internal health and environmental standards and its external trade practices among others with South Africa, including in the framework of the EU-South Africa partnership agreements, and most notably the EU-Southern African Development Community Economic Partnership Agreement (EU-SADC EPA) and the Clean Trade and Investment Partnership (CTIP).

We would appreciate being kept informed of any developments, actions undertaken, and forthcoming decisions in this regard.

Yours sincerely,



Mounir Satouri

Chair
Subcommittee on Human Rights



Udo Bullmann

Chair
Delegation for relations with South Africa

CC:

David McAllister, Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

Bernd Lange, Chair of the Committee on International Trade

Barry Andrews, Chair of the Committee on Development

Pierfrancesco Maran, Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Climate and Food Safety

Veronika Vrecionová, Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

Olivér Várhelyi, Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare

Christophe Hansen, Commissioner for Agriculture and Food

Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security

Jozef Síkela, Commissioner for International Partnerships