



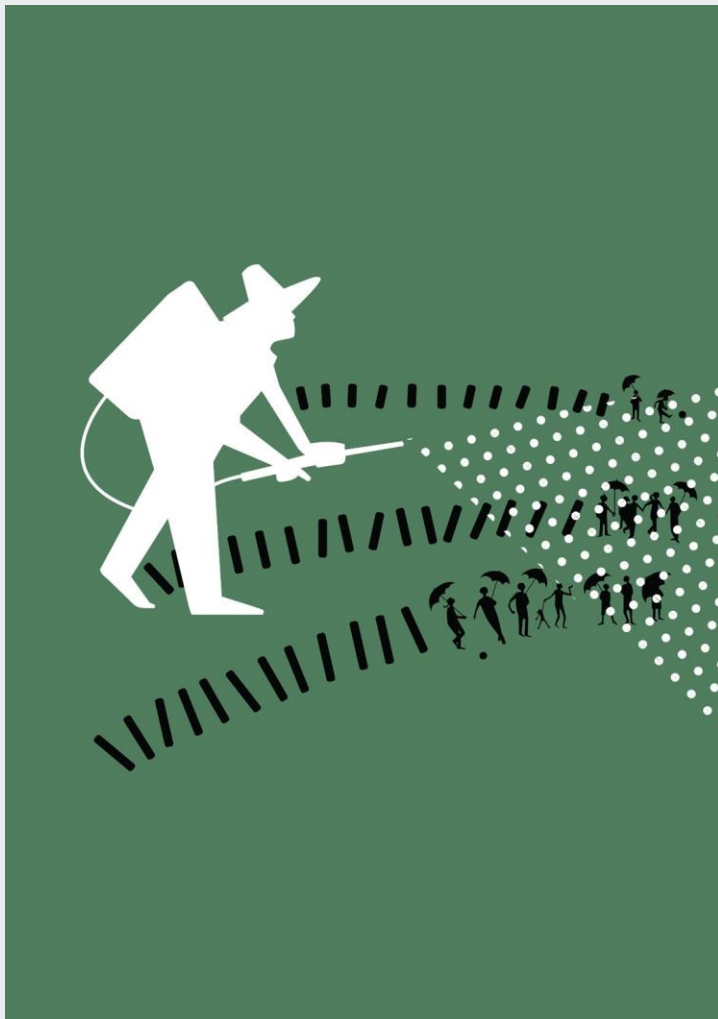
Children's rights - are they taken into account?

Better upholding children's rights through the Draft EU regulation on the Sustainable Use of Plant Protection Products



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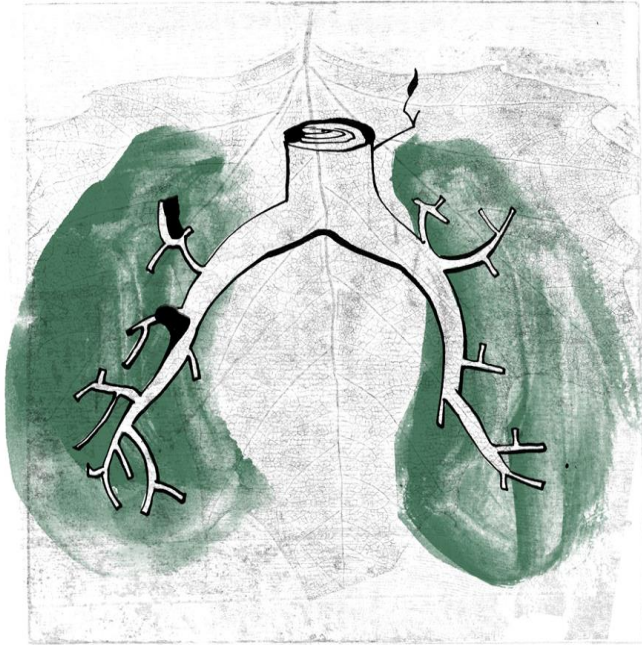
Why are children more vulnerable and impacted by pesticides exposure?

- **Developmental vulnerability:** children's organs and nervous systems are still in development, both during the prenatal and after-birth stages.
- **Exceeding intake:** They may be exposed to higher intake than adults, as they for instance **breath more often per minute**. Children consume more food and water relative to their weight, absorb toxics more readily, and are less able to excrete them afterwards.
- **Behavioral habits:** Children play on the ground, in watercourses, exploring the world through touch and taste. **Children are also less able to evaluate risks.**
- **Sensitive areas:** several testing campaigns and scientific studies indicate the **recurrent presence of pesticides in public areas**, such as playgrounds and public parks.



International recognition of the impacts of pesticides on children and foetus

- **Joint report 2017 on pesticides: Special Rapporteur on the right to food and SR on toxics and human rights (A/HRC/34/48)**
 - *“Children are most vulnerable to pesticide contamination”*: **higher dose per unit of body weight**
 - *“Exposure to **even low levels of pesticides**, for example through wind drift or residues on food, may be very damaging to children’s health”*
 - *“**Pregnant women** who are exposed to pesticides are at higher risk of miscarriage, pre-term delivery and birth defect”*
- **2016 Report of the Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights on the theme of children’s rights (A/HRC/33/41)**
 - *Exposure starts **before birth** through the mother’s own exposure: “**pre-polluted**” children*
 - *“**silent pandemic**”*
 - *Impacts can be irreversible and can even be **passed down from one generation to the next***



UN and EU children's rights frameworks

- Children are fully subject of, and entitled to these rights **the EU and Member States committed to protect**. **They are part of a vulnerable group and they are individual right holders who must be protected as such.**
- But a wide range of pesticides particularly harmful to children are still placed on the EU market and found in playgrounds and other sensitive areas.
- Infringements relate to the **rights and best interests of the child, right to life, health, environmental protection, physical integrity, play** etc.
- Legal grounds:
 - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
 - Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU
 - Treaty on the European Union
 - European Convention on Human Rights

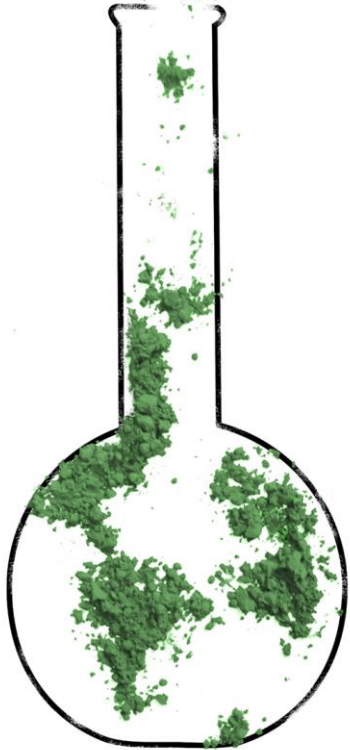
+ EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child



UN children's rights framework

➤ UN Convention on the rights of the child

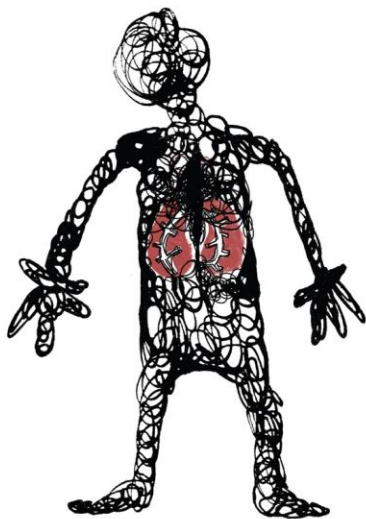
- Rights to **life**, to “the **highest attainable standard of health**” and to develop as persons “to the maximum extent possible”, right to **education**, to recreation and **play**, right to **information**
- Right to **physical integrity**: “non-consensual physical or mental intrusion against the body constitutes a human rights violation”
- **Obligation of States to prioritize the best interests of the child** when designing environmental and public health norms,



European children's rights framework

➤ Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

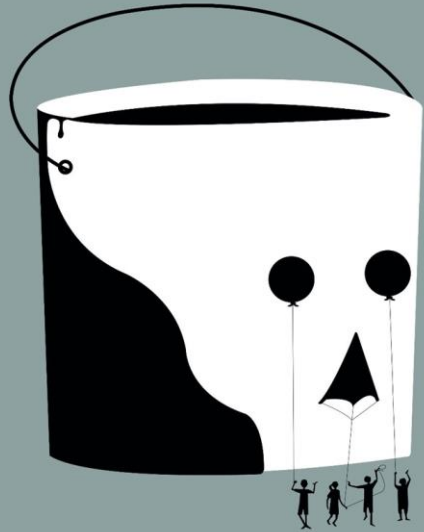
- The Charter **binds all EU Member states, with the same legal value as the EU Treaties.**
- Article 24 guarantees and protects the **rights and best interest of the child**, including the right to protection and care. In all actions relating to children, whether taken by public authorities or private institutions, **the child's best interests must be a primary consideration.**
- Article 2 guarantees the **right to life**, and Article 37 prescribes **environmental protection.**



European children's rights framework

➤ EU Strategy on the rights of the child 2021-2024

- Rights based strategy: an instrument for **mainstreaming a children's rights perspective in all relevant policies and legislation.**
- 2nd thematic area of EU actions aims to fight poverty, promote inclusive and child-friendly societies, health and education systems. **All children have a right to a good standard of living.**
- Children as agents of change, and no policy regarding children should be designed without their voices.



Our recommendations

SUR can better uphold children's rights by:

- Adopting a **broad and clear definition of 'sensitive areas'** where the use of pesticides would be banned altogether.
- Establishing **buffer zones covering the widest areas possible**, where pesticides with harmful properties cannot be used within a far-reaching metre distance from populations.
- **Restricting pesticides as much as possible.** 100% of the most harmful pesticides should be completely phased out by 2030, instead of the 50% reduction goal.



CRIN Position Paper on SUR:

<https://home.crin.org/readlistenwatch/stories/eu-toxics>

Available in English and Spanish

More resources available on our dedicated CRIN webpage: [Protecting children from harmful chemicals in the EU](#)

Art exhibition available at: <https://home.crin.org/projects/environment-and-toxics>

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