

## Background information

### What's happening:

The proposal is presented as an administrative “simplification” to support the fast-tracking of natural products to combat pests. But it applies to all pesticides, so in reality it would:

- Give chemical pesticides **indefinite approval**.
- Remove the obligation for Member States to consider **the latest independent science**.
- Allow banned pesticides to remain available for up to **three additional years**.

This would fundamentally weaken Europe's chemical safety system at a time when science, citizens' concerns, and the health and biodiversity crisis demand much stronger, not weaker, protection (leaked proposal [here](#)).

### Why these changes are dangerous:

#### 1. A shift toward unlimited pesticide approvals

The proposal abolishes the current 10-to-15-year renewal cycle during which pesticide active substances undergo a full scientific re-evaluation. Only substances flagged as "more hazardous" (candidates for substitution) would undergo periodic toxicity review.

These renewals are the only moments when the pesticide industry is automatically required to carry out a comprehensive update of safety data, review emerging scientific evidence, and demonstrate that their products still meet EU standards.

Removing renewal deadlines would have far-reaching consequences:

***Companies would no longer be required to identify new hazards or disclose new evidence of harm.***

Renewal procedures force companies to conduct new toxicology studies and evaluate new health and environmental endpoints. Without renewals, companies would no longer be obligated to test for new hazards (including endocrine disruption, developmental neurotoxicity, chronic health effects, and long-term ecological impacts), unless explicitly requested by the EU Commission and/or Member States.

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### ***It would become dramatically harder to ban harmful pesticides.***

Today, the renewal system has repeatedly identified serious harms years after approval. Without it, dangerous pesticides could remain on the market indefinitely.

Many of Europe's most harmful pesticides were only banned after new scientific data generated during their periodic reassessment exposed their dangers:

- **Neonicotinoids (major restriction in 2013, outdoor ban in 2018 and full ban in 2019-2020)** were initially approved long before anyone realised their catastrophic impact on bee population collapse. Research from independent scientists and repeated renewal reviews eventually forced the EU to impose restrictions in 2013 and a near-total ban in 2018.
- **Chlorpyrifos (banned in 2020)** was authorised for decades without recognising its health impact, including on children's brain development. Only after independent neurodevelopmental research accumulated did the EU finally withdraw its approval.
- **Mancozeb (banned in 2021)** stayed legal for more than half a century. Early evaluations overlooked its endocrine-disrupting properties, as well as potential reproductive and neurotoxic effects, which were only confirmed thanks to scientific advances and re-evaluation.
- **Flufenacet (banned in 2024)** was authorised for over 20 years before new safety data revealed its endocrine-disrupting properties for humans and wildlife, and its degradation in a tiny 'forever chemical' called 'TFA' (trifluoroacetic acid). TFA is detected in tap water nearly all across Europe.

These substances are just a few examples, many other chemicals currently under scrutiny for their harmful impact remain in use today. One example is **Acetamiprid**, the last widely approved neonicotinoid in the EU, linked to developmental neurotoxicity. Under the proposed simplification package, this pesticide and many others could be granted indefinite approval even as emerging evidence continues to raise red flags.

### ***A race to the bottom***

If older pesticides no longer face mandatory re-evaluation, keeping them on the market becomes cheaper than developing safer alternatives. Rather than promoting biocontrol, the proposal traps farmers in continued reliance on toxic chemical products.

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### 2. Ignoring independent science

The proposal would remove the obligation for Member States to consider the latest independent scientific research when authorising pesticide products.

Independent science plays an irreplaceable role in identifying risks that only emerge over time. New peer-reviewed studies are published every week, allowing to complement the weaknesses of the pesticide regulatory system.

Without mandatory consideration of this science, pesticide regulation becomes an industry-controlled process, eroding the precautionary principle and public trust precisely when independent oversight is most needed.

### 3. Doubling the grace periods to keep using dangerous pesticides

The proposal would extend grace periods to one year for continued sales and two years for continued use: a total of three years compared to the current maximum of 18 months. This would leave farmers, consumers, and ecosystems exposed to dangerous chemicals far longer than necessary.

## A move in the completely wrong direction

This deregulation comes at a time when:

- **Biodiversity is in crisis:** Europe's pollinators, beneficial insects, and birds are experiencing dramatic declines, in a large part linked to pesticide exposure.
- **Chronic diseases linked to pesticides are rising**, including cancers and Parkinson's disease.
- Farmers and rural communities face the **highest exposure and the greatest health risks.**
- Citizens overwhelmingly support **reducing pesticide use.**

This backward step is even more alarming because existing pesticide rules, as well as the poor implementation across Member States, are already not strong enough to adequately protect people and nature. Instead of fixing known gaps and enforcing the law properly, the Commission is now proposing to weaken them even further.

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### **What is needed instead**

We don't have to regress to the chemical middle ages. We can move to a new toxic pesticide free era. All tools are there to change farming without loss of production. Integrated pest management uses clever farming practices, where healthy soils and space for natural predators prevent pests. Biocontrol can be used in case problems arise and until we have developed better solutions the least problematic chemical pesticides can be used as a very last resort. This will make farming much more resilient, drought tolerant and strongly reduce costs for farmers. Crop insurance and support measures can ensure a reliable and fair income for farmers in the transition period. Health and biodiversity will benefit and farmers will regain the respect they deserve as hard working producers of our food and guardians of our landscapes.