



Press Release

Brussels, 6 November, 2024

Reinstate pesticides in policies - 260,000 EU citizens demand it

A quarter million Europeans signed a new petition that urges the European Commission to prioritise pesticide reduction. It was presented today, ahead of the hearings for the incoming Commissioners.

The petition was conducted by environmental activists platforms Ekō and WeMove, in collaboration with Pesticide Action Network Europe. In less than three months more than 260.000 people signed the petition.

Natalija Svrtan for PAN Europe emphasises: "The support reflects public demand for decisive action to halt the use of harmful pesticides and promote sustainable agricultural practices. Citizens regularly express their concern over pesticide's impacts on public health and the environment through petitions, European Citizens Initiatives or Eurobarometers."

The European Commission evaded the issue of pesticide reduction in its recent communications. It was not included in the [Mission letters](#) to the Commissioners-Designates.

Key demands:

1. **Reintroduction of pesticide reduction in EU Policy:** The petition calls on the Commission to ensure that pesticide reduction is once again prominently featured in European legislative texts and strategies.
2. **Reviving ambitious goals for sustainable food production systems:** The petitioners highlight the need to renew commitment to ambitious targets, especially in promoting sustainable food systems and protecting environmental health.
3. **Protection of public health and the environment:** The public and civil society organisations demand stronger regulations to protect human health, biodiversity, and the integrity of ecosystems across the continent.

The petition reflects widespread public dissatisfaction with the current course of agricultural and environmental policies. It urges the Commission to align its future plans with the needs of people and the planet, prioritising sustainable farming practices that will reduce the dependency on harmful pesticides.

Environmental and health NGOs, alongside consumer organisations, have played a critical role in amplifying this call to action. The presentation of the results of these petitions signals a unified demand from civil society to bring the pesticide reduction agenda back to the forefront of EU policymaking.

Natalija Svrtan from PAN Europe: "We urge EU politicians to take swift action to reduce the toxic cocktail of pesticides. Farmers and their families and neighbours are the first victims. It can lead to cancers and neurological disorders and damage to the development of children. It also leads to biodiversity loss, soil degradation, and contamination of water sources."

Nabil Berbour, campaign director from Ekō: "This petition shows that European citizens want to see pesticides issues high on the politicians' agendas. We call on the Commission to step up the European

Green Deal and its strategies to reduce the pesticide consumption."

Aleksandra Zielińska, senior campaigner from WeMove Europe: "Citizens across Europe are standing together to demand a healthier, more sustainable food system. These petitions are a clear message to policymakers that it is time to take a step towards a pesticide-free Europe."

Following the delivery of the petition, campaigners and civil society organisations will continue to advocate for pesticide reduction through dialogue with the Commission and relevant policymakers.

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Pesticide Action Network (PAN Europe) is a network of NGOs working to reduce the use of hazardous pesticides and have them replaced with ecologically sound alternatives. We work to eliminate dependency on chemical pesticides and to support safe sustainable pest control methods. Our network brings together over 45 consumer, public health and environmental organisations and women's groups from across Europe.

