

# NGOs urge Ursula von der Leyen to hold true to Green Deal commitment on export of banned chemicals

*BRUSSELS, 12 September 2023* – 85 social and environmental organisations urge Ursula von der Leyen and the European Commission to hold true to the European Green Deal commitment to ensure that hazardous chemicals banned in the EU will no longer be produced for export.[1]

Commission officials have informed campaigners and industry lobbyists that the Commission has decided not to follow-through and present a legislative proposal before the end of its mandate. Environment Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius however told the European Parliament's environment committee (ENVI) on Monday evening that he hopes, "if the ambition is still there, [the Commission] will be able to propose it in this mandate", in reply to a question about banned chemicals.[2]

Eoin Dubsy, campaigner at Ekō said: "President von der Leyen, Vice-President Šefčovič and Commissioner Sinkevičius need to clarify to their teams and the world what's going on to stop toxic exports. Is the Commission still planning to "lead by example" during this mandate, or are they slow-walking the last lap?"

Angeliki Lysimachou, Head of Science and Policy at PAN Europe added: "The Commission's U-turn is utterly unacceptable. Companies are reaping profits by selling banned pesticides, deemed too dangerous for European use, to third countries, exploiting their lax environmental and health regulations. This double standard must end now and the Commission's reversal shows a failure to prioritise human and environmental rights over private profits."

"The EU risks losing its credibility if it does not stick to its promises to act against these toxic exports. It is now the time to take courageous steps to protect people and their environment and not to back down. All people have the right to a healthy environment and physical integrity - regardless of whether they are EU citizens or live in third countries. A hesitation on the part of the EU sends a terrible message to the hundreds of million people suffering from pesticide poisoning worldwide." said Susan Haffmans, senior adviser on pesticides at PAN Germany.

267,000 people have now signed an export ban petition, and more than 2,400 EU citizens also contributed feedback to the public consultation earlier this year.[3]

The EU has one of the strictest regulations in the world for pesticides. But toxic chemicals that are banned in the union because of their impact on human health and the environment are still being exported to other, often poorer countries, leading to devastating consequences.

Not only do these hazardous chemicals harm people and ecosystems outside the EU, but they also end up in Europe, in the form of residues in food imports.

More than 326 civil society organisations from across the globe, institutions and trade unions delivered a Joint Statement to the European Commission in December 2022 demanding a ban on the export of hazardous chemicals that are forbidden in the EU.[4]

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**Notes:**

[1] Open letter of 12 September 2023

[https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.sumofus.org/pdf/Letter to Commission Protesting Export Ban Delay - 12 September 2023.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.sumofus.org/pdf/Letter%20to%20Commission%20Protesting%20Export%20Ban%20Delay%20-%2012%20September%202023.pdf)

[2] Video recording of Environment Commissioner at 20:51 minutes of 11 September 2023

[https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/webstreaming/envi-committee-meeting\\_20230911-2000-COMMITTEE-ENVI](https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/webstreaming/envi-committee-meeting_20230911-2000-COMMITTEE-ENVI)

[3] Petition to Environment Commissioner, started November 2022

<https://actions.eko.org/a/outlaw-exports-of-banned-chemicals>

[4] Joint Statement by 326 civil society organisations, December 2022 [https://eeb.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Joint-statement EU-exports 1-december-2022.pdf](https://eeb.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Joint-statement_EU-exports_1-december-2022.pdf)