

Joint Press Release

Brussels, 23/07/2024

Brussels to become the first European region to ban synthetic pesticides in agriculture in 2030

The use of conventional pesticides in agriculture on agricultural land will no longer be allowed in the Brussels region as of 2030. The use of synthetic pesticides by others than farmers will be banned in 2025. The new law went into force on the 17th of July (1). While this decision could be considered anecdotal, considering the few 250ha of agricultural land from the region, it creates a precedent as it is the first time a European region has taken such a decision to protect citizens' health and the environment against pesticides.

Martin Dermine, PAN Europe's executive director said: "The Brussels Region shows its big brother the European Commission the way forward. This is the first time a European region has applied the Directive on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides, to protect citizens against exposure to agricultural pesticides. The decision from the Brussels region government should be followed by other regions or countries to comply with EU law".

Since 2009, EU Member States and regions must implement the Directive on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides (2). Article 12 of the directive foresees that vulnerable groups such as pregnant women or children should not be exposed to synthetic pesticides. Regulators must ensure that organic pesticides or low-risk substances should be used instead. This article also foresees that nature conservation areas and water catchment areas should follow the same rules.

Martin Dermine added: "Scientific evidence shows that pesticides drift over long distances. The air is highly contaminated with pesticides in agricultural areas, while people's household dust contains dozens of toxic pesticide residues. Science shows us that there is no safe use of synthetic pesticides. The Brussels region decision is the only way to protect people's health and biodiversity effectively".

The recent decision also concerns the use of synthetic pesticides by citizens and companies (other than farmers) in private properties: they are banned in the region as of 2025. Until now endocrine-disrupting and neurotoxic pesticides such as pyrethroids are still authorised for private use in Belgium.

The Brussels region has been a pioneer in terms of pesticide restrictions in the EU. In 2013, it banned the use of pesticides in public areas (3): parks, playgrounds, sidewalks became pesticide-free. In 2016, it banned private uses of glyphosate (4). In 2018, it sued the European Commission before the Court of Justice of the EU, for re-approving glyphosate for 5 years (5).

Before publishing its law, the region consulted the Belgian Council of State, as well as the European Commission, to prevent a setback in Court.

Martin Dermine concluded: "Since 2009, the European Commission has done nothing to ensure that Member States implement the directive, which is supposed to protect citizens. Because of their inaction, children playing in their gardens adjacent to agricultural fields, or in public parks are directly exposed to neurotoxic or endocrine-disrupting pesticides. It is thus quite ironic that the seat of the European Commission, which is so reluctant to protect citizens and the environment against harmful pesticides, is located in the first pesticide-free region of the EU."

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Notes:

(1) [Arrêté du Gouvernement de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale encadrant l'utilisation de produits phytopharmaceutiques](#)

(2) [Directive \(EC\) 128/2009](#)

(3) https://etaamb.openjustice.be/fr/ordonnance-du-20-juin-2013_n2013031469.html

(4) https://document.environnement.brussels/opac_css/elecfile/IFPesticides_PesticidesInterdits.pdf

(5) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:62019CC0352&from=EN>

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.

