

## One of Europe's most toxic pesticides finally banned

**EU Member States agreed to a proposal to ban one of Europe's most toxic pesticides. The fungicide dimoxystrobin was authorised for use in 15 EU Member States. Pesticide Action Network cheers the decision. It is one of 'The Toxic 12' that now has gone down to 10. However, the decision should have been taken 7 years ago.**

“This is a great win for health and the environment. But it is also a cause for concern. This hazardous pesticide has been on the market far too long, with seven prolongations without proper evaluation,” says Salomé Roynel, Policy Officer at PAN Europe. “If the rules had been respected, dimoxystrobin would have been banned in 2016, based on the scientific conclusions of recent research on its toxicity. The delays are not acceptable and put human health and the environment at great risk. This is contrary to what is required in the EU Pesticide Regulation.”

The fungicide dimoxystrobin is used in northern and southern Europe on cereals, oilseeds and grass. It is classified both as suspected of damaging the unborn child (toxic to reproduction cat 2) and of causing cancer (carcinogen cat 2). Studies showed tumours in the intestines and thyroid. It is very toxic to aquatic life with acute and long-lasting effects. Its breakdown products can pollute groundwater.

It is authorised for use in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.


### Court case against systematic prolongation of pesticide authorisation

In July 2022 PAN Europe started [a court case](#) against the 6th extension of approval granted to Dimoxystrobin. With this case, we challenge the EU Commission's practice of granting consecutive years-long prolongations to dangerous pesticides, without any proper re-evaluation. The result is that people and the environment are exposed to substances that have harmful effects which should have been avoided. This case will continue after the Dimoxystrobin ban. See [our Q & A](#) on this court case.

### Dimoxystrobin: 17-year approval due to systematic prolongations

Dimoxystrobin was authorised for 10 years, expiring in 2016. The approval was prolonged for a year and a half due to the introduction of new regulatory requirements. Next, for six years in a row it was prolonged for an additional year. This extended the approval period to 17 years, when the maximum approval period for a new substance is 10 years (and 15 years for renewals). The reason? The Member State(s) in charge of reassessing the substances did not deliver their conclusions to the European Food Security Agency (EFSA) within the time limits set out in the Regulation.

The dimoxystrobin case is not a particular incident. Delayed re-assessments and approval prolongations for pesticides at the EU level are a standard pattern. To illustrate this, 136 pesticides have been prolonged under article 17 in 2021 (accounting for almost 30% of all currently EU-approved pesticides), while only 10 decisions regarding the (non-)renewal of active substances were adopted in that same year. Even for the most hazardous classified substances, the 'Candidates for Substitution', approval extensions are the norm: extensions are granted for up to 10 and a half years in the case of Ziram. Already 108 extensions - solely due to delayed assessments - were granted since 2011 to 39 out of the 53 pesticides from the EU Candidates for Substitution list.



**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.



See our Factsheet [Patterns of systematic and unlawful prolongation of toxic pesticide approvals](#)

## Ban the Toxic 12

In the campaign [Ban the 'Toxic 12'](#) we and our national partners have identified the 12 most toxic pesticide substances still authorised in the EU. They are on the EU list of 53 'Candidates for Substitution' and can lead to birth defects, cause cancer, heart disease, seriously harm the environment or a combination of these. Such chemicals should not be in our food or environment. The EU is aware of the problem and has imposed a regulation to substitute the most dangerous chemicals by less toxic alternatives. The EU Commission has also committed to reduce the use of these hazardous chemicals by 50% in 2030. However, this is only a half job and would mean many more years of unnecessary exposure to very dangerous chemicals. So we want all Candidates for Substitution to go by 2030 and the Toxic 12 now. With the [ban on ipconazole](#) earlier this year and dimoxystrobin now we're making progress: 2 of the 12 will be banned in 2024. So 10 more to go.

## Candidates for substitution not substituted

Another part of the EU regulations is neglected by the authorities that should guard health and environment. The EU regulations say that a pesticide on the 'Candidate for Substitution' list can only be authorised in pesticide products by Member States when no safer alternative exists. The alternatives can be chemical substances or non chemical methods. This 'substitution principle' has been mandatory for all EU Member States since 2015. However, substitution with a non-chemical alternative has never taken place. Recently some of these pesticides have been banned, not because of substitution but because it was proven that they are too toxic to (re-) authorised.

## What's next?

All 10 remaining pesticides on the Toxic 12 list are waiting for the conclusions of the new safety assessment (RAR) by an EU Member State or EFSA. The next discussion will be about the fungicide 8-hydroxyquinoline, classified as presumed to be damaging unborn child (toxic for reproduction cat 1B) and very toxic to aquatic life. According to the regulation, the substance does not meet the requirements to be reapproved unless human and environmental exposure to this hazardous substance is negligible. While the original approval period of 8-hydroxyquinoline was due to expire in December 2021. It has already been prolonged until December 2023 to complete the assessment. However, EFSA deadline to publish its conclusions on negligible exposure has now been extended to the end of the year as a result of a new delay of the Rapporteur Member State. This might mean that the substance extended approval will be again prolonged for another year. That would be another unlawful prolongation that harms health and environment.

## Factsheet on dimoxystrobin

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