

Green Deal is dead: MEPs voted against a healthy future for us and our children

EU Parliament Rejects Pesticides Reduction

Today the European Parliament voted down the Commission's proposal for an ambitious pesticides reduction in Europe. The proposal was urgent and essential to ensure a minimum of protection of EU citizens and ecosystems from the toxicity of pesticides. The lack of support represents a severe attack on the Green Deal and the public interest. This is a sad day for EU democracy, ahead of European elections.

The parliament voted on the Regulation on the Sustainable Use of Plant Protection Products (SUR). A voting session which deleted the majority of key measures of the proposal led to a text deprived of all substance.

"Thousands of scientists and millions of citizens have demanded reduction of pesticides to protect health and the environment. By not addressing these demands, the European Parliament is sending a negative signal to voters on its ability to deal with major societal issues. It is evident that the agrilobby has taken control of our House of Democracy," says Martin Dermine, PAN Europe executive director. (1)

"This is a historical black day for EU citizens and ecosystems, for the Green Deal and for the EU project overall", says Kristine De Schamphelaere, Policy Officer at PAN Europe, "The rejection of the proposal shows a shocking disregard for science, the public interest and the will of EU citizens. Most votes were guided by vested interests and disinformation by the agro-chemical industry."

"Two European Citizens Initiatives have called for pesticide reductions and protection of people's health and the environment. Politicians should serve citizens, not agribusiness. Today's vote will inevitably lead to more distrust in politicians", says Natalija Svrtan, Policy Officer at PAN Europe.

The conservative and liberal parties succeeded in obstructing the work on a vital piece of legislation for EU citizens, ecosystems and long-term food security. Since the publication of the Green Deal and the SUR proposal, many MEPs have tried to destroy the proposal or deprive it of any substance. Especially the EPP has been very vocal, attempting to destroy the Nature Restoration Law and the SUR, pretending they represent the interests of farmers and residents of agricultural areas, while doing exactly the opposite. Their actions disregard the importance of ecosystems, long-term food security, the health of citizens and the liveability of agricultural areas.

The vote follows a long disinformation and lobbying campaign of the agro-chemical industry and the large farming union COPA Cogeca, who attacked the SUR proposal, as well as the overall Green Deal. This has led to many MEPs echoing unfounded narratives, instead of advocating for science and the public interest.

Scientists (2) have been very vocal in debunking the disinformation campaign on the SUR, as well as on other essential elements of the Green Deal, such as the Nature Restoration Campaign. 6000 scientists state that tackling the biodiversity collapse is urgent, and a prerequisite to preserve ecosystems and their functions, including food production, for current and future generations.

Corporate Observatory Europe has well documented how the SUR was sabotaged by the pesticide's reckless assault on biodiversity and health. DeSmog reported on the strong links between MEPs and the agro-chemical industry. (3)

The SUR proposal included measures to reduce all pesticides and most hazardous pesticides by 50% by 2030,

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.



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binding rules for the implementation of Integrated Pest Management and measures to protect sensitive areas, such as public areas, nature reserves and water resources. These measures are urgently needed, according to scientists, to protect the health of citizens and the healthy functioning of our ecosystems, on which we fully depend. Also for farmers, who depend on healthy soils, biodiversity, clean water, pollination and natural pest control, and who are highly exposed to pesticides, ambitious measures to reduce pesticides and increase the resilience of cropping systems are key. The ENVI vote (4) on the 24th of October included many important provisions, although the voted text also severely lacked ambition regarding several key elements, due to the large opposition to the proposal. The rejection of a proposal, that already was compromised significantly at the expense of citizens and biodiversity, at Plenary Vote today, represents a new low in the SUR policy process.

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- (1) In the EU [public consultation on the Common Agricultural Policy](#) in 2017 6 respondents showed concern for environmental challenges, such as the prevention of biodiversity loss and prevention and reduction of water pollution (pesticides, fertilisers). Also in 2017, more than 1 million citizens asked the European Commission and the Member States, through a successful [ECI, for a ban on glyphosate and EU wide mandatory reduction targets for pesticide use](#). The final report of the [Conference for the Future of Europe](#) (2022) included the need to drastically reduce pesticide use. The 2022 [Eurobarometer survey on Food safety](#) in the EU listed pesticide residues in food as the most frequently selected concern related to food safety. In 2022, more than 1 million citizens raised their voices again, through the [ECI 'Save Bees and Farmers'](#), for phasing out 80% of pesticides by 2030 and 100% by 2035. **Of the 9 successful ECIs that have been submitted to the European Commission, 2 were focused on pesticides.**
- (2) https://zenodo.org/records/8128624/preview/Scientists%20support%20SUR%20and%20NRL%20Full_Preprint9.7.2023.pdf?include_deleted=0
- (3) The agro-chemical industry has strongly attacked the SUR proposal and other key elements of the Green Deal. Corporate Observatory Europe (CEO) documented this [in their recent article](#). DeSmog has recently published research on the strong links between MEPs and Big Agri ([Revealed: Meetings Blitz Between Big Ag and Anti-Green Lawmakers in Europe](#), [Mapped: The Deep Ties Between Big Ag and Europe's Right-Wing Politicians](#), [EU Lawmakers 'Do Not Speak For Us' Say Farmers Ahead of Crunch Vote](#)).
- (4) <https://www.pan-europe.info/press-releases/2023/10/envi-committee-vote-pesticides-regulation-sur>



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