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Newly released ECA report confirms Commission inaction on wild pollinator protection

Today, the European Court of Auditors released a report¹ on the European Commission's actions to protect wild pollinators. Once again, the report highlights a lack of commitment and consistency on the part of the EU executive, and how environmental protection ambitions are being stifled by the will to maintain an intensive model of agriculture, highly dependent on pesticides, which pose a serious threat to both human health and the environment.

More than ever, PAN Europe regrets that citizens' voices are not listened to: as such, we invite people to sign the *Save Bees and Farmers*² European Citizens Initiative to ensure the EU Commission and Member States take steps to effectively protect pollinators.

Martin Dermine, Environment Policy Officer at PAN Europe, said: "*The report confirms the schizophrenic attitude already displayed by the European Commission on such issues: on the one hand, millions of euros are spent to support farmers in planting flower strips or replant hedges along their fields as measures to help restore biodiversity; on the other, however, billions are spent in the Common Agricultural Policy to support intensive agriculture, which is the main cause of the massive decline in bee populations*".

The report lists the EU-funded programmes aiming at increasing the protection of pollinators, such as LIFE, research projects or beekeeping programmes. In specific areas, the report highlights the actions at Member States' level in the frame of the Habitats directive while the authors confirm that pollinators are not taken into account in the Common Agricultural Policy.

"*We urgently need to reconcile agriculture and biodiversity - and the proposed reform of the CAP, as well as the conservative approach of the Member States' agricultural ministries are negative signals for the future of our pollinators*", Dermine added.

PAN Europe is among the initiators and organizers of the European Citizens' Initiative *Save Bees and Farmers*², which has already collected over 420 000 signatures throughout the EU to demand that the European Commission set forth legal acts to phase out synthetic pesticides in European agriculture, restore biodiversity on farmland, and support farmers in the transition to agroecology by 2035.

¹ <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/>

² www.savebeesandfarmers.eu



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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 40 consumer, public health, and environmental organisations, and women's groups from across Europe.