



**Pesticide
Action
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Europe

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EU Commission draft Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation undermines the objectives of the European Green Deal

The leaked draft Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation shows a strong lack of ambition, giving Member States numerous possibilities to derail the objectives of the Green Deal. Despite some improvements, PAN Europe's analysis is that this legislative proposal lacks the change in mindset that the EU needs to embrace the transition of agriculture towards sustainable practices.

Martin Dermine, a Health and environment policy officer at PAN Europe said: "*The European Commission misses here a unique opportunity to set a series of principles to put our agriculture on a virtuous path and move away from pesticides. The basics of Integrated Pest Management are not made mandatory and synthetic pesticides remain at the centre of agricultural practices*".

Indeed, as in the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive, Annex III lists a series of non-mandatory non-chemical alternatives to pesticides. PAN Europe advocates that basic and cost-effective principles such as long-term crop rotation, use of resistant varieties, mechanical weeding become mandatory to automatically reduce the needs in pesticides.

Hans Muilerman, a chemical officer at PAN Europe said: "*The European Commission should be ashamed not to take the opportunity to finally ban some toxic practices that are the basis of industrial farming and that can easily be replaced by non-chemical alternatives: soil sterilisation with fumigants, or using pesticides-coated seeds lead to environmental and health disasters*".

Martin Dermine added: "*While the Commission document claims they aim at better protecting people's health and the environment, we again feel a strong lack of ambition: we do welcome the ban on pesticides in public areas and in Natura2000 sites but we cannot accept that the Commission does not set non-sprayed buffer zones next to schools, houses, paths or water courses: is children health less important than Natura2000 biodiversity?!*".

Hans Muilerman further commented: "*The European Commission proposes to take into account Member State's efforts since 2011 in the reduction of 'highly toxic pesticide'. EU law says this category of pesticides should have been banned since 10 years¹. Instead of imposing a short term phase out of these highly hazardous pesticides, the Commission now plays with figures to deceive citizens and keep them exposed to these poisons!*".

Martin Dermine concluded: "*Biodiversity is collapsing and people's health is being damaged by agrochemicals. 1.2 million EU citizens have supported the 'Save Bees and Farmers' European Citizens Initiative to phase out all synthetic pesticides by 2035 and replace them with agroecology. EU Barometers regularly show that citizens want to get rid of pesticides. It is time the EU listens to its citizens and sets a legal framework for a true transition towards pesticide-free agriculture!*".

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¹ Since 2011, EU Member States are supposed to gradually substitute the most toxic pesticides (55 'Candidates for Substitution'). They have not respected the law. The Commission planned to reduce them by 50% in the frame of the Farm-to-Fork strategy.

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.