

Brussels, 12 February 2019

European Parliament votes on the implementation of the Directive on sustainable use of pesticides

The European Parliament has today adopted an own initiative report on the implementation of the EU Directive on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides (SUD). PAN Europe welcomes the vote and emphasises that this report can help to speed up implementation of the Directive, which is long overdue.

“Despite the SUD, sale of pesticides has not reduced across Europe. The adoption of the European Parliament’s report today is a step in the right direction. The report repeats the conclusions of the European Parliament’s Special Committee on pesticides (PEST) a few weeks ago, including banning pesticides in public areas and protecting vulnerable groups. In addition, the report is a wake-up call for the European Commission, who need to move from monitoring Member States towards taking actions against the ones that do not comply with the SUD.” says Koen Hertoge of PAN Europe

Henriette Christensen, PAN’s Agriculture Policy Adviser, adds: *“The timing of this report is right as the EU is reforming its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). It is now time to fully integrate the SUD into all aspects of the CAP and to make pesticide dependency reductions one of the CAP’s success indicators.”*

Background:

The EU adopted in 2009 a Directive 2009/128/EC on sustainable use of pesticides Directive (SUD). The timeline of the SUD was very clear from the beginning: Member States should implement it as from 2011 by developing so-called National Action Plans. Also, Member States should set up systems to assist farmers financially and technically in uptake of non-chemical alternatives and agro-ecological practices, and Member States should have informed the European Commission in 2013 how they implemented Integrated Pest Management (IPM), making it mandatory for farmers to apply IPM as from January 2014.

The planned timing enabled the principle of IPM becoming fully integrated into EU’s Common Agricultural Policy, which was reformed in 2013. But, as highlighted by the Court of Auditors (1), a lack of leadership from the European Commission resulted in the only mandatory aspect of IPM introduced into the 2013 CAP reform being mandatory informing by Member States about IPM and non-chemicals. And even worse, to date the European Commission has not been monitoring whether Member States are even able to advise farmers about non-chemical alternatives allowing farmers to reduce their dependency on pesticides (2).

The SUD also stipulated that the European Commission should have prepared a report by 2014 evaluating how Member States are implementing the SUD. This report was published 3 years late, in 2017.

The own initiative report adopted today in the European Parliament’s plenary (3), can help to catch up on this delay as it includes:

- Highlighting the many problems associated with pesticide use and dependency (e.g. resistance among pests, high input dependency for farmers, poisoning of aquatic life) making reference to the many contemporary scientific studies between the use of pesticides and the ongoing decline in

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biodiversity (birds, insects, soil and other non-target organisms);

- Criticisms of the Member states for their lack of implementation of the Directive, in particular their weak and inconsistent National Action Plans, and their lack of commitment to IPM, with calls on MS to include clear quantitative targets as well as clearly defined annual reduction targets in their NAPs, with special attention to the possible effects on pollinators and the fostering and uptake of sustainable non-chemical alternatives and low-risk PPPs, in line with the IPM principles;
- Criticism of the Commission for delays in meeting deadlines with regard their reporting obligations on MS implementation as well as a call on the Commission to consider all measures to ensure compliance, including possible infringement proceedings against Member States who are failing to implement the Directive; and as part of that call on the Commission and the Member States to no longer allow the use of PPPs in areas used by the general public or vulnerable groups;
- Recognition of the important role that IPM can play (along with agro-ecological and organic farming) in significantly reducing pesticide use, calling on the Commission and the Member States to ensure better coherence of the Directive and its implementation with related EU legislation and policies, most notably the provisions of the CAP and Regulation 1107/2009, and in particular to integrate the IPM principles as legal requirements under the CAP, pursuant to Article 14 of the Directive.

Notes:

(1) Count of Auditor Special Report 04 2014 on Integration of EU water policy objectives with the CAP: a partial success, [here](#), says in box 6 on Sustainable use of pesticides: two steps forward, one step back: *'In 2009 the European Parliament and the Council adopted a regulation on the placing of plant protection products on the One intention of the regulation was to include the sustainable use of pesticides (and in particular integrated pest management) in cross-compliance (through SMR9) from 2014 onwards. However, in its proposal for a regulation on financing the CAP during 2014 that resulted in Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013, the Commission explicitly excluded the sustainable use of pesticides and integrated pest management from the scope of cross-compliance by omitting the sentence that specifically referred. As a result, although the sustainable use of pesticides was to be included in cross-compliance from 2014, the current regulation now makes that timeframe uncertain.'*

(2) While the first ecophyto demonstration project in France, [here](#), has proven that 50% reduction in pesticide dependency is possible, it was only on 1st February 2018 that France finally launched an [online resource center](#) to help farmers to phase-out glyphosate, including a database of around 50 documented and proven alternatives.

(3) Report and amendments available [here](#)

Contact PAN Europe, Henriette Christensen, +32473375671, henriette@pan-europe.info



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