

Brussels, 24th May 2022

A new campaign denounces the increasing presence of 55 most harmful pesticides on the EU market

EU Member States have been legally required since 2011 to phase out 55 pesticides identified as particularly harmful. However, their presence in food has increased dramatically over the last ten years as is shown in a [report](#) launched today. These findings reveal a failure by Member States to enforce the laws at the expense of consumer protection. The increased exposure also runs in the opposite direction to the pesticide reduction target of the Farm to Fork Strategy. PAN Europe and member organisations call for a direct ban of the 12 most toxic pesticides and a total phase out of all 55 very harmful pesticides by 2030.

In 2009, Regulation (EC) No. 1107/2009 introduced a new category of active substances known as the Candidates for Substitution. This provision was meant to identify the most harmful approved active substances for humans and the environment and to substitute them with less harmful chemical and non chemical alternatives to finally drive their phase-out.

“This category gathers the worst substances used on food still approved on the European market. Now the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies propose to reduce their use by 50% in 2030. But if Member States had seriously pursued the legislated phase-out target set by the Pesticide Regulation, this Farm to Fork goal would already have been achieved today.”, criticise Salomé Roynel, Campaigner at PAN Europe.

Because these substances are so toxic, Regulation (EC) No. 1107/2009 regulates them stricter than other active substances. Their EU approval period is restricted to 7 years (vs. 15 years for other pesticides) and Member States are legally obliged to give preference to less harmful alternatives when an application for a plant protection product is made containing a candidate for substitution. The aim of this substitution principle is to drive tailored and complete phasing out of these most harmful pesticides. Not only Member States failed to reach this goal, but a new report by PAN Europe shows that European food is increasingly contaminated with these most harmful pesticides.

Salomé Roynel commented: *“These chemicals should disappear from our food. But instead, we observe a dramatic increase in exposure to these most toxic substances over the last ten years. The proportion of fruits and vegetables contaminated with these pesticides continues to rise. Often the food shows multiple residues of two or more of these toxic substances at the same time. This clearly demonstrates that the substitution rules have never been implemented by the Member States and that they have failed in their responsibility to protect consumers.”*

Salomé Roynel from PAN Europe concludes: *“Substitution of the most dangerous chemicals has become a guiding principle of the EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability, the long lasting failure of substituting these most harmful pesticides is a scandal! The EU transition to a sustainable food system cannot be achieved until the most hazardous pesticides are fully eliminated from both its production and consumption system. This is not just a political aspiration; it is the law since 2011 and it is about time for Member States to act on it”.*

The new campaign will be rolled out over the next few months in 10 Member States including Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, with the following demands:

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.

Press Release



- Member States must immediately ban the 12 most toxic Candidates for Substitution. These [Toxic Twelve](#) are among the most dangerous ones and exposure to them is the highest, due to their use in the fields and/or their residues in food.
- Member States must start banning all pesticide products containing candidates for substitution and have to report on their progress to the European Commission and the public.
- The European Commission must ensure that the substitution guidelines are being independently reviewed by the end of 2022 to favour non-chemical alternatives and to shift away from the current pesticide-intensive agricultural system.
- The European Commission must put an end to continuous extensions of approval of these toxic substances from today on.
- The European Commission must adopt a zero-residue policy in food by 2035: the legal pesticide residue limits for these substances should be lowered to the lowest levels (determination limit).

You can find the report “Forbidden Fruit” [here](#)

You can find the campaign manifesto [here](#)

Learn more about the campaign: www.toxic12.eu

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