

Is German EU Presidency set to knife the Farm to Fork strategy?

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Brussels, 17 November 2020: Ahead of a gathering of experts from EU member states to discuss the implementation of the “Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive” (SUD) [1], PAN Europe warns that national plans towards reduction in pesticide use are not only insufficient, but could derail the Farm to Fork Strategy entirely.

The three-day online workshop, “Better training for safer Food: Experiences on SUD, its current implementation and possible future policy options”, taking place from 17 to 19 November 2020, is part of the revision process of the Directive 2009/128/EC that is already two years overdue, and is now scheduled to happen by 2022.

In May 2020, the European Commission published a report stating that most EU countries’ national action plans “lack ambition and fail to define high-level, outcome-based targets” for reducing the potential risks posed by pesticides [2].

“The poor quality and lack of ambition of Member States to reduce the risks posed by pesticides should not only be addressed in a workshop but in the front of the European Court of Justice. It simply can’t be that Member States fall short on the requirements of their own legally binding legislation and turn a blind eye to the biodiversity crisis that Europe is facing” said PAN Europe’s president Francois Veillerette.

“The European Commission should start infringement procedures against countries that fail to implement the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive” he added.

The Council, currently under Germany’s Presidency, has so far refused to acknowledge Member States’ grave lack of effort. After gaining access to a draft document last week [3], PAN Europe discovered that the EU Council, in the report on SUD implementation to be released, is instead calling for more soft measures such as training and research, and is completely sidelining all discussions on the idea of fixing EU-wide pesticide reduction targets as clearly addressed in the European Commission’s report [2].

“The Council’s attitude is in direct contrast with what European citizens already understand: Europe will not have clean water and restore its biodiversity without reducing its use of pesticides. This disconnect between the EU’s political ambitions and the practices of many individual member states urgently needs to be addressed”, said Henriette Christensen, Senior Policy Adviser Agriculture for PAN Europe.

“After the recent missed opportunity of the European Parliament to transform European agriculture through the CAP reform, and the EU thus turning its back on a sustainable agricultural model, the pesticides reduction objective is unequivocal: it requires the integration of the EU-wide 50% reduction target from the Farm to Fork strategy into both into the CAP and the SUD”, concludes Christensen.

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[1] For details on the “*Better training for safer Food: Experiences on SUD, its current implementation and possible future policy options*” workshop:

<https://icfnnext.swoogo.com/SUD>

[2] EU Commission report “*On the experience gained by Member States on the implementation of national targets established in their National Action Plans and on progress in the implementation of Directive 2009/128/EC on the sustainable use of pesticides*”

https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/plant/docs/pesticides_sud_report-act_2020_en.pdf

[3] EU Council draft report on SUD implementation obtained by PAN Europe:

<https://www.pan-europe.info/sites/pan-europe.info/files/wk08636-re01.en20.pdf>