

Black Day for Health and Biodiversity

EU Commission withdraws proposal for Pesticide Reduction

The announcement of President Ursula von der Leyen to withdraw the Pesticide Reduction Law SUR represents the end of an appalling opposition, led by the agro-chemical industry, against a more healthy, future-proof agriculture for the EU.

“The European Commission just took a decision that is harmful to farmers and their families, as the first victims of pesticide use. Pesticide pollution is a huge problem that has to be tackled. It pollutes our waters, harms our health and destroys the biodiversity that we depend on. It destroys fertile soil and endangers food production in the long run. We have to move towards a healthy and sustainable form of agriculture quickly, doing nothing is not an option in the light of the biodiversity crisis we’re in. Thousands of scientists and millions of citizens have urged EU politicians to take urgent action,” says Martin Dermine, PAN Europe executive director and representative of the Save Bees and Farmers European Citizens Initiative. *“Doing nothing is not an option. Not answering citizens’ demands goes against democracy and only favours agribusiness.”*

The Commission states that the SUR proposal has become ‘a symbol of polarisation’. However, the polarisation is the result of fake information spread by agribusiness to preserve a model that is detrimental to the farming community. Instead of listening to science and citizens’ demands, EU Member States have been favouring agribusiness interests. Ahead of the EU elections, PAN Europe considers that the withdrawal of the SUR proposal gives a very negative signal to citizens. Many farmers in Europe are already showing that ambitious pesticide reductions are possible, within the right framework to enable their transition and reward them for their work. The withdrawal of the SUR proposal fails farmers, by further delaying this urgently needed transition, and fails current and future generations.

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NOTES

- (1) In 2022, more than 1 million citizens raised their voices, through the [ECI ‘Save Bees and Farmers’](#), for phasing out 80% of pesticides by 2030 and 100% by 2035. Of the 9 successful ECIs that have been submitted to the European Commission, 2 were focused on pesticides. The [recent poll carried out by Ipsos](#) in 6 EU Member States expressed extensive support of citizens for ambitious pesticide policies. Among the respondents, 81,8% and 75,9% of respondents indicated concern about respectively the environmental impact and the health impact of pesticide use. Respondents also are supportive of binding provisions on IPM and the application of the precautionary principle.
- (2) [Scientists support the EU’s Green Deal and reject the unjustified argumentation against the Sustainable Use Regulation and the Nature Restoration](#)
- (3) The agrochemical industry strongly attacked the SUR proposal and other key elements of the Green Deal. Corporate Observatory Europe (CEO) documented this [in their recent article](#). DeSmog published research on the strong links between MEPs and Big Agri [‘Say Farmers Ahead of Crunch Vote’](#).

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 over 45 consumer, public health and environmental organisations and women’s groups from across Europe.

