



**Pesticide
Action
Network**
Europe

2 December 2016: Open debate at the EP on the Commission's upcoming proposal to ban pesticide use in ecological focus areas

Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN Europe) has welcomed the European Commission's intention to proceed with its proposal to ban the use of pesticides in productive Ecological Focus Areas (EFA) as soon as possible and in time for the 2017/18 planting season at the latest. The proposal is being made in the context of the simplification of the 2013 CAP reform based on experience to date.

PAN Europe together with MEP Maria Noichl and MEP Martin Häusling and hosted an open debate on the upcoming proposal and significantly, extensive research work presented at the meeting (see the presentations at: <http://www.pan-europe.info>) showed very clearly that, properly managed, EFAs deliver not just more biodiversity but yield increases in adjacent fields of greater than 10% for wheat, 20% for beans and 30% for carrots. The principle key to that proper management is not using pesticides!

The Commission proposal represents a huge win for farmers, a huge win for biodiversity and a huge win for common sense. Using pesticides in arable areas designated as ecological would be a distortion of the intention within the CAP reform to provide areas in productive commercial farming where biodiversity could provide the multiple ecosystem services agriculture so badly needs. In effect, pesticide use in EFA has and would wipe out the intended ecosystem benefits leaving the areas a killing field for beneficial insects.

PAN Europe commends this triple win to Member States as they complete their deliberations on the European Commission proposals, to both the European Parliament and Council in their scrutiny roles and most especially to farmers who can now take a further significant step towards sustainable agriculture while, at the same time, increasing crop yields. We look to Commissioner Hogan to ensure that there is now no softening of the Commission proposal.

PAN also recalls the urgent need for the Commission and Member States to fully implement the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive (Directive 128/2009/EC) and particularly the obligations therein with respect to integrated production management (IPM). Over 350,000 tonnes of pesticides are sold to be sprayed on Europe's fields each year and IPM could dramatically reduce this volume leading to cleaner water, richer biodiversity and soil and a healthier life for citizens, including farmer.

PAN's fifth annual conference on implementation of this Directive will take place in the European Parliament, Brussels on 7 February 2017. The conference will examine, inter alia, the grape production sector. Full details will be available from early January.

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Note to editor: PAN Europe is a network of NGOs working to minimise negative effects and replace the use of hazardous chemicals with ecologically sound alternatives. We work to eliminate dependency on chemical pesticides and to support safe sustainable pest control methods. Our network brings together 34 consumer, public health, and environmental organisations, and women's groups from across Europe.