



EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

PAN Europe
Pesticides Action Network Europe

PRESS RELEASE

Five-year delay for Assessment of Pesticides shows need for new chemicals and pesticides policy

Brussels (24.08.2001) The European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and Pesticides Action Network Europe (PAN Europe) call on the EU to reshape its chemicals and pesticides policy in order to effectively ban substances of high concern, set strict deadlines and allow full public participation.

The Commission's recently-issued report on the 1991 Pesticides Authorisation Directive (SANCO 822/2001 rev. 3 from 12.07.2001) recommends that its deadline to remove all pesticides with unauthorised active ingredients from the market in 2003 should be delayed for five years. With this report, the Commission admits that the current system does not work and that it cannot enforce its deadlines.

The EEB and PAN have criticised the slow, ineffective chemicals and pesticides control process for its lack of clear criteria to identify unacceptable substances, such as those which are persistent or bioaccumulative, and for putting the burden of proof and an enormous workload on the regulators instead of on industry. The existing system encourages industry to submit incomplete or delayed data-sets.

“The current EU agriculture policy relies on massive use of pesticides. Industry knows that this makes it unlikely that deadlines with sanctions will be seriously enforced”, says Dr. Ute Meyer, PAN Europe. **“Therefore it is necessary to have EU-wide pesticides legislation that establishes national pesticides use reduction programmes and minimises agriculture's dependency on pesticides.”**

The evaluation of the active ingredients of pesticides is performed behind closed doors. So far, NGO participation has not been possible. Public pressure and transparent discussions are necessary to improve procedures and decision-making. The EEB and PAN Europe urge the Commission to open up the process now to full NGO participation.

“A quick, effective chemicals and pesticides control is urgently needed; one which bans persistent or bioaccumulative or toxic substances, sets strict deadlines and allows full public participation.” says Stefan Scheuer, EEB Chemicals Policy Coordinator. **“These are the key issues which must be incorporated by the ongoing review of the chemicals and pesticides policy.”**

Now it is up to the European Parliament, which on Monday starts debating the Commission's White Paper for a future chemicals policy, to make sure that such requirements are included in future legislation.

Further information:

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