Joint Statement

The EU must make pesticide reduction a reality

We, the undersigned 125+ organisations, condemn the failure of the European Parliament, Council and Commission to deliver on a crucial element of the Green Deal: pesticide reduction. On February 6th 2024 the European Commission announced it would withdraw its proposal for the Sustainable Use Regulation (SUR), delaying by years urgently needed action to reduce the use and risks of synthetic pesticides in Europe.

By failing to adopt an ambitious pesticide reduction law, the EU institutions betray more than a million citizens across Europe who expressed the pressing need to reduce pesticides, and to support farmers in doing so, through the ECI Save Bees and Farmers\(^1\). Their demands deserve an answer, the next generations as well. Instead, what citizens have received is increased health and environmental risks and no commitment to sustainability, thus undermining the credibility of EU institutions.

The Commission decision to withdraw the SUR should not be presented as a ‘gift’ to farmers. It will only keep them trapped into the pesticide merry-go-round, further locking farming in unsustainable practices that impact farmers’ health, that of workers and citizens. Right from the outset, it was the pesticide and wider agribusiness industry - corporations that make big profits on the backs of farmers – who launched attacks on the Green Deal, Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategy\(^2\).

The farmers' mobilisations taking place across Europe require answers that address the root causes of their low income and lack of prospects. Backtracking on environmental ambition is not the solution. On the contrary: if the climate and biodiversity crisis are not addressed, the challenges faced by farmers will only worsen.

For decades, scientists have warned about the detrimental impact of pesticides. There is increasing scientific evidence linking exposure to synthetic pesticides to severe illnesses like cancer and Parkinson’s disease, with farmers and farm workers being the first affected\(^3\). Last year, over 6000 scientists raised the alarm on the impact of pesticides on biodiversity and the crucial need of a strong regulation to drastically reduce the use of pesticides to ensure our long-term food security\(^4\).

Producing food with less, if any, pesticides is possible, necessary and desirable for all in society. Extensive research and empirical data across Europe demonstrate the potential of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and agroecological practices to reduce reliance on pesticide, while increasing the overall resilience of agricultural systems and reinforcing the financial sustainability of farms\(^5\). Although IPM has been mandatory since 2014,

\(^1\) [https://www.savebeesandfarmers.eu/eng](https://www.savebeesandfarmers.eu/eng)

\(^2\) [Corporate Europe Observatory](https://www.corporateeurope.org/), 2023, How the pesticide lobby is sabotaging the EU pesticide reduction law

\(^3\) [Inserm](https://www.inserm.fr/), 2021, Latest Collective Expert Review on the Health Effects of Pesticides

\(^4\) [Rani et al.](https://www.inserm.fr/), 2021, An extensive review on the consequences of chemical pesticides on human health and environment

\(^5\) [Pe'er, Guy et al.](https://www.corporateeurope.org/), July 2023: Scientists support the EU's Green Deal and reject the unjustified argumentation against the Sustainable Use Regulation and the Nature Restoration Law

[https://ipmworks.net/](https://ipmworks.net/)

implementation has been lacking, due to the absence of a robust, binding and supportive
framework. The SUR proposal aimed to tackle these shortcomings.

Instead of embracing profit-guided tools promoted by the agroindustry, like pesticides and
genetically modified organisms, EU policies must focus on supporting farmers in shifting
towards environmentally and socially sustainable agricultural models, such as organic and
agroecological farming. The push for the deregulation of GMOs will only perpetuate an
agricultural model that depends on synthetic pesticides and contribute to the heightened
dependence of farmers on large corporations via patented seeds. In contrast, it is crucial for
the EU to acknowledge, protect, and universally promote farmers’ traditional knowledge and
know-how, and implement non-chemical alternatives to synthetic pesticides.

Supporting farmers in the transition also means tackling the decades of policies that have led
to this situation, with farmers being pushed to produce ever-more, ever-cheaper food. This
has amounted to large profit margins for agribusiness but at great societal costs. The EU
must ensure fair prices and a decent standard of living for farmers and farm workers, and
protect their livelihoods. The reduction in pesticide use must also be accompanied by strong
trade regulations that prevent unfair competition from products that do not respect EU rules.
It is also high time for the EU to ban the production and exportation of pesticides which cannot
legally be used on EU land.

We call on the European Commission to keep the focus on the real issues faced by farmers,
including fair incomes, while accelerating the transition towards resilient food systems not
dependent on synthetic pesticides, and ensuring access to safe and nutritious food for all. An
ambitious regulation at the European level for reducing pesticide use, aligned with the Farm
to Fork objectives and the post-2020 Global Biodiversity targets, is urgently needed to make
this transition possible, and must remain a priority of the next EU mandate.

**Signatories:**

**EU and International Organisations**

- Agroecology Europe
- BeeLife
- Birdlife
- Child Rights International Network (CRIN)
- Corporate Europe Observatory
- Euro Coop
- European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)
- European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT)
- Fair Trade Advocacy Office
- Foodwatch International
- Friends of the Earth Europe
- IFOAM Organics Europe
- Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)
- Justice Pesticides

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6 [Foodwatch](https://foodwatch.org), 2023, New Genome Techniques (NGT) – A Risky Corporate Distraction From Real Sustainable Solutions

7 [Le Basic](https://www.le-bas.fr), 2021, Pesticides: A model that’s costing us dearly
February 23, 2024

PAN Europe
SAFE Food Advocacy Europe
Slow Food International
Urgenci International Community Supported Agriculture Network
Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF)

National Organisations

Abeille Arlésienne
Abeille dauphnoise syndicat d'apiculture de l'Isère
Abeille Savoyarde Annecienne
ADA AURA
AEGILOPS
AGROLINK Association
Amigos de la Tierra
Amis de la Terre France
Asociación Galega de Apicultura-AGA
Association biodynamique Limousin
Association for Protection of Nature and Environment Nagykovácsi
Aurelia Foundation
BioForum
Broederlijk Delen
Bündnis für eine enkeltaugliche Landwirtschaft e.V.
Cambiamo Agricoltura Coalition
Canopea
CARI asbl
Carolina
CEEweb for Biodiversity
Centre d'Etude Technique Apicole de Loire Atlantique
Civilek a Mecsekért Mozgalom
CNCD-11.11.11
Coalition Living Earth (Koalicja Żywa Ziemia)
Coalición Por Otra PAC
Commun de Treilles
Coordination gegen BAYER-Gefahren
Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V.
Dutch Bee Conservation

Ecologistas en Acción
Éghajlatvédelmi Szövetség - Hungarian Climate Alliance
Entraide et Fraternité
Fair Trade Advocacy Office
Fédération des Syndicats d'Apiculture du Bas Rhin
Fédération Française des Apiculteurs Professionnels
Federation Nationale des Organisations Sanitaires Apicoles Départementales FNOSAD
Federazione Nazionale Pro Natura
Felelős Gasztrohős Alapítvány
Fenntarthatóság Felé Egyesület
Fondation pour la Nature et l'Homme
Friends of the Earth Malta
Friends of the Earth Sweden / Jordens Vänner
Générations Futures
GEOTA - Grupo de Estudos de Ordenamento do Território e Ambiente
GLOBAL 2000 - Friends of the Earth Austria
Green Circle of Pecs
Green Transition Denmark
Hnutí DUHA - Friends of the Earth Czech Republic
Hogar sin Tóxicos
Humanité et Biodiversité
Hungarian Society for Environmental Education (HSEE)
Illes de Paix
International Society of Doctors for Environment (ISDE)
Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Wasserwerke (IAWR)
February 23, 2024

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Les apiculteurs de la Region Est
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Magyar Természetvédők Szövetsége
Mensa Cívica
Meten-Weten
Natagora
Nature & Progrès
Naturschutzbund Deutschland e. V. (NABU)
Natuur & Milieu
Natuurpunt VZW
Nettle Environmental and Nature Conservation Association
Občianska iniciatíva Slovensko bez GMO
OGM dangers
OZ Vidiecky parlament
Permakultura SK
Pesticide Action Network Netherlands
Pestizid Aktions-Netzwerk e.V. (PAN Germany)
Pomona vzw
Quercus ANCN
Reflex Környezetvédelmi Egyesület/Reflex Environmental Association
ROMAPIS The Federation of the Romanian Beekeepers Associations
Save Our Seeds
Schweisfurth Stiftung
Škola permakultúry o.z.
Slow Food Deutschland
Solidagro
Syndicat Apicole Dauphinois
Syndicat Apicole de la Côte d'Or
Syndicat Apicole des Alpes de Haute Provence
Syndicat Apicole l'Abeille Bretonne 22
Syndicat Apicole Le miel des Vosges
Syndicat Apiculture Haute Savoie
Syndicat d'Apiculture du Gard
Syndicat d'Apiculture du Rhône
Syndicat de l'Apiculture de l'Allier
Terre d'Abeilles
The Environmental Forum
Umanotera
Umweltinstitut München e.V.
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Union syndicale apicole du Roussillon (USAR)
Védegylet Egyesület / Protect the Future Association
Verebélyi Mária
Via Pontica Foundation
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Weiner Sennyey Tibor
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Zöld Akció Egyesület (Green Action)