

Scientists call for ambitious Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation

The heavy use of chemical pesticides in agriculture is strongly linked to declines in insects, birds, biodiversity in terrestrial and aquatic systems and detrimental impacts on global public health. For that reason, the global reduction of pesticides use is one of the key negotiation points during the UN Biodiversity Summit (COP15) in Montréal. The European Commission has taken a leading role in efforts to curb pesticides by adopting a 50% reduction target of use and risks by 2030 in its [Farm to Fork Strategy](#). Earlier this year, the European Commission proposed [a Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation](#) to enshrine this target into legislation, as well as to mandate Member States to invest in Integrated Pest Management and ban pesticides from sensitive areas.

Given the urgent need for reduction of pesticide impacts, it is worrying to observe that a number of Member State governments and Members of the European Parliament have recently called for the delay and/or watering down of the new pesticides regulation. Citing [questionable](#) 'food security' and 'resilience' concerns, Member States have [called](#) for an additional impact assessment to the thorough assessment performed by the Commission before the outbreak of the Ukraine war. As members of the scientific community, we express our deep concern.

We stress that:

- The undelayed realisation of the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies' pesticides reduction objectives remains of utmost importance to stop and reverse the decline of biodiversity.
- The "[Potsdam Statement](#)" of earlier this year remains unreservedly valid. This statement, signed by 600+ researchers, stressed the need to take demand-side actions in order to future-proof the EU's food system, as such mitigating pressures on global biodiversity and sustaining the foundation for long-term food security.
- The gain in knowledge of the required additions to the thorough Impact Assessment performed by the European Commission is highly questionable, as the long-term challenges facing the EU food system and state of biodiversity have not changed since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine.
- Lack of binding targets is exactly the reason why investments in Integrated Pest Management have [lagged](#) behind since the adoption of the 2009 Pesticides Directive. The adoption of binding targets and a reallocation of public resources is [expected](#) to [accelerate innovation](#) of non-hazardous pesticide alternatives.
- A food system transition is non-linear and disruptive by definition. While current modes of impact assessment may provide insights into short-term market impacts, they are [incapable](#) of projecting longer-term innovation and disruption, which the Green Deal aims for.

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235. Dr Ulrich Loening, retired Reader in Molecular Biology and Director of the Centre for Human Ecology, University of Edinburgh
236. Dr. Doreen Babin, Julius Kühn Institute, Institute for Epidemiology and Pathogen Diagnostics, Braunschweig, Germany
237. Assoc.-Prof. PD Dipl.-Ing. Dr. med. Hans-Peter Hutter, Department of Environmental Health, Center for Public Health, Medical University Vienna, Austria.
238. Prof. Dr.. Gloria I. Guzmán. Professor of Agroecology and Organic Farming. Agro-ecosystems History Laboratory. Pablo de Olavide University (Spain).
239. Dr. Bartosz Bartkowski, Department of Economics, Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research - UFZ, Leipzig, Germany.
240. Prof. Dr. Josef Settele, Co-Chair of IPBES Global Assessment; Member of the German Advisory Council on the Environment - SRU; German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research (iDiv) Halle-Jena-Leipzig; Dept. of Conservation Biology and Social-Ecological Systems, Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research - UFZ, Halle, Germany.
241. Dr. Hanns Moshammer, Head of dept. of Environmental Health, Medical University Vienna, Austria.
242. Dr. Fabrice Martin-Laurent, Head of Agroécologie department, INRAE Bourgogne Franche-Comté, Dijon, France.
243. Francisco Díaz Martínez, PhD candidate on Biodiversity and Environmental Management. Department of Ecology. Biodiversity, Nature Reserves and Global Change. Instruments, Models and Applications. University of Murcia, Spain
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245. Dr. Stefan Möckel, senior scientist at the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research UFZ Leipzig. Lead author of the study “Pesticide tax in the EU – Various levy concepts and their impact on pesticide reduction”, 2021, <https://www.ufz.de/index.php?en=36458>
246. Prof.dr.ir. Cees J.N. Buisman, Executive Board Wetsus and professor Biological Recovery and Reuse Technology
247. Dr. Oliver Schweiger, Working Group Leader at the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research - UFZ, Halle, Germany. German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research Halle-Jena-Leipzig (iDiv).
248. Dr Elizabeth Finch, Postdoctoral researcher, Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research - UFZ, Halle, Germany.
249. Ute Susanne Kaden