

Placing of plant protection products on the market

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The Commission presents a report on the establishment of a European fund for minor uses in the field of plant protection products.

Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 regulates the placing of plant protection products (PPP) on the market and contains special provisions for the application and authorisation of so called minor uses. These are uses of PPP that are **economically not sustainable for the plant protection industry, but important for growers**.

Minor uses mainly concern minor or very minor crops (including most vegetables, fruit, nurseries and flowers) and it is estimated that they overall represent up to EUR 70 billion per year, representing 22% of the entire EU plant production value. It was estimated that direct impacts on the agricultural sector (i.e. crop production loss and additional growing costs for farmers) account for more than EUR 1 billion per year. Furthermore, most Member States consider minor uses to be so important that already today structural money and manpower amounting to approximately EUR 8 million are spent to address the issue.

The Regulation requires the Commission to present a report to the European Parliament and Council on the establishment of a European fund for minor uses, accompanied, if appropriate, by a legislative proposal. The aims of that report are:

- providing information regarding the situation on minor uses as reported by Member States and stakeholder organisations;
- presenting the strategy offered in Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 as regards minor uses;
- presenting the options for action considered in the preliminary study funded by the Commission;
- informing the European Parliament and the Council about the Commission's conclusions on a possible legislative proposal for the establishment of a European minor uses fund.

Four options for action by the Commission have been considered :

- **Option 1:** no funding by the Commission;
- **Option 2:** re-installation of the EU Minor Uses Expert Group: the direct costs are estimated in the range of EU 44 000/year at the expense of the Commission, not including the resources needed in the Commission to attend and follow-up the meetings;
- **Option 3:** Commission partly funding a coordination facility (Technical Secretariat) comprising of an independent central secretariat which coordinates the work between Member States and stakeholders: the required budget for the implementation of option 3 has been estimated in the range of EUR 0.5 to EUR 0.7 millions/year to be shared between the Commission and Member State. The co-funding by the Commission could be implemented in the form of a grant;
- **Option 4:** Commission partly funding a coordination facility (Technical Secretariat) and specific projects. In the framework of this option, a budget estimated at EUR 1.2- EUR 6 million/year would be necessary depending on the number of projects funded. In this option the costs should be shared between the three stakeholder groups (industry, growers and the Commission/Member State).

The collection of views of Member States and stakeholders showed a **clear demand for the establishment of a coordinated action at European level**. While policy makers supported in majority option 3, a clear preference for option 4 was indicated by growers and the plant protection industry.

Noting that coordination at the European level is essential to solve the minor use problem, noting that Member States have already national efforts in place, and noting that there are currently a number of grassroots stakeholder activities ongoing, the **Commission proposes the establishment of a coordination group.**

The Commission is of the opinion that, **in the short and medium term, the creation of a coordination platform** would be sufficient, to which the Commission is prepared to financially contribute.

Once the facility has been established and becomes operational, the Commission will assess its functioning as well as the results achieved and may propose further appropriate measures.

The Commission also calls for the full involvement of relevant stakeholders to successfully implement Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 and to find **EU-wide viable solutions for minor crop pest problems.** Special attention should be given to the implementation of integrated pest management practices and to low-risk active substances, bio-pesticides and basic substances.