

Implementation of Directive 2009/128/EC on the sustainable use of pesticides

2017/2284(INI) - 30/01/2019 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the own-initiative report by Jytte GUTELAND (S&D, SE) on the implementation of Directive 2009/128/EC on the sustainable use of pesticides.

The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, exercising its prerogative as an associated committee in accordance with [Rule 54 of the Rules of Procedure](#), also gave its opinion on the report.

Overall, Members regretted that, despite efforts made, the overall degree of progress in implementation by the Member States is insufficient to meet the Directive's main objectives and to unlock its full potential to reduce the overall risks deriving from pesticide use.

The Commission's 2017 progress report identifies significant gaps in the National Action Plans (NAPs) of Member States, suggesting a lower commitment to protecting the environment and health in some countries. They regretted that only 11 Member States have produced a revised NAP to date, although the deadline for revision was the end of 2017.

The report stressed that the CAP in its current form does not sufficiently encourage and incentivise the reduction of farms' dependency on pesticides and the uptake of organic production techniques. It considered that specific policy instruments in the post-2020 CAP are required in order to help change farmers' behaviour as regards pesticide use.

On the other hand, Members noted that EFSA's latest report on pesticide residues in food showed that 97.2 % of samples throughout Europe were within the legal limits under the EU legislation, which bears witness to an extremely rigorous and safe food production system.

Key recommendations

Members called on the Member States to:

- complete the implementation of the Directive without further delay;
- adhere to the established timelines for delivering revised NAPs and to deliver clear quantitative targets and a measurable overall objective of an immediate and long-term effective reduction in pesticide use;
- strictly follow the ban on imports of prohibited pesticides into the EU from third countries;
- move forward with the adoption and implementation of harmonised risk indicators as recently proposed by the Commission, in order to properly monitor the reduction impacts of pesticides;

The Commission is called on to:

- develop guidance on all the integrated pest management principles and their implementation;

- deliver on its commitment under the 7th Environment Action Programme to put forward a Union strategy for a non-toxic environment that is conducive to innovation and the development of sustainable substitutes, including non-chemical solutions;
- establish a fully operational and transparent system for the regular collection of statistical data on pesticide use, impacts of occupational and non-occupational exposure to pesticides on human and animal health, and presence of pesticide residues in the environment, especially in soil and water;
- set up a pan-European Platform on Sustainable Pesticides Use that would bring together sectorial stakeholders and representatives at local and regional level so as to facilitate information-sharing and exchange of best practices in reducing pesticides use;
- immediately prohibit the use of pesticides with active substances that are mutagenic, carcinogenic, or toxic for reproduction, or have endocrine-disrupting characteristics and are damaging to humans or animals;
- take a risk-based approach to the management and use of commonly used plant protection products that is justified by independent, peer-reviewed scientific evidence.

Members called on the Commission and the Member States to:

- place greater emphasis on the promotion of the development, research, registration and marketing of low-risk and biological alternatives, including by increasing funding opportunities within Horizon Europe and the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027;
- promote research programmes aimed at determining the impacts of pesticide use on human health, taking into account the full range of toxicological effects, including immunotoxicity, endocrine disruption and neurodevelopmental toxicity, and focusing on the effects of prenatal exposure to pesticides on children's health;
- no longer allow the use of PPPs in areas used by the general public or vulnerable groups;
- ensure that the 'polluter pays' principle is fully implemented and effectively enforced as regards the protection of water resources.