Statistics on pesticides

2006/0258(COD) - 11/12/2006 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to create a legal framework, and to lay down harmonised rules, for the collection and dissemination of data concerning the placing on the market and use of plant protection products.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

BACKGROUND: the 6th Environment Action Programme, approved in 2002, recognised that pesticide use impacts greatly both on human health and on the environment. Particular effort has been given, in particular, to reducing further still the use of pesticides for plant protection purposes. The Environment Action Programme underlines the need to achieve a more sustainable use of pesticides and to reduce the risk of pesticides.

In addition, the Commission Communication "Towards a Thematic Strategy on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides" (see INI/2002/2277), recognises the need for detailed, harmonised and up-to-date statistics on the sale and the use of pesticides at Community level. The Commission proposed to establish relevant mandatory requirements within two years of the adoption of the Thematic Strategy.

Indeed, monitoring the risks related to the use of pesticides needs appropriate indicators. The Member States, the Commission and the OECD have already conducted preliminary studies which seek to establish such indicators. The calculation of risk indicators is possible only on the basis of suitable data – such as pesticide use. Experts have, however, expressed their concerns about the accessibility, transparency, adequacy and reliability of such data.

CONTENT: the purpose of the proposed Regulation, therefore, is to create a legal framework that lays down harmonised rules for the collection and dissemination of data concerning the placing on the market and use of plant protection products. The Regulation instructs the Member States:

- to collect data regularly (annually as regards placing on the market and every five years as regards use);
- on how to collect data – such as representative surveys, statistical estimation procedures on the basis of expert judgements or models, reporting obligations imposed on the distribution chain for plant protection products, reporting obligations imposed on professional users, from administrative sources or by a combination of these means;
- on how to transmit date to the Commission.

It also entrusts the Commission with the tasks of adapting some technical aspects and defining the quality evaluation criteria and the data transmission format. The financing of actions for statistics on plant protection products will be covered by the Community statistical programme 2008-2012.

The proposal draws widely on the expertise of the 'Pesticide Statistics Experts Group'. It is also based on the experience gained through 30 pilot projects conducted between 1999 and 2004 within the technical action plan for improving agricultural statistics (TAPAS) and 10 projects carried out in 2005 in the new Member States and Acceding Countries with the support of the 2002 PHARE Multi-Beneficiary Programme for Statistical Co-operation.