



Pesticide reduction: regulatory framework



Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe
Dr. Martin Dermine

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Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe



- Since 1987, replace hazardous pesticides with environmental friendly practices
- ~50 member organisations accross Europe (Friends of the Earth Hungary), 13 staff members, Brussels
- Advocacy work, campaigning, legal work (court cases)
 - Pesticide authorisation system: toxicity of pesticides (active substances, co-formulants...), improve regulatory framework
 - Protect citizens and farmers health from direct exposure to pesticides
 - Protect the environment: bees (neonicotinoids), soil life (fertility)
 - Alternatives to pesticides in agriculture
 - Pesticide-free towns
- Scientists, policy officers, lawyers, communicators



Science-based approach



- Scientific knowledge on the toxicity of pesticides on the rise since 20 years
- Chronic exposure (farmers, residents): increased risk of developing cancer, Parkinson's, IQ reduction, infertility, birth malformation...
- Residues in food: setting legal limits of residues based on highly unprecise science (residue limits constantly modified)
- Collapse of biodiversity: one of the major causes, jointly with habitat destruction
- Science and regulatory history tell us...a pesticide that is considered safe today...will be banned for its toxicity in 5, 10, 20 years
- Toxicity to health and the environment intrinsically linked (e.g. neonicotinoids)





Science-based approach



Article

Neonicotinoid Pesticides Affect Developing Neurons in Experimental Mouse Models and in Human Induced Pluripotent Stem Cell (iPSC)-Derived Neural Cultures and Organoids

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Abstract: Neonicotinoids are synthetic, nicotine-derived insecticides used worldwide to protect crops and domestic animals from pest insects. The reported evidence shows that they are also able to interact with mammalian nicotine receptors (nAChRs), triggering detrimental responses in cultured neurons. Exposure to high neonicotinoid levels during the fetal period induces neurotoxicity in animal models. Considering the persistent exposure to these insecticides and the key role of nAChRs in brain development, their potential neurotoxicity on mammal central nervous system (CNS) needs further investigations. We studied here the neurodevelopmental effects of different generations of

- Neonicotinoids: from toxic to insects only (1980's)...to toxic to humans (2020's)
- No safe pesticide, no safe use of pesticide



Pesticide use reduction



- 2009: Directive on the Sustainable Use of pesticides (SUD)
- Aim: gradual reduction of pesticides dependence and better protection of citizens and biodiversity
 - Integrated Pest Management (IPM) mandatory as from 2014
 - IPM: prevention comes first, synthetic pesticides come last
 - Citizens, Natura 2000 (~21% of HU) and water protection areas: must not be exposed to synthetic pesticides
- Complete failure: Never transposed correctly in national legislation (European Commission, European Court of Auditors and European Parliament)
- No infringement procedures launched



EU Green Deal



- 2020: Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies
 - 50% reduction on the use/risk of pesticides
 - 50% reduction on the use of the most toxic substances (~50 substances)
 - IPM mandatory
 - 20% reduction in chemical fertilizers
 - 25% organic agriculture
 - ...by 2030
- 2022: publication of a draft Regulation on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides (SUR)
 - Intensive lobbying from the agroindustry against the proposal
 - War in Ukraine, important disinformation campaign on yield reduction etc.
 - Fall 2023: SUR rejected by the European Parliament
 - February 2024: SUR proposal withdrawn by President Ursula Von der Leyen



SUR: What's next?



- June 2024: EU elections
- Several options:
 - SUR 2.0 proposal by the Commission: several political groups favourable
 - A partial SUR to fix some issues (e.g. new law on biocontrol, pesticide-free towns)
 - SUD: Member States revise their national transposition of the SUD and finally implement it.
- Timeline:
 - Composition of the new Commission: end September
 - Hearing of new Commissioners: October
 - New Commission starting beginning of December at the latest, with a Vision for Agriculture



PAN Europe's demands



- Address the very clear **democratic signal**: phase out synthetic pesticides
- **Accompagny farmers** in the implementation of IPM to gradually phase out pesticides (independent advisory systems)
- **Financial support** to farmers: align new CAP to environmental rules
- **Pesticide-free towns**
- Protect citizens from direct exposure (broad non-sprayed buffer zones), Natura 2000 and water protection sites immediately
- Cut the financial link between pesticide industry and farmers



Conclusion



- No safe use of pesticides
- Farmers are the first victims of pesticide use
- Stop opposing yields and biodiversity
- No alternative: less and less pesticide authorised, more and more resistance, need to move towards resilient agroecological practices
- Phasing out synthetic pesticides will reconcile farmers, citizens and the environment



Thank you for your attention !



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