

It's time for the EU to phase out synthetic pesticides!

The EU must urgently promote the transition towards a bee-friendly agricultural model, able to preserve the biodiversity of agricultural landscapes and guarantee future sustainability. The decades of continued industrialization of our agriculture and food system have significantly contributed to a dramatic decline in biodiversity and in the number of pollinators, the contamination of our soil and water, and the presence of chemicals in Europeans' food.

What Europe needs are diversified agroecological food systems, based on farming agrobiodiversity, with lower dependency on external inputs, stimulating social relationships and short-supply chains, to build long-term healthy agroecosystems and secure livelihoods. The transition to agroecological food systems should take inspiration from the Ten Elements of Agroecology and the 13 Agroecological Principles of the FAO and of the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security.¹

To achieve this, the revision of the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive (SUD) must contribute to the ambition of the EU Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy, and will be instrumental to help farmers adopt more bee-friendly farming practices, and make it economically interesting to adopt agroecology and integrated pest management practices. Already over half a million EU citizens have voiced their demands by signing the ECI "[Save bees and farmers](#)" which include a phase out of synthetic pesticides by 2035, more measures to protect and restore biodiversity, and better support to farmers to transition to agroecology.

The SUD Must:

1) Set binding targets on the reduction of the risk and use of synthetic pesticides

- Include binding EU targets to reduce the use of synthetic pesticides by 80% by 2030, and a complete phase out by 2035, and set minimum contributions for each Member State.

2) Improve the data collection on the use of pesticides

- Focus on collecting reliable and precise data on the actual use of pesticides recorded by farmers and comparable across the EU, rather than measuring sales of pesticides.

3) Promote agroecology and the uptake of alternatives to synthetic pesticides

- Limit the use of pesticides as much as possible, starting with the abolition of their preventive use, in farming but also in gardening and forestry.
- Make the use of Integrated Pest Management mandatory for farmers, and enforce implementation through effective controls and sanctions.
- Provide support to farmers to transition towards agroecology and encourage farm management systems that aim to re-establish the symbiosis between bees and agriculture, using systems based on crop rotation, diversification and the protection of beneficial insects.
- Alternatives to pesticides must not include GMOs or new GMOs, which perpetuate a model of agriculture based on monocultures and industrial agriculture while posing a risk to biodiversity and farmers' sovereignty.

¹ https://foodpolicycoalition.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Policy-paper_mainstreaming-agroecology-in-EU-policies.pdf