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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Accompanying the document

REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

on the sustainable use of plant protection products and amending Regulation (EU) 2021/2115

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Executive Summary Sheet

Impact assessment on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive

A. Need for action

What is the problem and why is it a problem at EU level?

Chemical pesticides contribute to biodiversity decline. The European Green Deal aims to reduce both the use of chemical pesticides and the risk they present. The Farm to Fork strategy sets EU targets to reduce the use of – and risk from – pesticides by 50% by 2030. The current Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive does not reflect these ambitions. It has not kept up with technological progress and is failing to achieve effective sustainable use of pesticides. Implementation of the Directive is also uneven and incomplete. Member States could do more to promote alternative, non-chemical methods of pest control. Many have not set national targets to cut the use of and risk from pesticides.

What should be achieved?

The specific objective of the Commission proposal is to protect biodiversity, the environment and health by **reducing the use of chemical pesticides – and the risk from these pesticides – across the EU**. To achieve this, Member States must share the ambition of the targets set out in the farm-to-fork strategy. The Commission proposal aims to improve data gathering on the use of pesticides and to support alternatives to chemical pesticides.

What is the value added of action at the EU level (subsidiarity)?

The effects of pesticides on biodiversity, water quality and other environmental parameters transcend borders. That is why we need coordinated EU action to supplement and boost national and local actions. Such actions will also help to meet relevant sustainable development goals set out by the United Nations.

B. Solutions

What are the options to achieve the objectives? Is there a preferred option or not? If not, why not?

Option 1: The EU's targets to reduce pesticide use by 50% – and also reduce the risk from pesticides by 50% – would remain non-legally binding. Advisory systems and guidance for pesticide users would be improved. Precision-farming techniques to cut the use of – and risk from – chemical pesticides would be promoted.

Option 2: The 50% reduction targets would become legally binding at EU level. Member States would set their own national reduction targets using established criteria. These national targets would then be legally binding and enforceable. The use of more hazardous pesticides would be prohibited in sensitive areas. Professional pesticide users would need to keep electronic records on pesticide use and on integrated pest management. National authorities would analyse those records to monitor progress. Independent advisory services would advise pesticide users on alternative techniques and integrated pest management.

Option 3 would be similar to option 2. However, under option 3 the 50% reduction targets would become legally binding at both EU and national level. The use of all chemical pesticides would be prohibited in sensitive areas.

The preferred option is option 3, except for the targets, where option 2 is preferred. In this case, the preferred option would see the 50% reduction targets become legally binding at EU level, with Member States setting their own national reduction targets. The options have been assessed against a likely baseline scenario where the Directive remains unchanged.

What are different stakeholders' views? Who supports which option?

Views among stakeholders vary. Many members of the public, environmental organisations and the water industry demand strong actions and legally binding targets to reduce pesticide use and the risk from pesticides. In contrast, some pesticide users and pesticide-industry members see no need to reduce pesticide use. Pesticide users worry

about a lack of effective alternatives to chemical pesticides
C. Impacts of the preferred option
What are the benefits of the preferred option (if any, otherwise of main ones)?
The preferred option lowers the risks to human health and the environment from pesticide use. Pesticide users will be better informed about effective alternatives to chemical pesticides. National authorities will have also better tools to monitor the use of pesticides and implementation of integrated pest management.
What are the costs of the preferred option (if any, otherwise of main ones)?
Professional pesticide users will face additional costs for record keeping and for using advisory services. Banning the use of chemical pesticides in sensitive areas may result in lower crop yields from those areas. The pesticide industry may see reduced demand for their products. Higher production costs may also trigger a rise in food prices for EU consumers. EU reliance on imports such as cereals may increase. However, future adjustments, supports and mitigating actions are expected to reduce these costs over time.
What are the impacts on SMEs and competitiveness?
Profitability along the production chain will be impacted in different ways. This will affect SMEs such as farmers and other food-business operators. It will also affect the businesses that support these SMEs, such as suppliers of pesticides and equipment, agricultural suppliers, contractors, and advisers. The EU common agricultural policy offers Member States means to mitigate some negative impacts. Furthermore, more consistent application of EU law will reduce the competitive differences between SMEs currently operating in different Member States.
Will there be significant impacts on national budgets and administrations?
National authorities will face control and administrative costs for data collection and official checks.
Will there be other significant impacts?
Enforcing higher EU standards on pesticide use is like to impact global patterns of trade in agricultural products.
Proportionality?
The proposed actions are proportional to the overall objective of addressing the uneven and incomplete implementation of the current Directive to: (i) better protect health, biodiversity and the environment; and (ii) reduce chemical pesticide use and risk.
D. Follow-up
When will the policy be reviewed?
Every year, the Commission will review progress by the EU and Member States towards achieving the pesticide-use and risk-reduction targets. The legal act will be reviewed in due course, based on advances in scientific evidence and new technologies to reduce the use of – and risks from – pesticides.