



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 17 October 2022
(OR. en)

13663/22

LIMITE

**AGRI 547
PESTICIDE 32
SEMENCES 23
AGRILEG 151
ENV 1028
PHYTOSAN 40
CODEC 1542**

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Proposal on a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council
on the sustainable use of plant protection products and amending
Regulation 2021/2115
- Comments from Bulgaria

Delegations will find in annex the comments on Chapter II received from Bulgaria.

Proposal on a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the sustainable use of plant protection products and amending Regulation 2021/2115

BG written comments – Chapter II

WP SUR – 12-13 September 2022

Chapter II

General comment – Republic of Bulgaria does not support the introduction of legally binding targets. We consider that the F2F reduction targets should be applied only on EU level. In order to realize progress towards the objectives of the Farm to Fork Strategy each Member state should contribute with its national actions and not by national legally binding targets. In this regard we support Poland’s proposal for redrafting art. 5 (*see* WK 10272/2022 COR 1 ADD 15 EXT 1)

Article 4 “Union 2030 reduction targets for chemical plant protection products” +Annex I

Republic of Bulgaria also thinks that EC should choose which of the European Green Deal objectives is more relevant as they are contradicting each other. In order to avoid contradiction between ambitions to increase the organic farming areas while reducing the use of PPP, which are authorized for use in organic farming, Bulgaria proposes that a **different category is set up and lower weight coefficient is assigned to active substances, applicable in organic farming**.

The draft Regulation on sustainable use of pesticides includes an average 50% reduction of the use of **chemical pesticides**. The plant protection products containing **for example inorganic sulphur are chemical pesticides** but there are no hazards identified and they are authorized for use in organic agriculture. The PPP based on sulphur are among the first 5 active substances placed on the market in Bulgaria in greatest quantity. Inorganic sulphur is used also as fertilizer in agriculture.

The active substances, which do not require the setting of MRL are included in Annex IV of Regulation (EC) № 396/2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides in or on food and feed of plant and animal origin. The chemical active substances from Annex IV should have different status (for example sulphur) as no risks for human and animal health are identified for these substances.

Furthermore copper compounds which are also inorganic compounds are authorized for use in organic farming. All copper compounds are candidates for substitution with weight coefficient of 16 in contrast to the rest of the chemical pesticides which have weight coefficient of 8. In this regards the use of copper compounds raises the hazard coefficient and not only the quantity of the pesticides used. Copper compounds are used also as fertilizers in agriculture.

The PPP based on copper and sulphur are used in higher dosage in comparison to the synthetic pesticides.

Article 5 “Member States 2030 reduction targets for chemical plant protection products”

Republic of Bulgaria thinks that such legally binding targets would have been acceptable, when data on the use of PPP become available and/or can be collected electronically. Currently there isn't single methodology on EU level for data collection regarding the quantities of active substances placed on the market. The quantities of active substances placed on the market does not have the same meaning as the quantities of PPP used. There aren't relevant statistical data on EU level for the use of pesticides, as EUROSTAT receives incomplete data by the Member states on the use of pesticides. For that reason, Bulgaria has reserves on the proposed calculation methodology as it is not based on real data on the use of pesticides.

Regardless of the Commission's calculations that Bulgaria should decrease the use and risk of PPP with 35%, which currently is the lowest possible percentage, we consider that this minimum threshold shall result in considerable decrease of yields, deterioration of production quality, high product prices, lower income for agricultural producers, which in turn can lead to inability to ensure the competitiveness and provide food security. The differences in starting positions of the Member states and the EU average values are so big, that reduction in a range of 35-65% cannot compensate them and in the end of the period the Member states targets shall be even more incomparable, which does not correspond with one of the main objectives of TFEU to decrease the inequality in development level. Current data shows that the baseline of Bulgaria is below the set at EU level targets to be reached by 2030.

We thank the Hungarian colleagues for the methodology presented during the meeting. At this stage we have a scrutiny reservation. We should review it more carefully in consultation with relevant experts.

Regarding national target 2 we consider that the indicator is subject to a number of factors, which are beyond the control and actions of Member States.

Article 6, point 7 “Initial assessment of national targets by the Commission”

The proposal is not clear how and based on what criteria the European commission shall take decision to recommend to a specific Member state to increase the level of national reduction targets. The criteria must be included.