



Council of the
European Union

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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
On:	1 July 2020
To:	Delegations

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Subject:	Council Conclusions on Special report No 5/2020 from the European Court of Auditors entitled 'Sustainable use of plant protection products: limited progress in measuring and reducing risks' - Council Conclusions (1 July 2020)
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Delegations will find in the annex the Council Conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' Special report No 5/2020 entitled "Sustainable use of plant protection products: limited progress in measuring and reducing risks", approved by written procedure by the Council of the European Union on 1 July 2020.

**Council conclusions on Special report No 5/2020 from the European Court of Auditors
entitled ‘Sustainable use of plant protection products: limited progress in measuring and
reducing risks’**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- (1) WELCOMES Special Report No 5/2020 from the European Court of Auditors (‘Court’) entitled ‘Sustainable use of plant protection products: limited progress in measuring and reducing risks’;
- (2) ACKNOWLEDGES, against the background of increasing public concern regarding the risks associated with the use of pesticides, the Court’s finding that there has been limited progress in measuring and reducing the risks of plant protection products’ (PPPs) use;
- (3) STRESSES the importance of accelerating the sustainable use of PPPs and of converting the general principles of integrated pest management (IPM) into practical criteria along with some recommendations;
- (4) However, HIGHLIGHTS that the implementation of the IPM principles as defined in Annex 3 to Directive No 2009/128/EC on the sustainable use of pesticides has started in the Member States from very different starting points, that it is highly dependent on the specific conditions in each Member State, and that it has reached very different stages across the Union;
- (5) [...];
- (6) STRESSES that the differences between Member States regarding the type of agricultural production, the distribution of land, and geographical and climate variations from region to region pose a huge challenge;
- (7) NOTES the Court’s finding that EU legislation on IPM does not require farmers to keep records of how they apply IPM, and that the enforcement of the EU legislation on IPM is weak;

- (8) NOTES that an effective monitoring of PPPs has not been possible because of the lack of useful data, but that some Member States already provide detailed data with respect to the sales of PPPs;
- (9) AGREES with the Court that the effective monitoring of PPP use at EU level should be improved by providing for more precise reporting obligations, including more detailed non-aggregated data on their use in accordance with data protection legislation, but in a practical and feasible manner, within the framework of the farmers' existing reporting obligations, in order to limit the administrative burden as much as possible.
- (10) AGREES with the Court that the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) helps to support, through some measures, the sustainable use of PPPs and has set up farm advisory systems in accordance with needs of farmers;
- (11) WELCOMES the Commission's intention to further strengthen the contribution of the post-2020 CAP to the sustainable use of pesticides and to ensure food security;
- (12) NOTES the Commission's inclusion in the post-2020 CAP proposal of general IPM principles corresponding to requirements measurable at farm level, but POINTS OUT that translating the principles of IPM into controllable criteria is very difficult to do fairly and represents a challenge for which Member States need the Commission's support;
- (13) NOTES that some principles of IPM can already be supported in the Pillar II environmental and organic farming commitments as well as in other CAP measures, such as greening, and that, in the post-2020 CAP proposal, Member States may have further opportunities to support IPM through such means as the Pillar I eco-scheme and the Pillar II interventions;
- (14) NOTES that conditionality in the post-2020 CAP proposal may already be wider than the current conditionality framework, and therefore no new obligations should be added;
- (15) AGREES with the Court that providing more alternative methods and lower-risk PPPs can help farmers apply IPM, and HIGHLIGHTS the importance of education, training, research, the development of new techniques and technologies and the application of precision farming, as well as their take-up by farmers;

- (16) NOTES the finding that the existing harmonised risk indicators do not entirely show the extent to which the requirements of the Sustainable Use Directive have successfully influenced the sustainable use of pesticides, nor do they take into account the differences between the Member States;
- (17) WELCOMES the Commission's intention to update data requirements, assessment methodologies and decision-making criteria for the approval of micro-organisms and other substances to facilitate access to low-risk PPPs and to develop better harmonised risk indicators in order to reflect more clearly the risks and impact of PPP use for health and the environment;
- (18) PROPOSES that the upcoming revision of the Directive on the sustainable use of pesticides should include clear and more ambitious obligations regarding the reduction of the risk from the use of PPPs based on improved harmonised risk indicators;
- (19) ENCOURAGES Member States to support this process, while taking into account the objectives of the European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy.
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