



## Press release

### More guidance for countries on EU pesticide legislation needed

**15 December 2010, Brussels** - EU Health and Consumer Affairs Commissioner John Dalli has been asked to encourage faster, stronger implementation of pesticides policy in an open letter from the Health and Environment Alliance and Pesticides Action Network Europe (1).

As a result of recent EU legislation, Member States are asked to reduce pesticide use to protect health and the environment. But groups are concerned that deadlines related to National Action Plans on the sustainable use of pesticides scheduled for 14 December 2011 and 2012 will not be met. (2)

HEAL and PAN Europe are calling on EU Health Commissioner John Dalli to take a more pro-active role in protecting citizens from pesticide exposure. "Health impacts from pesticides are a major public health issue: both the cocktail effect of pesticides to which we are exposed and possible long-term effects. But we can reduce exposure now," says Anne Stauffer, Policy Manager, Health and Environment Alliance.

Recent EU law requires countries to set up action plans and to establish pesticide-free areas. "By making pesticide reduction a priority in 2011, EU Commissioner Dalli can put prevention first. Reduced use of pesticides will reduce exposure and in turn contribute to tackling some of Europe's major public health challenges such as increasing cancer rates," she says. (3)

During the past few months, PAN Europe and HEAL have monitored EU Member States activities on National Action Plans. They are increasingly concerned with the slow and uneven implementation of the EU Directive on Sustainable use. (4)

"We need the European Commission to provide stronger guidance and inspiration for EU Member states and to collect and disseminate information on best practice and alternatives to pesticide dependency to ensure real progress is made in the implementation of the National Action Plans in countries," says Henriette Christensen, PAN Europe. (5)

Ill-health and health care costs in developed countries continues to be dominated by chronic disease. Cancer incidence is expected to rise by 14% in the European Union between 2009 and 2020. There is a growing body of science that shows the link between cancer and chemical and pesticides pollution, particularly for pregnant women and farmers. (6)

Public opinion surveys reveal a continued high concern of European citizens about health impacts from pesticides in all aspects of their lives. A recent Eurobarometer shows that pesticide residues in food are a number one worry for 72% of EU consumers, a higher percentage than in 2005.(7) Europeans are also concerned about hazards from pesticide use in their homes. As a Eurobarometer from 2009 on chemicals in consumer products highlights, the top worry for Europeans is the potential health impact from pesticides and herbicides for home use (in gardens and greenhouses).

14 December each year over coming years is the deadline for compliance on different aspects of the new EU Directive on the Sustainable use of pesticides. HEAL and PAN Europe sent the letter yesterday to remind Commissioner Dalli that European citizens are counting on his leadership for better health protection through ambitious national implementation.

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## Notes for journalists

Websites: [www.pesticidescancer.eu](http://www.pesticidescancer.eu), [www.pan-europe.info](http://www.pan-europe.info)

(1) See: [www.env-health.org](http://www.env-health.org)

(2) For the legal text with the deadlines see: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:309:FULL:EN:PDF>

(3) For further information, see our Sick of pesticides campaign at [www.pesticidescancer.eu](http://www.pesticidescancer.eu) or <http://www.env-health.org/r/68>

(4) PAN Europe has recently published a guide on best practice NAP ([http://www.pan-europe.info/Resources/Reports/NAP\\_best\\_practice.pdf](http://www.pan-europe.info/Resources/Reports/NAP_best_practice.pdf)); the Health and Environment Alliance HEAL is currently collecting information on which cities in Europe have already gone pesticide-free (see: [www.pesticidescancer.eu](http://www.pesticidescancer.eu)).

(5) See for example the report, "A review of the role pesticides play in some cancers: children, farmers and pesticide users at risk?" published by CHEMTrust. <http://www.chemtrust.org.uk/documents/CHEM%20Trust%20Report%20-%20Pesticides%20&%20Cancer%20July%202010.pdf>

(6) See Special Eurobarometer 354: Food-related risks, November 2010: [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_354\\_sum\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_354_sum_en.pdf)

(7) See Eurobarometer 314: Europeans' attitudes toward chemicals in consumer products: risk perception of potential health hazards [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_314\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_314_en.pdf)

**Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)** aims to raise awareness of how environmental protection and sustainability improves health and to empower the health community to contribute their expertise to policy making. Since its inception, HEAL's membership has grown to include a diverse network of more than 60 citizens', patients', women's, health professionals' and environmental organizations across Europe which together have a strong track record in increasing public and expert engagement in both EU debates and the decision-making process. Website: [www.env-health.org](http://www.env-health.org)

**Pesticide Action Network PAN Europe** is a network of NGO campaign organisations working to minimise negative effects and replace the use of hazardous chemicals with ecologically sound alternatives. Our network brings together consumer, public health, and environmental organisations, trades unions, women's groups and farmer associations from across 19 European countries. We work to eliminate dependency on chemical pesticides and to support safe sustainable pest control methods. [www.pan-europe.info](http://www.pan-europe.info)