

PRESS RELEASE

EU Biocide Policy – Safety for Health and Biodiversity first!

Today the European Parliament Committee for Environment will discuss a new legislation for the authorisation and use of disinfectants in households, wood preservatives, insect sprays and other biocidal products. In light of this PAN Germany, PAN Europe, PAN UK and the Health and Environment Alliance HEAL have presented their key demands. They call to significantly improve the current legislative proposal in order to prevent a roll-back of health and environmental standards.

The discussed regulation draft of the Commission is intended to replace the current Biocidal Product Directive (Directive 98/8/EC), which regulates the authorisation and market placement of substances and products that kill or deter hazardous or unwanted organisms from viruses to mammals.

Already under current legislation, biocides have to be authorized, since many of the products are used by consumers as well as in the environment at large and can be hazardous to human health and the environment. The biocide industry already markets 50.000 products in the EU without consistent protection of and information for end users. The Commission freely acknowledges that the regulation draft aims to increase the free marketing of biocides, thus aiding the biocide industry. “This is a slap in the face of all efforts for the consumer’s and environmental protection.” says Carina Weber, PAN Germany’s executive director. Taking the recent reports of the Commission and other authorities into consideration, we are faced with huge inputs of biocides into our drinking water sources. The competent Commission directorate generale for health and consumer protection has documented an inter-relationship between biocides like disinfectants and bacterial resistance against antibiotics. This is a risk for the patients in hospitals. The health risks of the use of insecticides in households are already well-known.

Despite these dangers for health and environment, many suggestions of the Commission’s proposal would help biocidal products to reach the market faster, more easily and at less cost to the producer.

“It is necessary that certain hazardous biocides which are for example very eco-toxic, endocrine disrupting, cancerogenic, toxic for reproduction or have developmental neurotoxic effects, will be ultimately banned,” says Gergely Simon, board member of PAN Europe.

Nick Mole from PAN UK urges: “There should be a regulation in balance that complies with the objectives for the protection of the environment and health. Concrete measures should be established to guarantee a transparent and sustainable use of biocides. One of the few positive aspects of the draft is the proposed requirement to label biocide treated products like wool. Unfortunately, the draft stops at the half way for such requirements and provides several exemptions which weaken the substance of the provision.”

Anne Stauffer, HEAL Policy Manager comments: “The Biocides regulation should not fall back behind the important protection provisions which have been agreed on in the recently adopted



Nernstweg 32, 22765 Hamburg, Tel. 040-399 19 10-0, Fax -390 75 20, info@pan-germany.org, www.pan-germany.org

pesticides regulation. Many biocides pose a significant risk to human health. All decisions on the approval of such hazardous substances must therefore be based on the precautionary principle, to ensure there are no adverse health and environment effects. We urge MEPs to also include provisions on the protection of vulnerable groups such as children or pregnant women, who are at particular risk.“

PAN and HEAL criticise that the Commission proposal does not refer to any relevant environmental objectives, which for example are established in the requirements for the protection of our waters (Water Framework Directive), nor does it control the placement of nano-biocides (e.g. anti-bacterial nano-silver).

They call on the Members of the ENVI Committee to strengthen the Commission’s proposal towards a better protection of human health and the environment.

For further information:

Christian Schweer (PAN Germany)

Tel. ++49-40-3991910-24

Christian.Schweer@pan-germany.org

Gergely Simon (PAN Europe)

Tel. ++ 36 20 334 4336

gergely@pan-europe.info

Nick Mole (PAN UK)

Tel. ++ 44 20 7065 0905

nickmole@pan-uk.org

Anne Stauffer (HEAL)

Tel: +32 2 234 3643

anne@env-health.org

Background information:

Key demands of PAN and HEAL 3-11-2009

<http://www.pan-germany.org/deu/~stellungnahmen.html>

<http://www.env-health.org/r/68>

