

# Pesticides and Health E-News

A monthly news summary brought to you by the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) as part of the Sick of Pesticides Campaign



APRIL 2010

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## Policy and science

**Don't forget to have your say on pesticide use in the UK!** 4<sup>th</sup> May sees the end of UK government public [consultation](#) on the implementation of the EU Directive on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides. The Government's proposal contains a number of key measures in relation to residents.

The consultation has the potential to lay down the ground work for an overhaul and re-evaluation of the way in which the use of pesticides is controlled in the UK. It is open to anyone to make comments and suggestions. Many organisations have already responded, you can read the Pesticides Action Network UK response [here](#). Georgina Downs, of the UK Pesticides Campaign, has prepared a briefing on the consultation which is available [here](#).

**Revision of the EU biocides law.** On the 7<sup>th</sup> April the European Parliament's Industry Committee (ITRE) agreed to support the product labeling of nano-biocides, but at the same time called for an increase in number of hazardous biocides that would still be allowed on the market.

Prior to the vote, HEAL, as part of the NGO coalition, sent a letter to the ITRE committee, asking for their support in ensuring a clear framework for the phase out of highly hazardous substances and coordinated action for the use phase of biocides. Read the NGO [letter](#).

The next stage for this revision is for the Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) to vote on the 500 plus changes proposed to the European Commission's legal text at the beginning of June.

**EU Action Against Cancer.** On April 7th, the European Parliament's ENVI Committee agreed to support the draft report on Action Against Cancer ([the European Partnership](#)).

Prior to the vote, 22 members and partners of HEAL wrote to ENVI Committee MEPs calling for recognition of the environmental dimensions of cancer, especially those of hazardous chemicals and non-voluntary exposures, particularly of fetuses and young children. Read the [NGO letter](#).

The draft report now calls for the inclusion of environmental and occupational exposures, in



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cancer prevention programmes and actions, and will be voted on by the entire Parliament in early May.

**Biocides – risks and alternatives.** The Pesticide Action Network (PAN Germany) has produced a new report on the risks of biocides to health and the environment and the safer alternatives in the EU. The report claims that EU biocide legislation has failed to establish effective risk management. There is a large and expanding market for all kinds of biocides, yet their necessity is often unproven. Highly hazardous substances, banned for other purposes, can still be sold as household substances.

With the EU biocide policy currently under review, the report calls for the establishment of an innovative biocide legislation that ensures the consistent phase-out of hazardous substances, as well as providing an effective framework for the development and use of sound alternatives. Read the report [here](#).

## HEAL's Sick of Pesticides Campaign

**Our Sick of Pesticides campaign has been gathering momentum, and over the past few months has received lots of coverage in European media.** There are many great articles in the UK media on Pesticides and health at the moment in the run up to the close of the Government consultation on pesticide use (see above). In France, the Victims of Pesticides network has received a lot of attention – even European Parliamentarians have been talking about it! For a full run down of all the media coverage received, have a look on the [Sick of Pesticides website](#).

Sick of Pesticides is a Europe-wide initiative working to raise awareness of the links between pesticides and cancer. The aim is to put pressure on governments to encourage them to set up an ambitious National Action Plan for Pesticide Reduction and to help citizens and public bodies to rapidly reduce their dependence on pesticides.

**In May, the Sick of Pesticides campaign is expanding to Hungary, Belgium and the Netherlands.** We now have our partners for these campaigns secured and will announce plans next month – watch this space!

**Pesticides in schools survey.** We are looking for NGO partners in European countries to pilot our survey with local authorities, and other bodies responsible for pesticide use in and around school areas. Contact Gill ([gill@env-health.org](mailto:gill@env-health.org)) for more information

## International news

**French government report ignores NGO recommendations on the dangers of pesticides.** On the 28<sup>th</sup> April the French Parliamentary office for the evaluation of the scientific and technological choices (OPECST) released their final report on “Pesticides and health”. HEAL members [Mouvement pour le droit et le respect des générations futures \(MDRGF\)](#) and [RES - Réseau Environnement Santé](#) have both voiced disappointment in what they believe to be, a weak report that fails to acknowledge new science on the treats to health and the environment from pesticides. The disappointment of the NGO community is particularly acute as their welcomed input to the draft report year – where they had voiced their concerns and provided scientific evident to support these - was not acknowledged in the final version. Read the press releases from [MDRGF](#) and [RES](#).

**EPA ban hazardous metals for residential areas.** The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has ruled that aluminium and magnesium phosphide can no longer be used in residential areas (including homes, nursing homes, day care facilities, hospitals

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and schools) to better protect people, especially children, from dangerous exposures. EPA also increased the buffer zones around non-residential buildings, and created more protective product labeling. [Read the press release.](#)

**New York sets goals for pesticide-free state parks.** Targeting areas frequented by children, such as playgrounds, picnic areas, baseball fields, campgrounds, beaches, and hiking trails, New York Governor David A. Paterson announced an initiative to substantially reduce pesticide use throughout state parks. "People visiting our parks, particularly children, should not be exposed to pesticides. This effort will reduce or, when possible, eliminate the use of pesticides in our State parks and historic sites" said Governor Paterson. Read the full article [here](#)

**Teleconference: "Reducing Environmental Cancer Risk: What We Can Do Now".** Join CHE (The Collaborative on Health and the Environment) on **May 18th at 10 AM Pacific / 1 PM Eastern** for a teleconference with representatives of the President's Cancer Panel and learn more about the findings from their new report on cancer and environmental risks. Read more [here](#).

## More info & articles on pesticides and health:

Interested to find out which foods have the most pesticides? Have a look at the [Shopper's Guide](#)

[US Pesticide poisoning bill strengthens farm worker protection](#)

[Pesticide can turn male frogs into females.](#) Atrazine, a herbicide used globally but banned in the EU, can cause chemical castration and complete feminisation in adult male frogs, according to a recent study.

[Pesticide Exposure and Child Development](#) On March 16, epidemiologist Brenda Eskenazi, Ph.D., presented her research with farm workers in California.

[Farm pesticides linked to skin cancer](#) Large-scale study highlights agricultural chemicals as a possible risk factor behind rising rates of melanoma in the US.

[Links Between Pesticide Exposure and Mental Health.](#)

[Mental Health Effects Arising from Pesticide Exposure: A Guide for Healthcare Providers and Mental Health Practitioners" \(3-fold brochure\)](#)

**P.S.** This month our Facebook page expanded to 300 followers! With lots of discussions every week, it's a great way to follow the pesticides and health debate, and to find out how you can contribute to the reduction of pesticide use in the UK and abroad. Join the [Facebook debate!](#)

*Sick of Pesticides Campaign is run by the Health and Environment Alliance, an NGO working at EU level to raise awareness of how environmental protection improves health.* We achieve this by creating opportunities for better representation of citizens' and health experts' perspectives in the environment and health-related European policy-making. [www.pesticidescancer.eu](http://www.pesticidescancer.eu)

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