Open letter to:
The permanent representations to the European Union

9 December 2022

Subject: Prioritise the protection of people’s health and oppose a complementary impact assessment on the SUR proposal

Dear Permanent Representative to the European Union,

On behalf of the Health and Environmental Alliance (HEAL) and our health group members working together across Europe to protect health and prevent diseases, we are writing to you to express our deep concerns at the current attempts by certain EU member states to delay the adoption of the proposal for a Sustainable Use of Plant Protection Products Regulation (SUR) by requesting a complementary impact assessment. This file is critical for the protection of people’s health and we appeal to you to not delay its adoption.

The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) is the leading not-for-profit organisation addressing how the environment affects human health in the European Union (EU) and beyond. HEAL works to shape laws and policies that promote planetary and human health and protect those most affected by pollution, and raise awareness on the benefits of environmental action for health. Our over 90 member organisations include international, European, national and local groups of health professionals, not-for-profit health insurers, patients, citizens, women, youth, and environmental experts representing over 200 million people across the 53 countries of the WHO European Region.

We are concerned that 19 countries are currently discussing to request an complementary study to the current impact assessment by the European Commission on the SUR proposal, arguing that the possible long-term impacts of the energy and food price crises due to the Ukraine war should be taken into consideration to ensure food security. These attempts, however, will only achieve the contrary. They are blocking the EU’s opportunity to address long-term food security by moving towards a healthy, just, and environmentally-friendly food system, where Europe develops its environmental, health and economic resilience, as previously highlighted by environmental health groups. In fact, the SUR is an opportunity to improve public health for the following reasons.

**It is urgent to reduce our exposure to harmful pesticides and protect people’s health**

The SUR is key to delivering the objectives of the European Green Deal for human health. It aims to improve health protection and disease prevention by promoting the use of safer alternatives to pesticides and therefore is crucial for the future of a healthy food production system. It also responds to the recent European Citizens’ Initiative “SaveBees&Farmers”, where over 1 million Europeans are calling the European Commission to phase out synthetic pesticides by 2035 because of their devastating impacts to human and environmental health.
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As an alliance, HEAL brings independent and expert evidence from the health community to EU and global decision-making processes to inspire disease prevention and to promote a toxic-free, low-carbon, fair and healthy future.