

8 September 2026

To: President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen

CC: Commissioner Christophe Hansen, Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi, Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis, Commissioner Jessika Roswall

Health call: Withdraw the Food and Feed Safety Simplification Omnibus proposal

Dear European Commission President,

Thank you again for our discussion on protecting Europeans' health from chemical and pesticides pollution during your meeting with the Green10 in early July. This exchange took place against a backdrop of mounting scientific evidence on the growing burden of disease and significant associated health costs.

The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) is an alliance of over 70 member organisations working for better health through a healthier environment. We represent health professionals, not-for-profit health insurers, doctors, nurses, cancer and asthma groups, citizens, women's and youth groups, environmental NGOs, scientists, and public health institutes.

Today, we are writing to urge you to withdraw the European Commission's Food and Feed Safety omnibus proposal. Health groups have significant concerns that this proposal, as well as the amendments proposed by the co-legislators, would lead to a weakening of key health protective provisions in the current EU pesticides authorisation and management framework.

Europeans are deeply worried about the health impacts of pesticides pollution, and the science is clear: Exposure to health-harming pesticides is linked to a number of diseases – this includes childhood cancers, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, and Parkinson's disease, to name a few. [It is estimated](#) that in 2017 alone, the societal costs – including health costs – directly attributable to pesticides were approximately €2.3 billion.

As a doctor, you know first-hand the human cost of the illnesses related to pesticide exposure, and your concern for Europeans' health and safety was clear in our July exchange. But the Food and Feed Safety proposal and the proposed amendments would not keep people safe but instead backtrack on health protection, representing only the latest example of health taking a back seat to the short-term interests of some parts of industry.

In 2024, you made the decision to withdraw the European Commission proposal for a Regulation on Pesticides Reduction (SUR), following the expression of concern by

farmers and industry. We are now asking you to apply the same foresight and decisiveness when it comes to the concerns of the scientific and health communities – withdraw the Food and Feed Safety omnibus proposal.

HEAL's key concerns are:

The complete absence of a regular EU impact assessment.

An independent impact [assessment](#) commissioned by the Dutch Parliament concluded in April 2026 that the proposal is unlikely to achieve any of its stated objectives. It found no evidence that the proposed changes would significantly reduce administrative burdens, accelerate authorisations or promote innovation in biocontrol products. Instead, it concluded that the proposal risks increasing regulatory complexity, prolonging the presence of hazardous substances on the market, and shifting responsibility for identifying risks away from pesticide manufacturers and onto public authorities.

Major concerns within the scientific community in regard to health, environment and decision-making based on robust science.

In a series of scientific papers and [statements](#), scientific experts from across Europe (Belgium, [Germany](#), Denmark, and Sweden) have similarly warned that the proposal would significantly weaken the regulation of pesticides, undermining both the protection of human health and environment and science-based decision making.

Unlimited approvals and limited exemptions put health at grave risk.

The initial European Commission proposal is concerning, in particular because it suggests the replacement of the current regular review of authorisation for active substances in pesticides by a system of unlimited approvals by default and very limited exemptions. The current regular review (every 10–15 years) is essential to adequately consider new evidence and promote safer alternatives. **Without it, pesticides causing serious harm to human health, such as chlorpyrifos, a pesticide that has harmful effects on children's brain development, would still be on the EU market.**

Limiting EU member states' competences on taking the latest science into account.

The proposal would also lead to member states being severely limited in considering the latest independent science when authorising pesticide products, as they are expected to rely only on the latest EU-level assessments, which could be a decade old. Member states' competence to make decisions based on the latest scientific information and the reality of the situation in their regions is crucial to avoid risks to human health.

The current draft EP ENVI/AGRI report is only increasing our concerns.

The suggested modifications would lead to increased exposure to health-harming pesticides for both adults and children. The time for which health-harming substances could be allowed on the market would be doubled (from seven to fifteen years for pesticides candidates to substitution, and from fifteen months to three years following the non-renewal of the authorisation). As was noted by a DG SANTE representative during the exchange of views in the Parliament, the other modifications which go beyond the scope of the initial proposal would also increase exposure.

These modifications to the current EU pesticides law would unnecessarily put people at risk and lead to increased costs. As highlighted by the European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) Executive Director, the agency has [indicated](#) that with 50 additional experts and €15 million in funding, the current backlog could be cleared within three years, without removing review requirements.

The EU's focus should be on the means and resources for the implementation and enforcement of existing legislation and their thorough evaluation to prevent and reduce ill-health.

For further information on the concerns of health organisations, please see [here](#).

Yours sincerely,

Ms. Genon K. Jensen

Executive Director

Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)

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We are the leading not-for-profit organisation addressing how our environment affects health in the European Union and beyond. Supported by over 70 member organisations, HEAL brings independent and expert scientific evidence from the health community to European and global decision-making processes to inspire disease prevention strategies. HEAL'S EU Transparency Register Number: 00723343929-96

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