



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 7 December 2016
(OR. en)

15337/16

AGRI 664
PHYTOSAN 44
PESTICIDE 5

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Acceleration of Sustainable Plant Protection
- Information from the Presidency

Delegations will find in Annex a note from the Presidency on the above mentioned subject to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the meeting of the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 12-13 December 2016.

Acceleration of Sustainable Plant Protection

Update on implementation

1. Introduction

On 28 June 2016 the Council endorsed the implementation plan to accelerate sustainable plant protection prepared by the expert group¹ (10041/16 REV 1 + ADD 1). The plan identifies actions to be taken by Member States, the Commission and stakeholders with the aim of increasing the availability of low-risk plant protection products and speeding up the implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in the EU.

The expert group continues its work to support the implementation and report on its progress to the Council.

2. Implementation phase started

The Member States, Commission, EFSA and stakeholders have begun implementing the identified actions.

Member States are working actively on the implementation of the plan's recommendations, building upon their ongoing actions for sustainable plant protection. Several Member States in fact used this implementation plan to reinforce and elaborate further national initiatives. In addition, the implementation plan has contributed to coordination between different authorities, knowledge sharing between Member States and in awareness raising on the importance of expanding the farmer's toolbox with sustainable plant protection options.

¹ The expert group was established in October 2015 and composed of 19 Member States, the Commission and EFSA.

Since the recent plan's endorsement, several more low-risk and basic substances were approved at a EU level. The number of requests for low-risk plant protection product authorizations in Member States is still small but steadily growing. This shows the importance of an increased effort to identify low-risk substances and to accelerate their market access.

The Commission is committed to continue working together with the Member States, to support the implementation of the actions identified and to facilitate the continued work of the expert group as it fits within the Commission's strategy for the sustainable use of pesticides. This summer a Commission Decision has been adopted on the work programme for the renewal of active substances whose approval will expire in the coming years. In this work programme the renewal of approval of potentially low-risk substances is prioritised in order to allow faster market access and to make them available for the initiatives towards sustainable use of pesticides.

Furthermore, the Commission has made further progress on the work to clarify the criteria to identify low-risk substances, by putting forward a proposal to amend the current criteria for consultation through the Commission's feedback mechanism. The amended set of criteria would not only ensure clarity but may also simplify the decision making process for low risk substances. To facilitate the assessment of pheromones for use in plant protection, the Commission worked with Member States and stakeholders to establish a new guidance document.

In addition, through its research and innovation programmes, FP7 and Horizon 2020, the European Commission continues to support a broad body of research in the area of sustainable plant protection. As an example of knowledge-sharing and cooperative research on integrated pest management (IPM), the EU sponsored C-IPM Eranet hosted the final conference on 6 December 2016, where the results were presented and the future IPM research agenda discussed.

Specific work has also been conducted by the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO) to provide guidance for the efficacy assessment for low-risk plant protection products and by the Minor Uses Coordination Facility to promote low risk techniques including non-chemical biocontrol tools to address gaps in the farmer's plant protection toolbox for minor uses.

Representatives from farmers, the food chain, industry and NGO's expressed to the expert group their support for the plan's implementation and their appreciation of the actions taken by MS and the Commission. They underlined the importance of continued action to accelerate sustainable plant protection.

All actors are encouraged to continue their work on the plan's implementation. Member States not yet taking part in the discussion on the plan's implementation at an EU level are encouraged to do so.

3. Conclusions

The Presidency invites the Council to take note of the update on the implementation of identified actions.