EU Parliament tears apart the ambition to reduce pesticides in Europe

A majority of the European Parliament rejected the Commission proposal to reduce the use of pesticides in the EU, a pillar of the EU Green Deal, falling for the lobbying efforts from the agro-industry.

As Rapporteur MEP Sarah Wiener puts it, “today is a very dark day for the environment and farmers”. During the plenary vote, a majority of MEPs voted against all promising aspects of the regulation proposal making it an empty piece of legislation, without any possibility of driving a reduction in the use of toxic pesticides in our fields.

Despite the wide scientific and public consensus on the need to phase out pesticides, the originally ambitious Commission regulation proposal has been strongly watered-down with the adoption of amendments suppressing national binding targets and rules for integrated pest management. The result is that MEPs decided to vote against the emptied-out proposal as a whole.

Madeleine Coste, Slow Food Advocacy Director

“A majority in the Parliament has decided to side with the agroindustry and its allies, who have lobbied against this proposal over the last 2 years, ignoring the scientific consensus on the need to transform our current food system. It is outrageous that scientists’ and citizens’ voices are ignored in this way, and a worrying prospect for the fate of the EU Farm to Fork Strategy, and the transition to sustainable food systems.”

Clara Bourgin, food, farming and nature campaigner at Friends of the Earth Europe

“Conservative MEPs delivered today the final blow to the crucial pesticide reduction law. We’re now back to square one, with no proposal to tackle the biodiversity crisis, secure long-term food security and protect people’s health. When are policy-makers going to wake up and stop choosing a toxic industry’s interests over the citizens they’re supposed to represent?”

Yoann Coulmont, campaigner at Générations Futures

“This regulation was a big part of the Green Deal on agriculture and an opportunity to engage the transition of agrifood systems at EU-wide level. Conservative MEPs missed the boat, worse : they sank it, with all the efforts to assure the right to a healthy environment and sustainable food sovereignty.“