



Political opportunities to protect children's health across Europe

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe





UN Rapporteurs



“It is possible to produce healthier, nutrient-rich food, with higher yields in the longer term, without polluting and exhausting environmental resources”

- UN Special Rapporteur on the right to Food, Hilal Elver, 2017

He conclusively calls *“to ensure that buffer zones are appropriately sized to protect people, waters and sensitive areas from the serious risks and harms of pesticide spray drift.”*

- UN Special rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes, Marcos A. Orellana, 2021

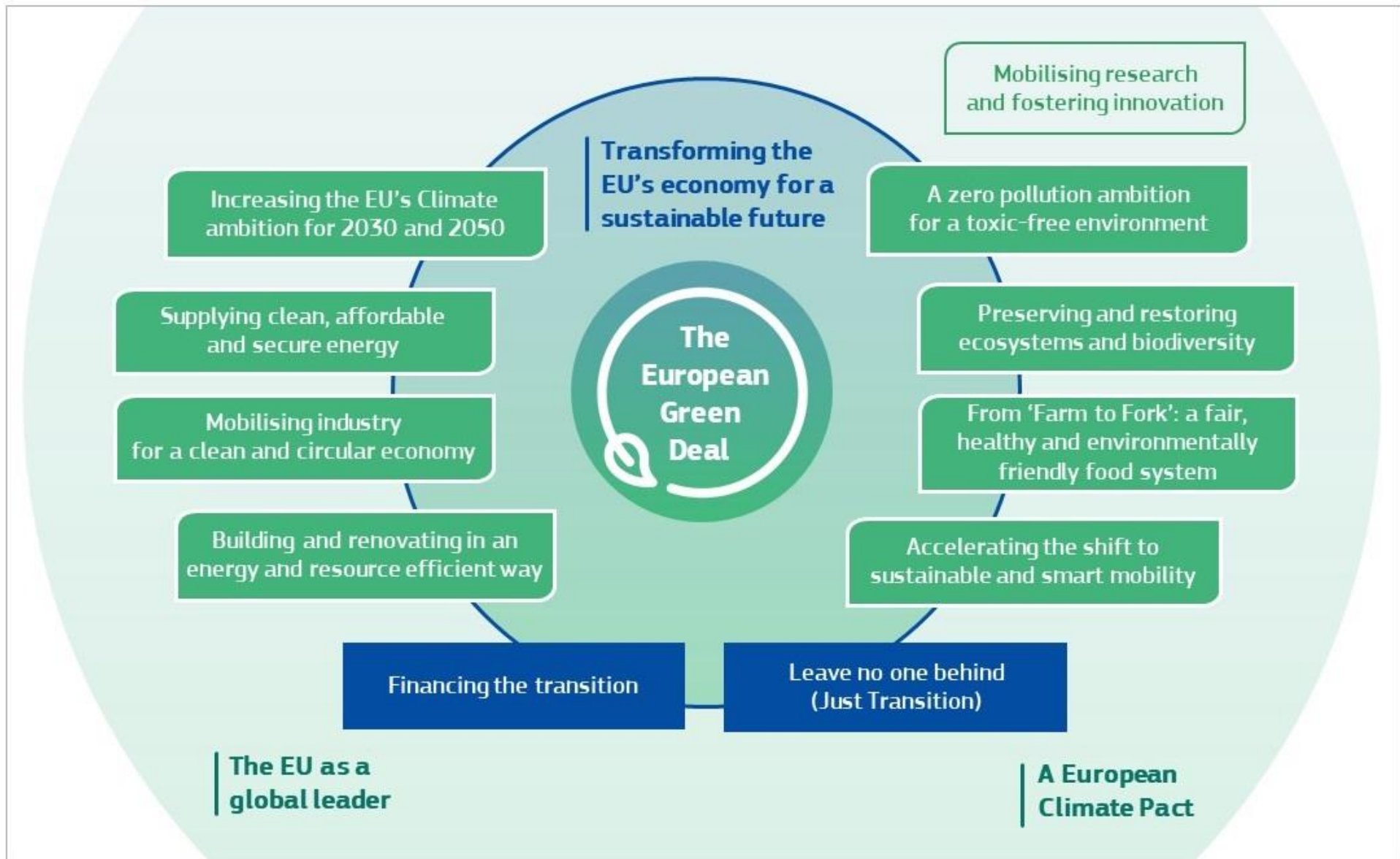


The report recommends:

- Enact safety measures to ensure adequate protection for pregnant women, children and other groups who are particularly susceptible to pesticide exposure
- Create buffer zones around plantations and farms until pesticides are phased out to reduce pesticide exposure risk
- Take necessary measures to safeguard the public's right to information
- Encourage farmers to adopt agroecological practices to enhance biodiversity and naturally suppress pests and to adopt measures such as crop rotation, soil fertility management and crop selection appropriate for local conditions



UN Special Rapporteur on the right to Food, Hilal Elver, 2017





❖ Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

- Reduce the risk and use of chemical pesticides and more hazardous pesticides by 50% by 2030
- Eliminate the use of chemical pesticides in sensitive areas such as EU urban green areas by 2030



❖ Farm to Fork Strategy 2030

- Further action to reduce the overall use and risk of chemical pesticides by 50 percent and the use of the most hazardous pesticides by 50 percent by 2030

❖ Circular Economy Action Plan

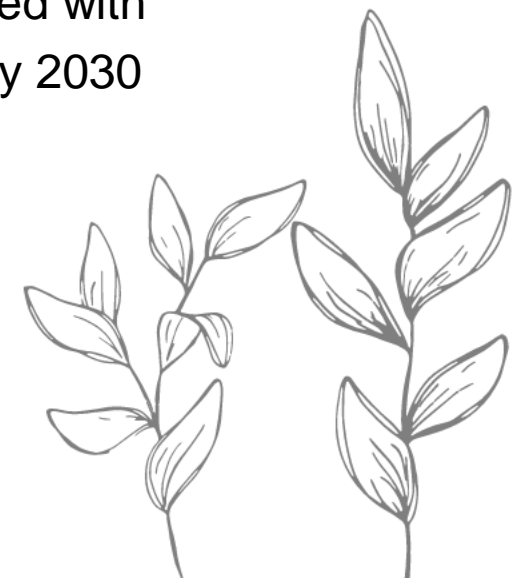
- European Social Fund Plus, Cohesion Policy funds, European Urban Initiative, Intelligent Cities Challenge, Circular Cities and Regions Initiative, Green City Accord

❖ Zero Pollution Action Plan

- Reduce use and risk associated with chemical pesticides by 50% by 2030

❖ Sustainable Chemicals Strategy

- Fully implement provisions in place for pesticides (Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) of pesticides Regulation (No 396/2005) and Plant Protection Products Regulation (No 1107/2009))



❖ Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive (SUD, 2009)

- Member states have a responsibility to take action to modify municipal governance to reduce pesticides.
 - *Recital (16) Use of pesticides can be particularly dangerous in very sensitive areas, such as **Natura 2000 sites** protected in accordance with Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC. In other places such as **public parks and gardens, sports and recreation grounds, school grounds and children's playgrounds, and in the close vicinity of healthcare facilities**, the **risks from exposure** to pesticides are **high**. In these areas, the use of pesticides should be **minimised or prohibited**. When pesticides are used, **appropriate risk management** measures should be established and low-risk pesticides as well as biological control measures should be considered in the first place*
 - *Article 12 Member States shall, having due regard for the necessary hygiene and public health requirements and biodiversity, or the results of relevant risk assessments, **ensure that the use of pesticides is minimised or prohibited in certain specific areas**. Appropriate risk management measures shall be taken, and the use of low-risk plant protection products as defined in Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 and biological control measures shall be considered in the first place.*
- ***Specific areas:***
 - *Areas used by the general public or by vulnerable groups (public parks and gardens, sports and recreation grounds and children's playgrounds, close vicinity of healthcare facilities)*
 - *Protected areas (Water Framework Directive and Habitats and Birds directive)*
 - *Recently treated areas used by or accessible to agricultural workers*

❖ Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation (SUR) proposal

- SUD (2011): Implementation IPM obliged since 2014, reduction of pesticides: limited implementation by member states
- MS failed to implement EU-legislation
- Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies
- Change demanded by Citizens (ECI Save Bees and Farmers) (*80% reduction of synthetic pesticides by 2030 – 100% by 2035 – 100% of more hazardous pesticides by 2030*).
- June 2022: proposal adopted by the EC on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation
- Legal act that applies automatically and uniformly, without needing to be transposed into national law. Mandatory implementation, legally binding for all EU countries
- Implementation of IPM
- Reduction goals - 50% use and risk of chemical pesticides and more hazardous pesticides
- Sensitive areas - buffers
- ...
- Currently: amendments suggested by the ENVI committee

❖ Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation (SUR) proposal

- Sensitive areas

- Area used by the **general public** (public park, garden, recreation or sports grounds, public path)
- Area used predominantly by a **vulnerable group** as defined in Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009

*‘vulnerable groups’ means persons needing specific consideration when assessing the acute and chronic health effects of plant protection products. These include **pregnant and nursing women, the unborn, infants and children, the elderly and workers and residents subject to high pesticide exposure over the long term**; → all women of childbearing years*

- Human **settlements (community in which people live and work)** – excluding industrial, commercial and transport unites and mine, dump and construction sites → include these
- **Urban area covered by a watercourse or water feature**
- **Non-productive areas** (Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC – Common Agricultural Policy))
- **Ecologically sensitive area:**
 - Any area protected under the **Water Framework Directive**, safeguard zones for drinking water
 - Sites of Community importance and special conservation areas (**Habitats directive**) and special protection areas (**Birds Directive**), and other **national, regional or local protected areas**
 - Area for which the monitoring of **pollinator species** establishes that it sustains one or more pollinator species classified as being threatened with extinction

❖ Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation (SUR) proposal

- Sensitive areas

- EC proposal: Use of pesticides prohibited in sensitive areas

- Buffer zones

- EC proposal: 3 meter around sensitive areas/member states may establish larger buffer zones

→ *at least 100m around sensitive areas*

→ *houses/private properties and gardens also need buffers, as well as roads and paths*

→ *at least 25m in between fields*

- Studies - court cases pointing out the need for larger buffer zones

❖ Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation (SUR) proposal

- Proposed recitals on health:

Scientific studies underline the adverse impacts of pesticide exposure on human health. Farmers, workers, operators, bystanders and inhabitants of agricultural areas are particularly exposed to pesticides. Pesticides have been shown to drift, leading to contamination and exposure at farm distances from the location of application. Links have been shown between exposure to pesticides and elevated rates of chronic diseases as well as different forms of cancers, neurodegenerative disorders (Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease), diabetes and ALS. Many pesticides have endocrine disrupting characteristics, interfering with natural hormones and even at low doses affecting normal development and function of multiple organs.

...

*Exposure to pesticides has also been linked to intergenerational impacts, highlighting the need to act to reduce exposure now for the health of future generations. The body of evidence underlines that the full health impact of pesticides may be highly underestimated, **which requires a precautionary and preventative approach**. Pesticides also have cumulative and synergistic impacts given the effects of long-term exposure, mixtures and co-formulants.*

❖ Buffer zones

- Pesticides drift – found far away from places where they are applied
- EFSA guidance model – limitations (inhalation, dust/seed coating, exposure values/time, wind speed, people in rest, co-formulants/cocktail effects, ...)
- Exposure: contact (skin), inhalation, food
- Study South Tyrol 2021: Despite buffers of 30 meter, children's playgrounds contaminated with pesticide drift (also endocrine disruptors)

Research | [Open Access](#) | [Published: 06 January 2021](#)

Year-round pesticide contamination of public sites near intensively managed agricultural areas in South Tyrol

[Caroline Linhart](#) ✉, [Simona Panzacchi](#), [Fiorella Belpoggi](#), [Peter Clausing](#), [Johann G. Zaller](#) ✉ & [Koen Hertoge](#)

- Sprint Study – Wageningen University: case studies in Europe - up to 124 different pesticides in one sample in house dust of a farmer (neurotoxic, carcinogenic, reproduction development effects, endocrine disruptors)
- Court case France (2021): 3, 5 and 10 m not enough - Générations Futures in France asks for at least 100m buffers
- Court case in the Netherlands (2021): pesticides found up to 500m from treated fields, where people live. Natura 2000 areas need larger buffers.
- Court case in Belgium (Flanders) (2023): 500m public areas/houses/sensitive groups - 2km around nature areas

Article | [Open Access](#) | [Published: 16 December 2021](#)

Direct pesticide exposure of insects in nature conservation areas in Germany

[Carsten A. Brühl](#) ✉, [Nikita Bakanov](#), [Sebastian Köthe](#), [Lisa Eichler](#), [Martin Sorg](#), [Thomas Hörrén](#), [Roland Mühlethaler](#), [Gotthard Meinel](#) & [Gerlind U. C. Lehmann](#)

EU's Urban Policy

❖ European Green Capital Award

- Annual award: recognises and rewards local efforts to improve the environment in big cities



❖ European Green Leaf Award

- Annual award: recognises and rewards local efforts to improve the environment in small cities

❖ Urban Greening Platform

- Supporting towns and cities in restoring nature and biodiversity (Urban Greening Plan Guidance and Toolkit)

European
Platform
Urban
Greening

❖ Green City Accord

- Movement of European mayors aiming to make cities greener, cleaner and healthier (air water, nature and biodiversity, circular economy and waste, and noise)



❖ Green City Accord

- Movement of European mayors aiming to make cities greener, cleaner and healthier (air water, nature and biodiversity, circular economy and waste, and noise), supporting the EU Green Deal and UN SDGs



Substantial improvement in air quality in cities moving closer to meeting the WHO Air Quality Guidelines



Significant progress in improving water body quality and water use efficiency.



Significant progress in preserving and promoting urban biodiversity, including by increasing the quantity and quality of urban green areas, combating the loss and restoring urban ecosystems.



Development of a circular economy with a substantial improvement in urban household waste management, a radical reduction in waste generation and waste sent to landfills, and a significant increase in reuse, repair and recycling activities.



Strong reduction in noise pollution to approach WHO recommended levels

❖ Initiatives/promoted for cities by the EC and funding

- Covenant of Mayors
- 100 Intelligent Cities Challenge
- Horizon Europe Mission: 100 climate neutral cities
- CIVITAS Awards, Healthy Clean Cities,
- Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans, European Mobility Week (and Awards)
- URBACT programme, Urban Innovative Actions
- Circular cities and regions
- European Capital of Innovation Award
- Life projects (environmental, nature conservation and climate action projects)
- Regio funding (European Structural and Investment Funds, European Regional development Fund, InvestEU Fund, InvestEU Portal)

❖ European Green Capital and Green Leaf Award

- Award established in 2008 to honour European cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants at the forefront of sustainability
- 13 winning cities since 2010 - Lahti 2021 (FI); Grenoble 2022 (FR); Tallinn 2023 (EE)
- A cash prize was established in 2020 for the winning city
- Cities are evaluated based on 12 areas related to sustainability
- Since 2015 competition for cities with between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants.
- To date there have been 11 winning cities.
- Unlike EGCA, the European Green Leaf Award can be awarded to two cities at the same time as two winners
- Starting with the 2019 edition, winning cities receive a cash prize
- 2022: Valongo (IT) and Winterswijk (NL)





Different approaches to 'pesticide free towns' by EU Member states

Pioneering towns that follow a zero-pesticide Policy convincingly show that green urban management is possible (Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark, Germany, France, Sweden, ...)





Luxembourg



- March 2010, launched national campaign “Sans pesticide” / “Ohne Pestizide”
- In 2014: implementation plan of the SUD: ban use of pesticides in public spaces from 2016 - transitioning to organic agricultura - 50% reduction of pesticide use by 2030
- Ministry of Sustainable Development, the Administration of water management, various nature parks, NGOs and the City of Luxembourg worked together
- Indirect financial support
- Good communication campaign to encourage citizens and raise awareness
- No derogations





France



- 2014 - first EU Member State introducing a general framework gradually implementing a ban on all public authorities to use pesticides
- 2017 – state, local authorities and public bodies -prohibited - public spaces, forests, roadsides, walkways accessible or open to the public
- 2019 - pesticide use prohibited for non-professional users in private gardens
- July 2022 - extended to places of living and other private areas where the public has access, including parks, leisure areas, cemeteries and sports fields
- Main drivers
 - Senator Joël Labbé - Labbé Law
 - NGO - Générations Futures – interactive map – towns already Pesticide-free
 - ‘Collectif des maires anti-pesticides’,





• Belgium

- permits for and conditions linked to the sale of pesticide products in jurisdiction of the federal authorities



Flemish region

- In 2002 - decision to be pesticide free by 2015
- Jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment
- communication and technical support (with NGOs), no financial support
- parks, sports fields, recreational areas, amusement parks, playgrounds
- Campaign “Zonder is Gezonder”
- data reporting, but no monitoring system, no sanctions, derogations



14-
15



• Belgium

- permits for and conditions linked to the sale of pesticide products in jurisdiction of the federal authorities



Walloon región

- The first steps in 80s (public parks, roads, watercourses, ponds, lakes, ...)
- 2014: 5-year transitional period
 - Jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment
 - communication and technical support (with NGOs), no financial support
 - Ban: Parks, sidewalks, sport fields, cemeteries, roads, railways
 - buffer strips, especially around spaces frequented by vulnerable groups
 - 50-meters around schools, nurseries and childcare facilities during the hours in which these places are frequented
 - No monitoring

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15





• Belgium

- permits for and conditions linked to the sale of pesticide products in jurisdiction of the federal authorities



Brussels Capital Region

- Ban of pesticides gradually implemented since 2013
- 2014: 5-year transitional period
 - Jurisdiction of the Department of Environment
 - communication and technical support (with NGOs), no financial support
- Parks, sidewalks, sport fields, cemeteries, roads, railways
- Ban of glyphosate and neonicotinoids for all uses, agricultural areas included
 - No monitoring

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15



❖ Example: cemeteries full of life in Flanders

Project by Natuurpunt

ecopedia
bouwen aan groenexpertise

Natuurkennis Natuur & Groen Wet & be

Biodiversiteit van begraafplaatsen

Inverde

natuurpunt

Biodiversiteit op begraafplaatsen

02:22



*'Narrow-leaved Fumitory' - cemetery Bertem -
Picture by Roosmarijn Steeman*



*'Bird's foot' - cemetery Leuven -
Picture by Roosmarijn Steeman*

Waarnemingen.be

Invoeren Ontdek Projecten Over ons Community

Heverlee - Abdij van Park - Kerkhof Vlaams-Brabant

Details Waarnemingen Foto's Geluiden Soorten gezien Ranglijst waarnemers

2022-03-30 - 2023-03-30 Selecteer een soort Planten

Zoek Filter Wis filters Als kaart Toon geavanceerd

Datum	Soort	Aantal
2023-03-27 14:07	Heelbeen - <i>Holosteum umbellatum</i>	1 bloeiend
2023-03-26	Heelbeen - <i>Holosteum umbellatum</i>	5 bloeiend
2023-03-20 15:15	Donderblad - <i>Sempervivum tectorum</i> ?	1
2023-03-19 16:29	Steenbreekvaren - <i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>	1



Thank you!

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