



## REACTION OF THE AGRICULTURE AND PROGRESS PLATFORM to the draft Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation (SUR): yes, to improvement and progress; no, to counterproductive measures that further deplete the farmers' toolbox

Brussels, 8 July 2022

On 22 June 2022 the European Commission adopted its proposal for a Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation (SUR). The proposed pesticide use reduction targets are unachievable as the farmers' crop protection toolbox is further depleted, without any real effective alternatives becoming available. To provide satisfactory control of certain harmful organism (pests, diseases and/or weeds), there are no available, effective, safe and affordable alternatives to chemical PPPs in the short term. Meanwhile, uncertainties remain in the medium term. Keeping food production in Europe and at adequate levels is now – against the background of the crisis in Ukraine – more crucial than ever, and the proposed SUR should take this into account.

The Agriculture and Progress Platform supports further reduction in the use and the impacts of chemical plant protection products, following the path farmers have been following for years, among others by applying Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices. Farmers – based on decades of experience - deserve the decision-makers' confidence to apply IPM adequately. The SUR proposal, however, does not reflect such confidence: in fact, it foresees a far too rigid system regarding the choice of crop protection tools and/or measures during critical stages of crop growth. The proposed rules will seriously impact the productivity and competitiveness of farmers and primary food processors, an impact that has not been evaluated properly. Due account should be taken of availability (or not) of alternatives, the effectiveness of alternatives, and the cost of such alternatives. Furthermore, crops grown and products manufactured in third countries which are imported into the EU should be as respectful of health, the environment and biodiversity as those grown and manufactured in the EU.

The Agriculture and Progress Platform also considers that New Genomic Techniques (NGTs) are efficient tools to accompany a new agricultural evolution. Discussions on the SUR proposal cannot be disconnected from discussions on NGTs, for which an adequate legal framework should be adopted as soon as possible.

**We call upon the Member States and the European Parliament to combine ambition with realism by adopting a framework that allows flexibility as a sign of confidence in farmers' ability to sustainably manage their production. Yes to progress, no to counterproductive measures that further deplete the agricultural toolbox. Agriculture and Progress will be a constructive partner to help the draft SUR evolve in this direction.**

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