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EU pesticide legislation MEPs vote to give greater protection to consumers and environment from pesticides

Pesticides

Following today's vote in the EP Environment Committee (ENVI) on her report revising existing legislation on pesticide authorisations, German Green MEP and rapporteur **Hiltrud Breyer** says:

"Pesticides are toxic substances, manufactured with the intention of killing, yet they end up on our plates and, ultimately, in our bodies. Future legislation must ensure that pesticides that are dangerous for consumers and the environment are gradually taken off the market, a fact that was strongly made in my report, which was adopted by the ENVI Committee today.

"The report stresses that substances which prove to be carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic for reproduction must be banned, despite the efforts of chemical industry to oppose this. Substances for which neurotoxic and immunotoxic effects have been demonstrated must also be taken off the market. Well-designed provisions for substitution of harmful substances with less dangerous ones can create a win-win situation: reducing risk for consumers, users and the environment, while at the same time stimulating innovation in the chemical industry. This approach should be strengthened for EU-wide approval of active substances, as well as for national authorisations of pesticide products.

"Consumers are exposed to a growing number of pesticide residues, notably in fruit and vegetables, according to evidence from the monitoring reports of the control authorities. Recent research demonstrates that particularly vulnerable groups, such as children and pregnant women, can be affected in their development by exposure to a number of currently-used pesticides. The ENVI Committee has called for such evidence to be taken into account and for a more transparent and participatory authorisation procedure.

"The Committee also called for improved environmental risk assessment and the exclusion of substances which are toxic for bees or detrimental to the water protection policy of the EU and its member states. Unfortunately, the provisions for applying mandatory standards of integrated pest management and for

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promoting non-chemical alternatives in crop management were not supported in today's vote. Thus the requirements for better application of pesticides, as foreseen by the Commission proposal, have been substantially weakened."