

15 December 2022



Subject: Decision with high impact on European Green Deal as an “A-item“ in Dec 19 Council

Dear Ministers of Environment, Climate and Energy,

We, initiators of the successful European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) 'Save Bees and Farmers', have learned that a decision with potentially fatal implications for the EU's Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies is on the agenda as an A-item of the upcoming [Energy Council on 19 December](#). It is thus set to be adopted with neither political debate nor formal vote.

This Draft Council Decision requests the Commission, with reference to the war in Ukraine, to *submit a study complementing the impact assessment of the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the sustainable use of plant protection products (SUR)*, prepared in the Permanent Representatives Committee on 10 December.

We are deeply concerned that delays caused by this additional assessment could thwart a decision in this legislative period on urgent pesticide reduction and biodiversity restoration.

You can prevent this scandal: The [Council's Rules of Procedure \(page 33\)](#) allow any Member State to request the removal of an A-item: *'An 'A' item is removed from the definitive agenda if a position on that 'A' item might lead to further discussion or if a member of the Council or the Commission so requests (Article 3(8) CRP)'.*

While the Czech presidency is at pains to state that the negotiations should 'not be impaired', it actually limits the subjects of negotiation, that the Council 'wishes to continue without undue delay', to the "technical aspects of the proposal" in the Recital 7 of the Draft Decision. This clause will open up almost unlimited possibilities for those aiming to derail the legislative process and prevent its conclusion before the upcoming European elections, **with far-reaching consequences for the biodiversity strategy, the Farm to Fork Strategy, and thus for the European Green Deal.**

The risk of dragging out the legislative proposal would not be matched by any useful gain in knowledge given the additional data requested by the Czech presidency are one-sided and suggestive in character. They exclude the expected positive effects of pesticides reduction both on the health of farmers, rural residents and consumers, and on biodiversity which is a long-term prerequisite of agricultural productivity.

It is undemocratic and unacceptable when decisions with such far-reaching effects on central political strategies of the EU are taken without a regular vote on the basis of a qualified majority vote, particularly at a time when ambitious global actions are being discussed at the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) in Montreal to address the accelerating biodiversity loss. It is unacceptable that the EU appears to be doing a handbrake turn to avoid a legislative proposal for mandatory pesticide use and risk reduction. Europeans deserve better.

On behalf of 1.1 million European citizens who supported the successful ECI 'Save Bees And Farmers' demanding ambitious pesticide reduction targets, we call on you to ensure that this A-item will be withdrawn from the agenda and therefore not be adopted.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Helmut Burtscher-Schaden'.

Dr. Helmut Burtscher-Schaden (on behalf of the Save Bees and Farmers' Citizens Committee)