

PESTICIDE EXPORTS

The EU has banned the use of a number of pesticides that have been proven to cause serious damage to human health and the environment. However, companies are still free to manufacture these dangerous pesticides in the EU in order to export them to other countries with weaker regulations, thereby endangering human health and the environment there.

In 2024 alone, the EU exported 122,000 tonnes of banned pesticides containing a total of 75 highly hazardous active substances.

*Public Eye (2025): Banned pesticides - Massive increase in exports from the EU.

Who benefits, who suffers, who decides?

“ Cypermethrin is increasingly used in the cultivation of soy, sorghum, tomatoes and watermelons. It contaminates our drinking water and damages our health. And it is particularly harmful to our bees, resulting in massive bee mortality.

Leydy Pech, beekeeper
Alianza Maya, Mexico

“ Pesticide-Formulations containing active ingredients such as atrazine, carborufan, methamidophos, or paraquat, which are banned by the Sahelian Pesticide Committee (CSP), are still to be found in almost all West African countries.

Ndeye Maimouna Diene, Executive Director of PAN Africa
Senegal

“ Through agroecology, we farming families are becoming independent of expensive inputs such as pesticides and fertilisers, and we are producing healthy food for our families.

Josue Gomes, smallholder farmer
Quedas do Iguacu, Paraná, Brasilien

“ I was poisoned with Dormex (which contains cyanamide) while working on the grape farm. My lungs were so damaged that I lost my job and income because I was unable to work. I suffer from irreversible, chronic respiratory complaints which result in me being hospitalized a couple of times per year. I can no longer walk long distances or sing in the church choir.

Dina Ndleleni, former farm worker
South Africa

“ We farmers can ensure enough production for everyone to survive – but access to it and ensuring that no one dies of hunger is another game played by the country's politicians, which we must all solve together.

Bhairab Saini, smallholder farmer
West Bengal, Indien

Toxic exports: Europe's double standard in the pesticide trade

Contact with synthetic chemical pesticides can cause skin and respiratory reactions, poisoning or neurological disorders in humans and, in the long term, increase the risk of cancer or impair fertility. **Highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs) are particularly problematic as they can cause serious harm to humans and the environment.**

Despite international recognition of these dangers, there is still no official list of highly hazardous pesticides. Since 2009, the civil society organisation PAN International has been publishing such an HHP list based on international criteria.

Highly hazardous pesticides banned in the EU are exported by EU companies all over the world – including to countries in the Global South, where they are often used under poorer working conditions and with lower safety standards. The health consequences are borne primarily by agricultural workers and rural communities, while the profits remain with the manufacturers. This double standard creates global inequality with high social and environmental costs.

HHP list from PAN International
pan-international.org/wp-content/uploads/PAN_HHP_List.pdf



Globale initiatives for greater justice in the pesticide trade

Numerous initiatives around the world are campaigning against the export of banned or highly hazardous pesticides. **Organisations, associations and scientists working for environmental and health protection are calling for stricter rules, enhanced transparency and an end to harmful double standards in the international pesticide trade.**

Civil society networks document problems, support those affected and call on politicians to put the protection of all people and the environment above the economic interests of a few. **The United Nations – in particular through the efforts of the UN Human Rights Office, but also through the Global Chemicals Framework (GCF) – is also pushing for global minimum standards and a phase-out of HHPs and their replacement with non-chemical alternatives.**

France and Belgium have already introduced legal export bans. An EU-wide law against the export of highly hazardous or banned pesticides would be even more effective.

Joint demand
pan-international.org/wp-content/uploads/Banned-pesticides_ENG_FINAL.pdf



Agroecology: practical solutions

There is another way: approaches such as diversified crop rotations, growing robust varieties from own seeds, mixed farming systems with trees and grazing animals, farm-based circular economy, encouraging humus formation for soil regeneration, biological pest control using beneficial organisms, and the targeted promotion of knowledge exchange are proven methods for reducing the need for synthetic chemical pesticides and fertilisers. **At the same time, ecological farming practices promote biodiversity and soil health while increasing long-term resilience to climate and other stress.**

In addition to certified organic farming, agroecology is gaining importance as a social movement for more justice, solidarity and sustainability in the food system. **Agroecology combines scientific knowledge, local experience and indigenous practices, placing people along the value chain at the centre of decision-making processes rather than corporations.** This approach can make a significant contribution to achieving and securing the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the long term.

More on agroecology
panna.org/our-work/agroecology/

