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Establishing a Framework for Community Action to Achieve a Sustainable use of Pesticides

1st Reading Plenary Vote

Key issues

Bans on use of pesticides in public places

Conservatives successfully supported the rejection of:

- "a ban on the use of pesticides in all areas used by the general public or by sensitive population, at least in residential areas, parks, public gardens, sports and recreation grounds, school grounds and playgrounds and in the vicinity of public healthcare facilities (clinics, hospitals, rehabilitation centres, health resorts, hospices)."

Conservatives successfully supported:

- the approach that pesticides shall be prohibited or restricted to the minimum necessary in areas used by the general public or by sensitive population groups.

This approach would be applied in at least in urban residential areas, parks, public gardens, sports and recreation grounds, school grounds and playgrounds and in the vicinity of public healthcare facilities (clinics, hospitals, rehabilitation centres, health resorts, hospices). In addition, no-spray zones to protect particularly, though not exclusively, sensitive groups such as babies, children, pregnant women and the elderly should be established. The use of non-chemical alternatives should be promoted.

Quantative reduction targets and deadline for establishing National Allocation Plans

Conservatives successfully supported the rejection of:

- of quantative reduction targets, except for substances of very high concern;
- the establishment of targets to reduce by 25% the use of pesticides within 5 years of application of the baseline year and by 50% within 10 years.

This approach would have meant that Member States would have been forced to reduce their usage of pesticides by 20%. A simple volume reduction might not lead to a reduction in risk or exposure to pesticides, as users of pesticides may be forced to use higher quantities of stronger pesticides.

However, Conservatives did support a reduction target for active substances of very high concern. There will be a minimum reduction of 50% 2013.

Information to neighbours

Conservatives successfully supported the rejection of:

- an obligation for farmers to inform neighbours 48 hours before they intend to spray pesticides.

Mandatory no-spray buffer zones surrounding water courses

Conservatives successfully supported the rejection of:

- the requirement for Member States to establish a no-spray zone of at least 10 metres either side of water courses.

These amendments would have had serious consequences to agricultural production in Europe. The Water Frame Directive already ensures that Member States establish appropriate buffer zones on fields adjacent to water courses in order to protect drinking water supplies.