

MEETING WITH BASF
SPEAKING POINTS –ON SUD REVISION

19th May 2022, 11.00 CET

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SPEAKING NOTE

Before the summer, the Commission will bring forward a proposal to make chemical and hazardous pesticides the last resort option. It will mark a significant milestone on our journey towards achieving our vision of sustainability.

You will understand that I cannot comment on the details of our proposal, until the College has adopted it.

The proposal shares the **same key objective as the current legislation**, which is to protect biodiversity, the environment and human health by reducing the use and risk of chemical pesticides across the EU.

In order to do so, the **systematic application of integrated pest management** must become the norm. This is not about banning the use of pesticides but about transforming our food system to work with nature rather than against it.

Targets are necessary. We are certain that we can achieve significant reductions without jeopardising profitable production, but to do so we need to have alternatives available to allow the farmer to make an informed choice without economic losses.

The **availability on the market of low risk alternatives is a critical element, and we rely on the industry to develop new and safer products to meet the challenge of pest resistance.**

It is important that the big players in the agrochemical industry invest in lower risk solutions, including biological pesticides, since there is an opportunity to develop new products with higher efficacy.

We are willing to play our part. We have been – and will remain – very active in this promising area.

We are taking measures to simplify the authorisation process for non-chemical pesticides. This should facilitate a shorter path to market for products that are compatible with integrated pest management such as biocontrol.

The more resources we collectively invest in assessing plant protection products, the more and safer alternatives we will have.

In the meantime, we have listened to what stakeholders tell us is needed to boost the uptake of alternative, **non-chemical pest control methods**. This could also involve:

- Requiring Member States to set **positive targets**;
- A **definition of biocontrol**;
- Requiring farmers and other professional users of pesticides to obtain **independent advice on alternative methods**.

Russia's war in Ukraine is reconfiguring everything in the world around us and the negative impact on food and farmers of the Russian invasion of Ukraine calls for targeted short term measures. The SUD revision will, therefore, be adopted before the summer.

But what this crisis is making abundantly clear is also that the resilience of our food system longer term requires a **fundamental re-orientation of EU agriculture and EU food systems towards security and sustainability**. We must reduce our overreliance on inputs, including pesticides, through innovation, agro-ecology and adoption of best practices.

We must adapt to the new realities, but we should stay our course.

I look forward to hearing your views.