ONE ISSUE NO DIVIDE

EU citizens across the political spectrum want stricter pesticide regulation



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SUMMARY

Citizens across seven EU countries overwhelmingly want stronger protection from pesticides, regardless of their political views. A new YouGov poll covering France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania and Spain reveals that EU citizens massively support phasing out pesticides and reject replacing the periodic safety reviews of pesticides with unlimited approvals. These views are held across party lines.

The findings expose the lack of public backing for the Commission's proposal to introduce unlimited pesticide approvals under the Food and Feed Safety Omnibus proposal (Omnibus X), a move strongly supported by conservative and far-right Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). However, as the poll shows, this deregulation agenda is starkly at odds with the priorities of the people these MEPs represent.

Key findings

- **Citizens want pesticide use phased out, not expanded. Between 68% (Spain) and 80% (Romania) of citizens say that pesticides should be phased out completely,** whether or not alternatives are immediately available. Support for expanding pesticide use is just 1–3% at the country level.

- **Unlimited approvals of pesticides are massively rejected.** Support for unlimited pesticide approval stands at only 4–6% in France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland and Spain, and 10% in Romania.

- **The rejection of unlimited approval crosses political divides.** When respondents are grouped by the European Parliament group of the party they voted for, support for unlimited pesticide approvals remains very low, ranging from 3% to 10%. It is lowest among voters of the Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA) at 3%, and stands at 5% among voters of The Left, the Socialists and Democrats (S&D), Renew Europe and the European People's Party (EPP). It reaches 6% among voters of Patriots for Europe (PfE), 7% among those of the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), and 10% among those of Europe of Sovereign Nations (ESN).[1]

- **Citizens across the political spectrum favour more frequent reassessment.** Similarly, support for more frequent reassessment ranges from 50% to 72% across the seven countries, and from 49% among PfE-affiliated voters to 89% among Greens/EFA-affiliated voters, with support at 59% among EPP-affiliated voters and at 57% among ECR-affiliated voters. This contrasts with the current proposals by the European Commission, the Council and the co-rapporteurs in the European Parliament.

- **Human health and the environment are the priorities.** Human health is the top consideration in pesticide approval decisions in every political group, cited by 69–81% of respondents. Water quality and biodiversity follow, while agricultural yields, production costs, and the effects on prices receive very little attention.

1 Group voters refer to the aggregate of respondents who voted for a party represented in one of the specified groups in the most recent national election (legislative or presidential).

- **Citizens want manufacturers to pay for the damage.** Pesticide manufacturers are the most frequently selected party responsible for covering pesticide-related damage in all seven countries and across political affiliation, ahead of farmers, taxpayers or shared responsibility between all three.

The findings expose a stark disconnect between what citizens want and the position of some of the elected MEPs, who are ignoring their voters' demands and are pushing to weaken protection from pesticides through the Commission's Omnibus "Food and Feed Safety" proposal. Presented in December 2025, the proposal would make unlimited approvals for pesticide active substances the norm, scrapping the regular safety reviews that have allowed 54 harmful substances to be banned since the EU pesticide regulation entered into force in 2011. It would also make it far easier for endocrine disruptors and groundwater contaminants to stay approved "by derogation", and let banned pesticides, including some carcinogens, remain on the market for up to three more years. These changes have raised serious concerns among scientists, doctors and five UN experts over the potential risks to human health, the environment and fundamental rights. The push to weaken these safeguards has been backed by conservative and far-right MEPs, who are leading on the file, with support for some of these proposals also coming from members of the S&D and liberal groups.

MEPs should listen to the people they represent. The findings leave little room for doubt about the lack of public support for unlimited pesticide approvals, and other measures prioritising agro-economic considerations over the protection of human health and the environment.

We call on all MEPs to stand with their voters and reject the Omnibus X proposal.

68-80%

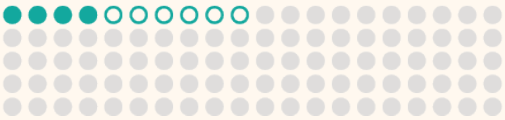
of respondents supporting the complete phase-out of pesticides





4-10%

of respondents supporting unlimited pesticide approvals





1.

BACKGROUND

In December 2025, the European Commission presented its Food and Feed Safety Simplification Omnibus, a proposal that, under the guise of simplification, dismantles key safeguards protecting people, food, water and the environment from pesticides. Now in the hands of the European Parliament's 720 Members of the European Parliament (MEP), the proposal risks watering down the pesticide law even further, gutting its core purpose: a high level of protection for human and animal health and the environment, based on the precautionary principle and independent science.

One of the most worrying changes is the move towards **unlimited approvals for pesticide active substances**. Currently, these substances are approved for a limited period and must be reassessed every 10 to 15 years. According to an analysis of the proposal by Générations Futures, **49 active substances could automatically receive unlimited approval from 1 January 2027, under the original timeline, and hundreds of substances could be granted unlimited approvals in the years to come.** These include glyphosate, acetamiprid, certain PFAS substances and others of concern. The proposal would also limit the use of the latest scientific evidence when deciding whether pesticides can be authorised, allow substances that should no longer be approved to stay in the market, such as carcinogens or reprotoxicants, and make it easier for harmful substances that fail safety standards to regain approval.

Instead of addressing these risks, the European Parliament's draft report by Rapporteur MEPs Herbert Dorfmann (EPP) and Michele Picaro (ECR), together with amendments proposed by other MEPs, could weaken safeguards even further.

The Commission's proposal was presented without an independent impact assessment and without meaningful consultation with civil society. This is particularly concerning given the influence and access enjoyed by the pesticide industry compared with the limited opportunities for citizens and civil society organisations to make their voice heard. **To help address this democratic gap, we decided to ask citizens directly.** We wanted to understand what they think of the Omnibus proposal and, more broadly, what kind of European agriculture they want for the future.

2.
METHODOLOGY

The YouGov survey

The survey was conducted online in seven Member States (France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain) using YouGov's established polling methodology. In each country, the survey targeted 1,000 respondents aged 18 and over, with samples designed to be nationally representative of the adult population.

Political profiling was implemented to capture respondents' political affiliations and ensure that public opinion was assessed across the political spectrum. YouGov attributed respondents' political affiliation based on their vote in the most recent national legislative or presidential election, rather than the European elections. Voting behaviour in national elections is a more reliable indicator of respondents' political outlook, which is what matters most when assessing views on concrete policy decisions. These results are shown per country.

All raw data are available here.

Analysis of the affiliated European Parliament political groups

To understand the overall political spectrum of voters, the survey results from YouGov were further analysed based on the European Parliament political group affiliations of the respective national parties. Therefore, we aggregated respondents' answers according to the European Parliament political group to which the party they voted for in the most recent national election currently belongs.
Two categories of parties were excluded from the analysis: those elected to the European Parliament in 2024 that did not contest the most recent national election, and those whose MEPs sit as non-attached members. The resulting sample comprises 4,223 respondents, representing 59% of the total sample of 7,158, who reported voting for a party currently represented in one of the EP's political groups in the most recent national election. Margins of error

were calculated accordingly to show the confidence interval for each response.
While most EP political groups are represented by a single party in each national context, a few exceptions required specific treatment:

Poland - Trzecia Droga: The party has three MEPs, two of whom sit with the EPP and one with Renew. Respondents who voted for Trzecia Droga were excluded from the group-level analysis and treated as non-attached for the purposes of this analysis. This decision was based, among other considerations, on the fact that their results do not differ substantially from those of respondents who voted for KO, which is represented in the EPP. Including Trzecia Droga voters in the EPP sample would therefore primarily reinforce the robustness of an already sufficiently large sample.

Poland - Konfederacja: Since the party Konfederacija seats with PfE (3 MEPs), ESN (2 MEPs) and 1 non-attached, half the voters of this party were attributed to ESN and half with PfE.

Romania - PNL and UDMR: Respondents who voted for either party were attributed to the EPP group, as both parties are represented within it.

Romania - SOS RO and POT did not present candidates to the EU elections, so they were not included.

All raw data are available here.

Table 1 Summary of the aggregation of the results based on European Party political groups that national parties are affiliated to

	S&D	EPP	Greens	ESN	Renew	Left	PfE	ECR	Not included
Germany	SPD	CDU/ CSU	Bündnis 90/ Die Grünen	AfD	FDP	Die Linke			BSW, Other, Non-Voter/ Don't know
Spain	PSOE	PP				Sumar	Vox		Others, Non-voter
France		Pécresse	Jadot	Zemmour	Macron	Mélenchon	Le Pen		Others, Non-voter
Ireland		Fine Gael			Fianna Fail	Sinn Fein			
Italy	PD	Forza				M5S	Lega	Fratelli	BSW, Other, Non-Voter/ Don't know
Poland	Lewica	KO	Konfederacija (1/2)				Konfederacija (2/2)	PiS	Trzecia Droga, Other, Non-voter/ Don't know
Romania	PSD	PNL, UDMR			USR			AUR	SOS RO, POT, Other, Non-voter/ Don't know

3.

MAIN RESULTS

Citizens want pesticides phased out, not expanded

The survey reveals a strong public preference for a future in which pesticides are phased out of European agriculture.

Across the seven Member States, between 68% and 80% of respondents support a complete phase-out, either immediately or as soon as alternatives become available. Only 8–15% favour retaining sustainable alternatives only as a complement to pesticides, and just 1–3% support expanding their use.

The distinction between an immediate phase-out and a gradual transition is important. About 32-52% of respondents across the countries favour ending pesticide use immediately, with Italy standing out (52%).

When those favouring a phase-out as soon as possible are also considered, the overall picture suggests a broader demand for urgent action. The gap between the two options is often narrow, indicating that respondents may differ more on the timing and practical implementation of a phase-out than on the need to bring pesticide use to an end. This is particularly evident in Spain (32% in favour of an immediate phase-out and 36% of a phase-out as soon as possible), Ireland (37% and 36%, respectively), and Poland (36% and 35%). The difference is more pronounced in Romania (43% versus 37%), France (41% versus 36%), and Germany (41% versus 30%). Italy presents the clearest contrast, with 52% favouring an immediate phase-out compared with 24% supporting a phase-out as soon as possible.

The figures suggest that the main disagreement is often about the timing of the transition rather than its ultimate direction.

Thinking about the future use of pesticides in European agriculture, which of the following comes closest to your view?

- Pesticides should be phased out completely as alternatives are already available.
- Pesticides should be phased out completely but they cannot be all immediately replaced by alternatives.
- Pesticides should not be phased out, alternatives can be used as a complement.
- The use of pesticides should be expanded, alternatives can be used as a complement.
- None of the above
- Don't know

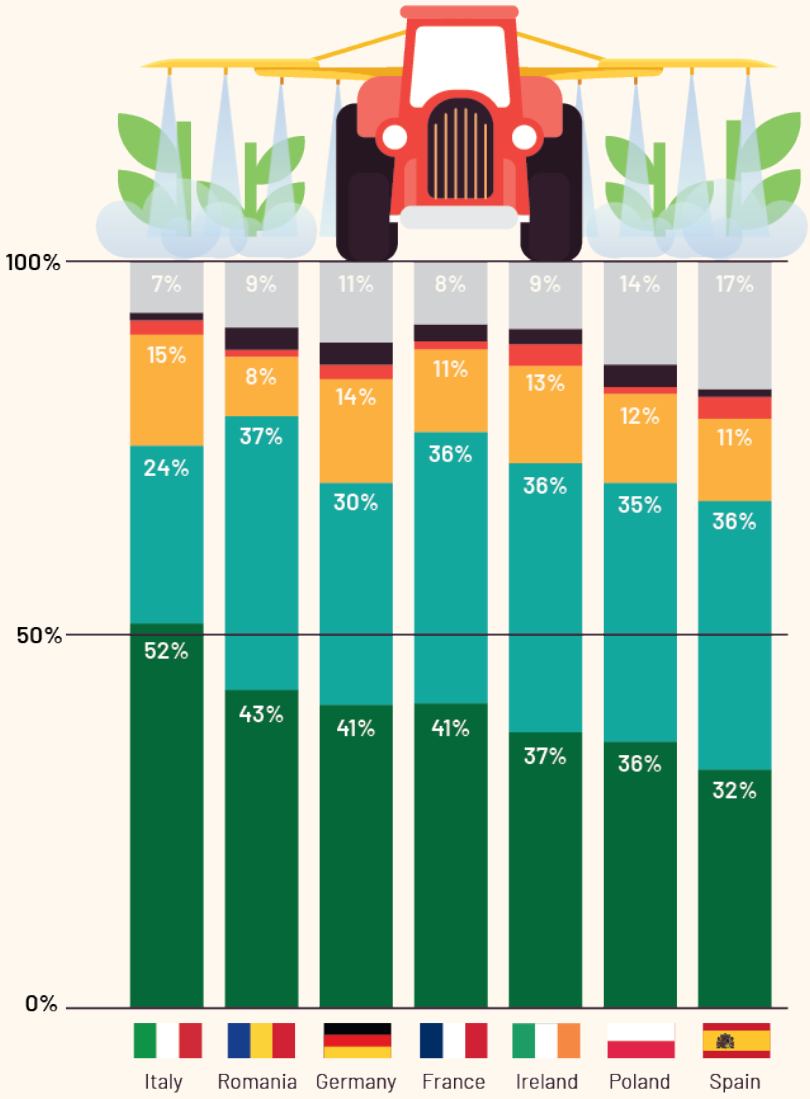


Figure 1: Citizen's views on the future use of pesticides in European Agriculture

Marginal public support for unlimited approvals

Citizens also express a clear preference for the exact opposite of what the European Commission proposes, i.e. reinforcing regular reassessment of pesticide approvals rather than allowing substances to remain approved indefinitely.

A majority of respondents in six countries favour reassessment more frequently than the current interval of every 15 years. In these countries, support ranges from 55% in France to 72% in Germany. The lowest record is Spain, with 50% still supporting more frequent safety reviews.

By contrast, unlimited approvals receive only 4–6% support in France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland and Spain. Romania is the outlier at 10%, which nevertheless remains a small minority preference.

The findings also demonstrate that citizens are willing to engage with a relatively technical regulatory question. Between 80% and 91% of respondents expressed a view on the frequency of reassessment in every country.

At what intervals should pesticide approvals be systematically reviewed?

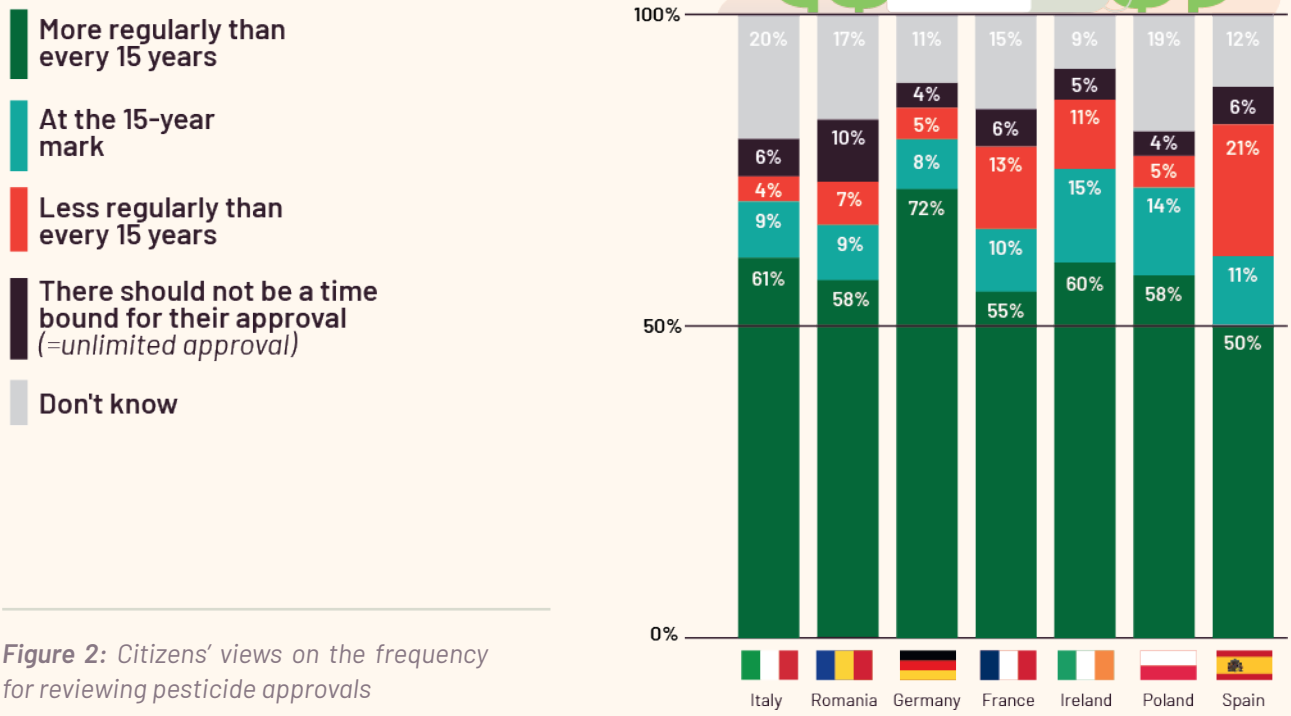


Figure 2: Citizens' views on the frequency for reviewing pesticide approvals

The central message is unambiguous: citizens massively call for a system that exerts more scrutiny on pesticides, while public support for removing time limits on pesticide approvals is marginal.

Human health and environmental protection outweigh agronomic and economic considerations

When asked which factors should be prioritised in pesticide approval decisions, respondents consistently placed human health first, followed by water quality and biodiversity.

Human health is the leading consideration in every country, cited by 68–76% of respondents. Water quality comes next, at 44–55%, followed by biodiversity, at 28–50%. Agronomic and economic considerations receive little support. Effectiveness against pests is cited by 16–30%, soil quality by 17–31%, crop yields by 6–16%, food prices by 10–18%, and production costs by just 5–9%.

The findings suggest that citizens want pesticide approval decisions to be guided primarily by their implications for health and the environment, rather than by production-related considerations, even in a context where food prices are a major concern for EU citizens.

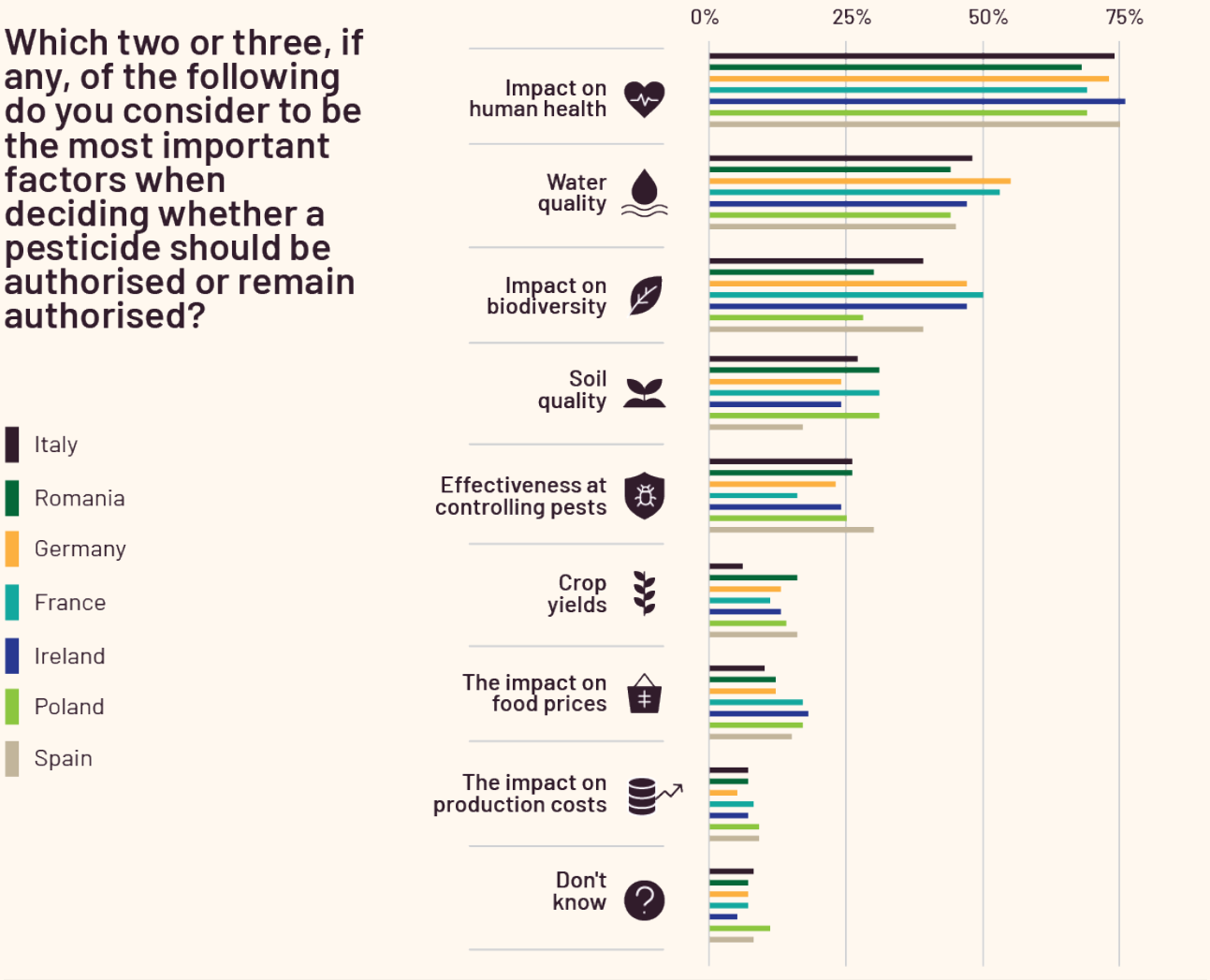


Figure 3: Citizens' views on the most important factors in pesticide authorisation decisions

Citizens want pesticide manufacturers to pay for the damage

Across all seven countries, pesticide manufacturers are the most frequently selected party to bear the costs of damage caused by pesticides.

Between 37% and 49% of respondents identify the companies that manufacture and sell pesticides as primarily responsible for covering these costs. This is the leading response in every country and exceeds support for each alternative.

Germany and Ireland record the highest levels of support for manufacturer responsibility, at 49% and 48% respectively. Poland and Romania record the lowest, at 38% and 37%, with France, Italy and Spain between 40% and 43%.

Currently there exists no general EU-wide instrument for pesticide manufacturers like Extended Producer Responsibility, Producer-Funded Remediation Fund or Risk-Based Pesticide Levy.

If the use of an authorised pesticide results in additional costs for society, for example for drinking water treatment, healthcare or the remediation of ecosystem damage, who do you think should mainly bear these costs?

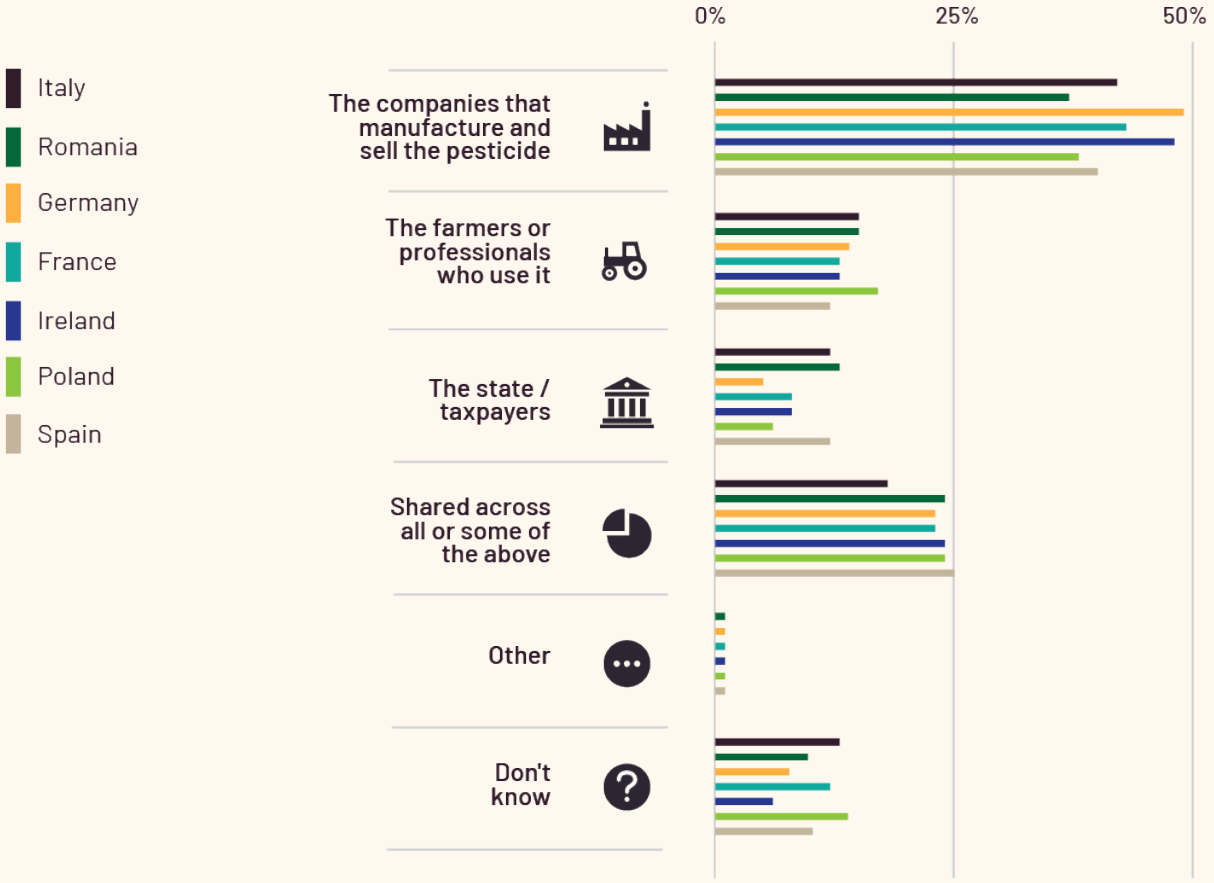


Figure 4: Citizens' views on who should bear the costs of pesticide use

The findings hold across the political spectrum

The survey's analysis by political affiliation confirms that the country-level findings apply regardless of political views. The national-level results are presented in the Annex.

We further analysed the YouGov results by the European Parliament political group to which each respondent's chosen national party belongs. The picture is consistent across the political spectrum: support for an immediate phase-out varies between groups, but voters of no political group broadly support unlimited pesticide approval or expanded pesticide use.

When immediate and gradual phase-out preferences are combined, support for a complete phase-out reaches:

Group	Support
Greens/EFA-affiliated voters	92%
The Left-affiliated voters	83%
Renew-affiliated voters	77%
S&D and ECR-affiliated voters	75%
EPP-affiliated voters	71%
PfE-affiliated voters	69%
ESN-affiliated voters	62%

Table 2 *Citizens' support for immediate or gradual pesticide phase-out, by European Parliament group of the party voted for*

Support for an immediate phase-out is highest among Greens/EFA voters, at 62%, followed by The Left at 54% and ECR at 46%. Among the other groups, it ranges from 33% among EPP voters to 39% among Renew voters[2].

Unlimited approval attracts only 3–10% support across the groups: 3% among Greens/EFA-affiliated voters, 5% among S&D, Renew, EPP and The Left voters, 6% among PfE-affiliated voters, 7% among ECR-affiliated voters, and 10% among ESN voters.

Group	Support
Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA)	3%
The Left	5%
Socialists and Democrats (S&D)	5%
Renew Europe (Renew)	5%
European People's Party (EPP)	5%
Patriots for Europe (PfE)	6%
European Conservatives and Reformists	7%
Europe of Sovereign Nations (ESN)	10%

Table 3 *Citizens' support for unlimited pesticide approval, by European Parliament group of the party voted for*

2 Group voters refer to the aggregate of respondents who voted for a party represented in one of the specified groups in the most recent national election (legislative or presidential).

Thinking about the future use of pesticides in European agriculture, which of the following comes closest to your view?

- Pesticides should be phased out completely as alternatives are already available.
- Pesticides should be phased out completely but they cannot be all immediately replaced by alternatives.
- Pesticides should not be phased out, alternatives can be used as a complement.
- The use of pesticides should be expanded, alternatives can be used as a complement.
- None of the above
- Don't know

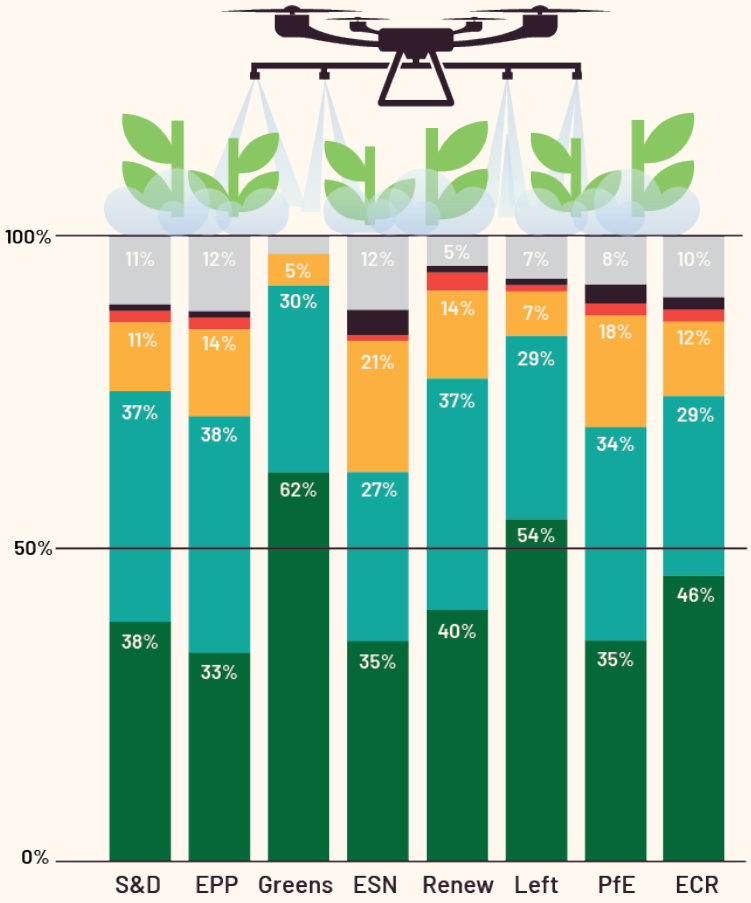


Figure 5: Citizens' views about the future of pesticides in Europe, by European Parliament group of the party voted for

Between 49% and 89% of voters across the eight groups favour reassessing pesticide approvals more frequently than every 15 years. Greens/EFA-affiliated voters are highest at 89%, followed by The Left at 66%, S&D at 63%, Renew at 62%, EPP at 59%, ECR at 57%, and ESN at 55%. Patriots for Europe records 49%, just below the majority threshold.

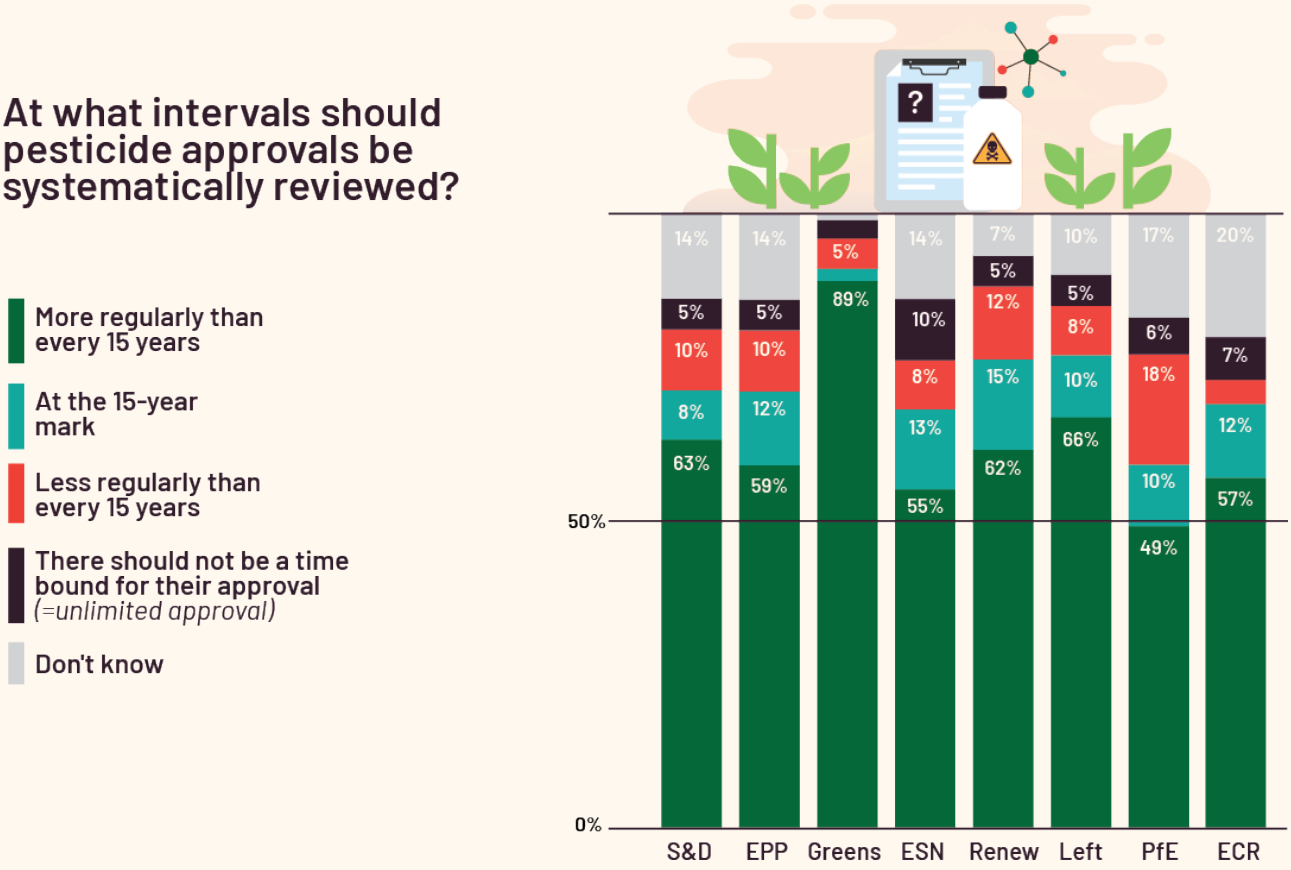


Figure 6: Citizens' views on the frequency for reviewing pesticide approvals, by European Parliament group of the party voted for

Health and environmental protection also remain priorities across political affiliations. **Human health is the leading consideration in all eight groups, cited by 69–81% of respondents**. Water quality and biodiversity are particularly prominent among Greens/EFA and The Left-affiliated voters, while economic and agronomic factors remain secondary across the political spectrum.

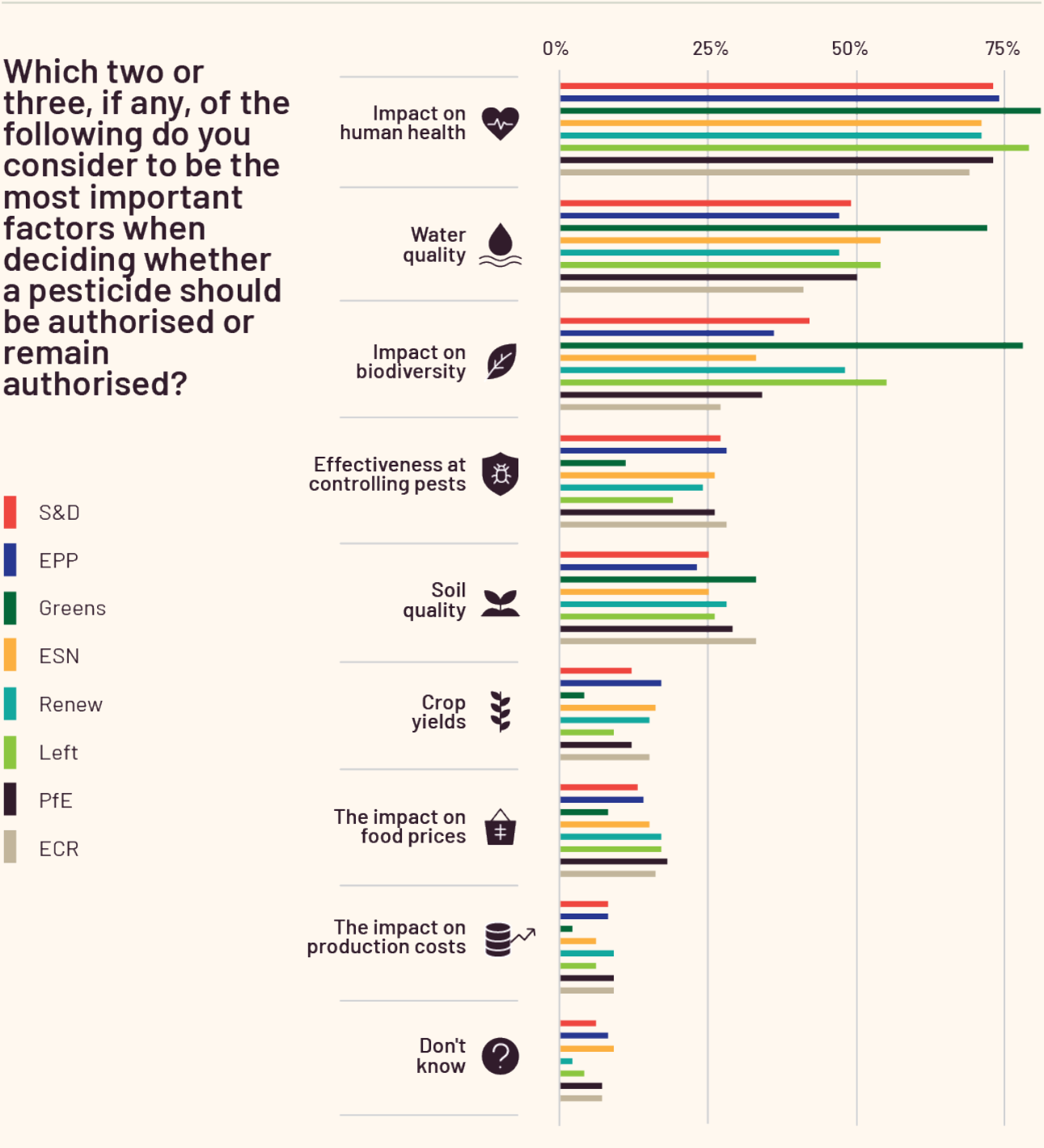


Figure 7: Citizens' views on the most important factors in pesticide authorisation decisions, by European Parliament group of the party voted for

Finally, pesticide **manufacturers are the most frequently selected party responsible for covering pesticide-related costs and damages in all groups, with responses ranging from** 54% of the Greens voters to 39% of the ECR-affiliated voters.

If the use of an authorised pesticide results in additional costs for society, for example for drinking water treatment, healthcare or the remediation of ecosystem damage, who do you think should mainly bear these costs?

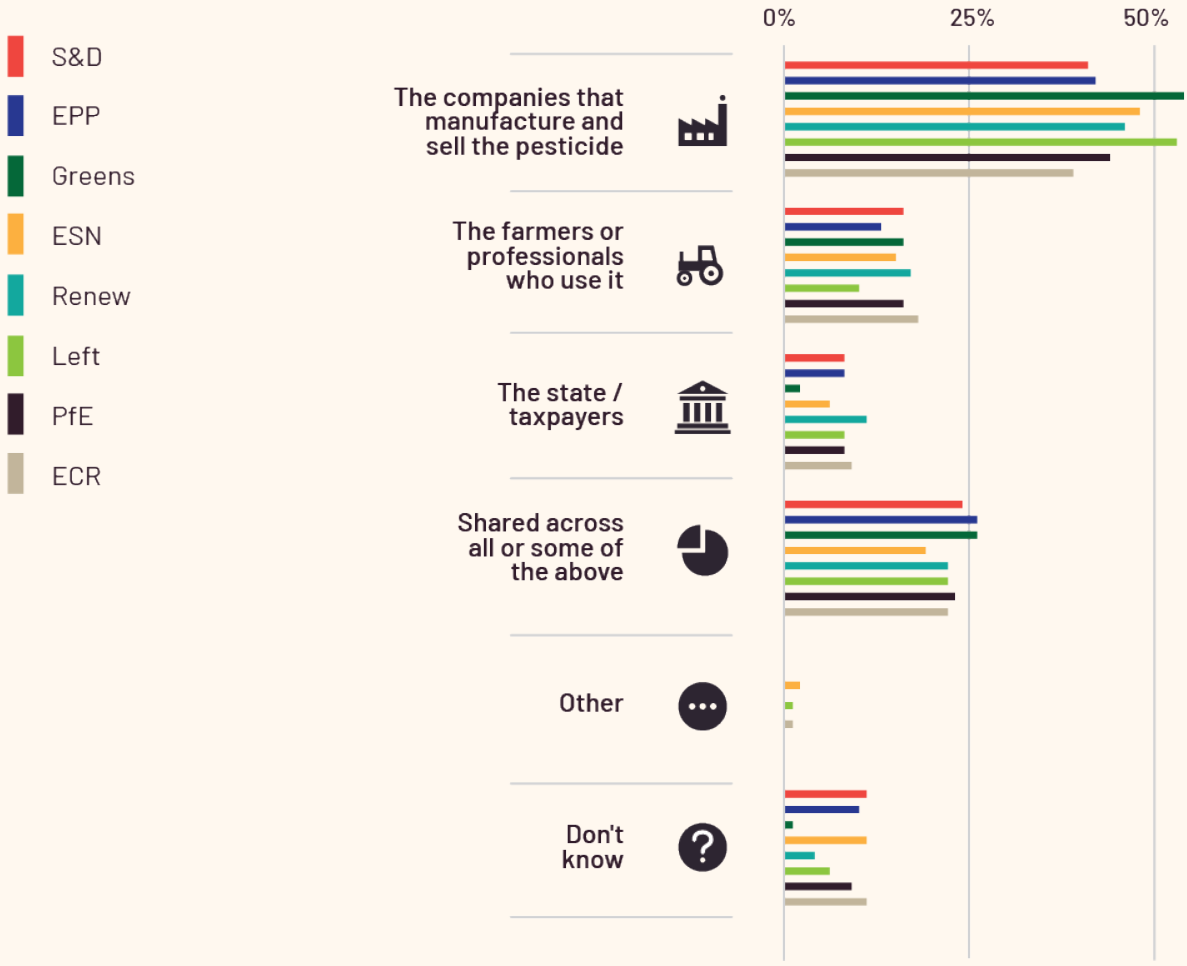


Figure 8: Citizens' views on who should bear the costs of pesticide use, by European Parliament group of the party voted for

4.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The YouGov poll across seven EU countries reveals a clear disconnect between citizens' demands and the European Commission's Food and Feed Safety Omnibus proposal. With 68–80% of respondents supporting the complete phase-out of pesticides and only 4–10% supporting unlimited pesticide approvals, the public clearly favours stronger protection for human health and the environment. These views cut across political lines, demonstrating that pesticide safety is a shared public priority.

The results of this poll are in line with a *previous Ipsos poll* from 2023, carried out in six EU Member States. The poll results were similarly eloquent: 76% of respondents were concerned about the impact of pesticide use on human health, while 82% were concerned about the impact of pesticides on the environment. A majority of respondents (59%) also considered that farmers should always favour the least toxic crop protection method. In addition, two successful European Citizens Initiatives (*Stop glyphosate* in 2017 and *Save Bees and Farmers* in 2022) managed to reach more than one million European certified signatures. Both initiatives asked for a gradual phase out of toxic pesticides in the EU. In 2021, the Von der Leyen I Commission organised a *Conference on the Future of Europe*, gathering randomly selected European citizens who asked for a strong reduction in pesticide use in their final report. Finally, regularly published Eurobarometers indicate that food contamination with pesticide residues is a major source of concern among Europeans[3]. In addition, many national or European petitions asking for a pesticide reduction have successfully collected hundreds of thousands of signatures on different pesticide-related topics over the last decade.

Despite the continuous signals delivered by Europeans to politicians, it is highly concerning to observe that democratic demands remain unheard. On the contrary, rather than reflecting the views of European

3 2019 Eurobarometer: Food Safety in the EU; 2020 Eurobarometer: Making our food fit for the future – new trends and challenges; 2022 Eurobarometer: Food Safety in the EU; 2024 Eurobarometer: Attitudes of Europeans towards the environment.

voters, this Omnibus proposal, as well as the one presented by conservative and far-right MEPs at the European Parliament closely mirror industry interests, prioritising private profits over public health and environmental protection.

A scientific evaluation commissioned by the Dutch parliament in 2026 concluded that the Commission proposal will not deliver on its promises to unclog the regulatory system. This assessment has led 573 scientists to express their concern about the Commission's proposal.

The European Commission proposal, beyond the immense gift it provides to the pesticide industry, will increase the distrust of citizens towards politicians and against European institutions.

Citizens' demands over time concern both the pesticide authorisation regulation (EC) 1107/2009, as well as the way pesticides are used by farmers and how citizens and the environment are protected against them, under the Directive 2009/128/EC on the sustainable use of pesticides. While many aspects of the implementation of these pieces of legislation require significant efforts, regulators should act to ensure the high level of protection of human health and the environment foreseen in the law, rather than reducing it. Many solutions have been put forward to improve the system over the last decade[4], and the Commission proposal disregarded past work to put forward its industry-driven agenda.

The authors of this report respectfully invite MEPs to listen to the overwhelming majority of the people they represent, reject the European Commission proposal, and ask the Commission to draft a new approach that truly improves the pesticide regulatory system, instead of weakening it.

4 European Parliament Report on the Union's authorisation procedure for pesticides (2019)
European Commission REFIT report (2020)
European Food Safety Authority proposal to unclog the pesticide regulatory system (2026)

ANNEX: COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS



FRANCE

PHASE-OUT

77.4%
consider a phase-out necessary

Only **1%** supported expanded use

APPROVALS

55% want pesticides reassessed more often than every 15 years.

Only **6%** support unlimited approval



PRIORITIES

Health, water quality and biodiversity lead, while production costs (8%) and yields (11%) come last.

69%
Health

53%
Water quality

50%
Biodiversity

WHO SHOULD PAY

43%
say manufacturers should pay for the damage

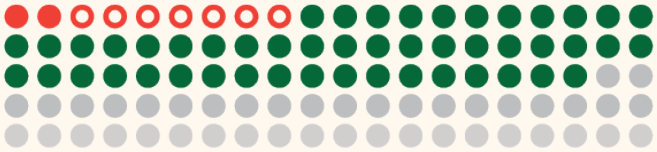
POLITICAL ANALYSIS

Among 2022 first-round Le Pen voters.

2%
back expanded use

7.5%
unlimited approval

49%
want more frequent reviews



GERMANY

PHASE-OUT

71%
consider a phase-out necessary

Only
2% want use expanded

APPROVALS

72% favour a more frequent approval process more often than every 15 years

Only **4%** support unlimited approval



PRIORITIES

73%
Health

55%
Water quality

47%
Biodiversity

WHO SHOULD PAY

49%
say chemical companies should bear the costs

POLITICAL ANALYSIS

Supporters of the CDU/CSU and the SPD both back stricter rules (73%), and only 2-3% prefer unlimited approval.

2-3%
prefer unlimited approval

73%
back stricter rules



IRELAND

PHASE-OUT

73%

pesticides should be phased out

Only **3%** want use expanded

APPROVALS

60% want approvals reviewed more often than every 15 years

Only **5%** support unlimited approval



PRIORITIES

76% rank health impact as a top priority, the highest of any country.

76% Health

47% Water quality

47% Biodiversity

WHO SHOULD PAY

48% say manufacturers should pay the extra costs to society

ITALY

PHASE-OUT

76%
back a complete phase-out

Only **1%** want use expanded

APPROVALS

61% want approvals reviewed more often than every 15 years

Only **6%** support unlimited approval



PRIORITIES

Health, water quality and biodiversity lead, while yields (6%), production costs (7%) and food prices (10%) come last.

74% Health

48% Water quality

39% Biodiversity

WHO SHOULD PAY

42% say manufacturers should pay for decontaminating drinking water, treating diseases and restoring ecosystems

POLITICAL ANALYSIS

The same ranking holds among Lega, Forza Italia and Fratelli d'Italia voters.

POLAND

PHASE-OUT

71%
want pesticides phased out completely

Only **1%** favour expanded use

APPROVALS

58% want more regular checks

14% want the status quo

Only **4%** accept removing systematic reviews and 5% accept less frequent ones



PRIORITIES

Human health, soil and water quality and biodiversity lead, while production costs and yields are cited 5 to 7 times less often than health.

69%
Health

44%
Water quality

31%
Soil quality

WHO SHOULD PAY

38% say manufacturers should pay for decontaminating drinking water, treating diseases and restoring ecosystems

POLITICAL ANALYSIS

Support for a phase-out is 71-74% among Left, KO and PiS voters. Support for more frequent checks ranges from 55% (Konfederacja) to 66% (Trzecia Droga), and only 2% of Konfederacja voters back unlimited approval.

SPAIN

PHASE-OUT

68%
want pesticides eliminated

Only **3%** favour expanded use

APPROVALS

50% want reviews more often than every 15 years

Only **6%** support unlimited approval



PRIORITIES

Health, water quality and biodiversity lead, while production costs (9%) and food prices (15%) rank low.

75%
Health

45%
Water quality

39%
Biodiversity

WHO SHOULD PAY

40% say manufacturers should pay for decontaminating drinking water, treating diseases and restoring ecosystems

POLITICAL ANALYSIS

34% of Vox voters want immediate elimination, above the national average of 32%, even though Vox MEPs support the most deregulatory measures.

ROMANIA

PHASE-OUT

80%

consider a phase-out necessary

Only **1%** favour expanded use

APPROVALS

58% want pesticides reassessed more often than every 15 years

Only **10%** support unlimited approval



PRIORITIES

Health, water quality and biodiversity lead, while effectiveness at controlling pest (26%) and yields (16%) get less support

68% Health

44% Water quality

30% Biodiversity

WHO SHOULD PAY

38% say manufacturers should pay for the damage

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Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe is a science-based organisation bringing together more than 50 consumer, public health and environmental organisations, trade unions, women's groups and farmer associations from across Europe. We work to eliminate the dependency on pesticides and promote alternatives that work instead of fighting against nature.

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