

BTO- Meeting of Commissioner Kyriakides with the European Crop Protection Association (ECPA)

Date: 7 February 2020

Place: Commissioner's Office

Participants:

- ECPA: [REDACTED]
- Commission: Commissioner Kyriakides, Annukka Ojala, Roberto Reig Rodrigo, [REDACTED]

The Commissioner welcomed the visitors, explaining that she was in the process of meeting with many stakeholders in view of the preparation of the Farm to Fork Strategy, emphasising her resolve to come out with an ambitious strategy at the end of March and inviting the visitors to present their views and expectations.

ECPA presented the organisation, emphasising its members focus on research and innovation and the significant percentage of turnover that the biggest five members invest into the development of new active substances. ECPA welcomed the holistic approach in the European Green Deal and Farm to Fork Strategy as trade-offs among conflicting goals need to be made and called for pesticides not to be regulated in too many different pieces of legislation. ECPA considered that the Green Deal needs to unleash innovation and that farming practices need to evolve.

In ECPA's view the reduction target for pesticides should comprise risk as use/volume alone is not a good indicator. The harmonised indicator HRI-1 established under the Sustainable Use Directive is the best measuring tool available at this moment and the baseline should be a 4-year average to take account of climatic variations. Furthermore, ECPA is keen to avoid that pesticides are singled out by being the only input with reduction target – fertilisers and antimicrobials should also be covered. The Commissioner noted the suggestion as regards the target and indicator and invited ECPA to submit concrete proposals during the forthcoming public consultation on the Farm to Fork Strategy roadmap.

ECPA considered that it will not be possible to replace all chemical pesticides by biological solutions as these are not efficient enough and replacing chemicals needs time. It costs about 250 million Euros and takes more than 10 years to bring a new active substance to the market – partly also due to the delays in the assessment procedures caused by Member States. Due to recent non-renewals for several chemicals the farmers' toolbox is depleting. Farmers need help and advice – one model could be 'pesticides on prescription' as, according to ECPA, already successfully implemented in Greece and the Czech Republic. ECPA supported an increase in organic production, noting that its members also produce substances allowed in organic agriculture and that civil society is wrong in believing that organic production is pesticides free, but cautioned that there are trade-offs as more mechanical weeding will need to increased greenhouse gas emissions.

Out of scope