

PRESS RELEASE - Strasbourg, 18 December 2008

Pesticides

Breakthrough on EU pesticides rules a real boost for public health

The European Parliament and Council last night agreed on new rules for the authorisation of pesticides, following constructive 'trialogue' negotiations. Commenting on the outcome, German Green **Hiltrud Breyer**, EP draftswoman for the pesticides regulation, said:

"This agreement is a milestone for the environment, health and consumer protection in Europe. The EU will set a global precedent by phasing out highly toxic pesticides.

"The provisions agreed upon will clearly underline EU leadership in protecting the public from toxic substances. Crucially, carcinogenic substances, as well as those that are mutagenic or damage reproduction, will be banned. Endocrine disruptors, which cause damage to the hormonal system, will also be put on the 'black list' and will be properly defined for the first time. There will also be stricter safety criteria for substances deemed to pose a significant risk to the development of the nervous system or to the immune system.

"This breakthrough will not just bring major improvements to public health but also to the environment. It will provide greater protection for bees, which are suffering significantly from pesticide use. It will now be necessary to prove that a substance does not have unacceptable acute or chronic effects on bees for it to be introduced or allowed to stay on the market.

"In the future, pesticide products will be authorised with a mutual recognition system in a European Union divided into 3 zones. On the insistence of the European Parliament, member states now have far more possibilities to introduce additional conditions or restrictions on use. While maintaining harmonisation in the placing of products on the market, it gives sufficient flexibility to ensure that national environmental standards can be upheld.

"This political agreement is a win-win situation: not only for the environment, public health and consumer protection, but also for the European economy, since it will lead to more innovation, placing the EU at the forefront of this sector."

NOTE FOR EDITORS: The political agreement has to be confirmed by the EP plenary vote on 14 January 2009 and it must then be formally endorsed by the full Council.

Press Service of the Greens/EFA Group
in the European Parliament