

PRESS RELEASE

On the AGRIFISH Council on 12.12.2022: A sustainable supply of clean drinking water requires a ban on chemically synthesized pesticides in water protection areas now

Karlsruhe, 08.12.2022: In a [News article](#) in July, the German Environment Agency (UBA) pointed out that, even with "Codes of Good Practice", conventional agriculture now leads to contamination of drinking water resources by degradation products (metabolites) of chemically synthesized pesticides/plant protection products. Pesticide authorisation procedures no longer offer sufficient protection. The main reason behind this are successful lawsuits by producers against pesticide use restrictions in Germany, which despite being based on the latest scientific findings, had to be cancelled by court order. Comparable lawsuits are also possible in the other EU member states.

"UBA draws attention to new loopholes in the authorisation procedure for pesticides. The EU Commission's proposal of 22 June 2022 for a [Regulation](#) (SUR, Sustainable Use of plant protection products Regulation), which provides for a ban on pesticides in water protection areas, is therefore all the more important. This is the only way to maintain the high quality of drinking water. However, natural pesticides that are permitted in organic farming should continue to be allowed, because a sustainable drinking water supply needs a switch to organic farming in water protection areas," says Prof. Dr Matthias Maier, President of the IAWR.

In [2019](#) already, the European Parliament had regretted a deterioration of drinking water resources due to pesticide degradation products, noting that these had led to increased treatment costs in waterworks. These additional costs had not been borne by polluters, but by drinking water consumers. On 26 October 2022, Wolfgang Deinlein, IAWR Managing Director, therefore declared at an [Event](#) in the European Parliament: "The costs arising from the installation and operation of additional treatment technology to remove pesticide degradation products must in future be borne by the polluters ("polluter pays") in accordance with European primary law. Since many pesticide metabolites can only be removed by means of high-tech reverse osmosis, the costs quickly run into the billions, so that their affordability is unlikely to be given everywhere. Fortunately, in its [Resolution](#) on the farm-to-fork strategy on 20.10.2021, the European Parliament has already voted in favour of a 50% pesticide reduction by 2030, so we firmly believe that the Parliament will fulfil its duty to ensure the protection of public health, the environment and a supply of clean drinking water by agreeing to a pesticide ban in water protection areas."

With a view to the Council meeting (AGRIFISH) on 12.12.2022, Prof. Dr. Matthias Maier adds: "This equally applies to the Council, which co-adopted the EU Drinking Water Directive in 2020. Therein, the competency of the EU level is derived from the importance of drinking water for human health. For this reason, the Council is also responsible for enabling waterworks to comply with the limit values for pesticides (metabolites) contained therein. Considering the financial, regulatory and especially the technical constraints, there are limits set to any further orientation towards removal of pesticide inputs by waterworks. These limits must not be exceeded. The SUR regulation should therefore be adopted as soon as possible."

The European Citizens' Initiative "[Save Bees and Farmers](#)" was officially declared successful on 10.10.2022. The EU Commission is thus called upon by 1.1 million EU citizens to submit a legislative proposal that provides for an even more far-reaching pesticide reduction than the EU Commission's SUR proposal.



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