



PRESS RELEASE: “THE CLOCK TICKS” – YOUNG FARMERS, POLITICAL, SCIENCE, DISEASE AND INDUSTRIAL EXPERTS CALL ON EU INSTITUTIONS TO SECURE MARKET ACCESS FOR SAFE AND EFFECTIVE MICROBIAL PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS

Brussels, 31 March 2022 - Opening today’s press conference including leading global and international media Mr **Martin Hlaváček** MEP (Cz, Renew Europe, AGRI Member) outlined how the European Union can ultimately strike a balance between food safety and food security through a fast-track/low-cost market access for “inherently safer” (as stated by the European Commission’s [own website](#)) and effective microbial plant protection products (MPPPs). According Dutch Minister of Agriculture Mr **Henk Staghouwer** in his message to the European Commission of 25th January 2022 DG SANTE’s latest draft documents towards a more sustainable European agriculture are not sufficiently effective. Not only steps adapting data but also procedural steps are required. Mr Hlaváček: “I will ask the incoming Czech EU Presidency to consider organizing a follow-up conference on this matter with the Task Force on MPPPs.” Therefore **Diana Lenzi**, President of the European Council of Young Farmers, calls on the European Commission to “accelerate the approval process of Biological Plant Protection Products (PPPs) as essential instruments needed in every farmer’s toolbox to secure sustainable agriculture in Europe.” She said that farmers are confronted with “a ticking clock against challenges such as climate change, food security and environmental safety”. She asks the Commission to show “common sense, reason and practicability in the solutions put forward”. Dr **Willem Ravensberg** (Koppert BV/Microbial Plant Protection Products Task Force) detailed how such an approach lacks today. “MPPPs already and safely on the market since decades are threatened to be taken out and new ones cannot get in.” For smaller tech companies this may mean the end of the line – quit or leave Europe. As cause for the amazing lengths of the delays he referred to Health Commissioner **Stella Kyriakides**. She formally acknowledges that national authorities since 2009 “still lack appropriate knowledge and experience to deal with MPPPs”. As chemical pesticides already identified as damaging for humans and environment stay in the market, current Commission policies remain imbalanced. Dr **Jobien Wind**, a scientist with Parkinson’s Disease, urged the EU institutions “to proactively support farmers in finding new sustainable, innovative ways for crop management” and “to rigorously improve the evaluation procedure for chemical pesticides – both individually and sprayed as cocktails, by screening for effects on the nerve system of mice.”

How the present imbalance can be restored without adapting the relevant Regulation (EC)1107/2009 was underlined by the globally renowned law Firm **Arnold & Porter** (attachment 1). Participants referred to their legal argumentation as ‘iron-clad and indisputable’. Arnold & Porter also contributed to the Task Force’s proposed draft European Commission ‘Communication’ text (attachment 2) that identifies how an explanation of several articles of Reg 1107/2009 can immediately open the market for MPPPs. *Minister of State and former Prime Minister of Belgium Prof **Mark Eyskens** applauded both documents and called on the goodwill of the European Commission to do what 4 consecutive European Parliament Resolutions require the Commission to*

implement: fast market access to MPPPs. “I will recommend these documents to the Presidents of the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission.”

Chairman **Ad Melkert** also chaired the 30th August 2021 webinar on this subject. On that occasion a very senior former official of the European Commission said then that the relevant EU regulations are outdated, stifle innovation and protect the interests of incumbent industries. That answers media questions on the cause of the delays. Dr Ravensberg and Task Force science expert **David Cary** responded to questions regarding the comparative costs of chemical and microbial PPPs: “Chemical pesticides seem to be cheaper but if the external costs resulting of damage to our environment and public health are included that bill is much higher – though not paid for by the producing industries, but by us, the society.”

Press conference recording available here: [Events | microbialppptaskforce.eu](https://microbialppptaskforce.eu/events)

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