


## Parliamentary questions

23 July 2008

P-4305/08

WRITTEN QUESTION by Robert Sturdy (PPE-DE) to the Commission

### ▶ Subject: Plant Protection Products Directive

 Answer(s)

The Agriculture Council adopted a political agreement on the revision of the Plant Protection Products Directive in June 2008 and the report will be sent to the European Parliament this autumn for further discussion.

Can the Commission explain why it failed to include an impact assessment in its proposal on the Plant Protection Products Directive?

Does the Commission intend to carry out and publish any Impact Assessment in the near future, bearing in mind that the report is already approaching its second reading and is due to be adopted by early 2009? If not, why not?

Does the Commission intend to publish a critique of the Pesticide Safety Directorate's report?

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Answer given by Ms Vassiliou  
on behalf of the Commission  
(12.9.2008)

The Commission adopted on 19 July 2006 its proposal for a Regulation of Parliament and the Council concerning the placing on the market of plant protection products. The Commission presented with the proposal an impact assessment which is electronically available at the following address:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/cia\\_2006\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/cia_2006_en.htm)

One of the main aims of the proposal for a Regulation concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market<sup>1</sup> is to maintain a high level of protection for humans, animals and the environment.

The proposed criteria for approval of active substances are essential to achieve these objectives: substances which are persistent in the environment, accumulating in living organisms or very toxic should not be approved for use in plant protection products. The same applies to exposing farmers or consumers to substances which are proven to be carcinogenic, mutagenic, and toxic to reproduction or which affect fertility or reproductive behaviour (endocrine disruptors).

The Commission rejects the criticism that the criteria are cut-off criteria, because exposure is in fact taken into account: these highly hazardous substances can be approved if exposure to them is negligible (e.g. closed system). Moreover, the Commission proposal was built on experience gathered during the review programme of existing substances under Directive 91/414/EEC<sup>2</sup>.

The United Kingdom (UK) Pesticide Safety Directorate has carried out an Impact Assessment, which compares the effect of the criteria as proposed by the Commission and amended by Parliament. However, this Impact Assessment is based only on a worst case scenario, which is unrealistic because it does not integrate the fact that substances will be removed from the market under the review, before the new Regulation becomes applicable. Moreover, it is not expected that all substances listed as possible endocrine disruptors by the UK, on the basis of the chemical class they belong to, will finally be classified as endocrine disruptors after a scientific evaluation.

<sup>1</sup> COM (2006) 388 final.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 230, 19.8.1991.

The Commission is of the opinion that the new Regulation might lead to the withdrawal of a limited number of active substances and will monitor the situation carefully. However, the Commission also believes that it is an incentive for the development of new safer products. In addition, the new Regulation contains measures, such as the zonal system and obligatory mutual recognition, simplified rules on data protection, clear deadlines for the approval and authorisation procedure and facilitated authorisation for minor uses, which are measures in favour of agriculture.