



MINOR USES - UPDATE

Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market requires that by 14 December 2011, the Commission submits to the European Parliament and the Council a Report on the possible establishment of a European fund on minor uses, accompanied, if appropriate by a legislative proposal.

The report was adopted by the Commission on 18 February 2014.

Minor uses of pesticides are uses on niche crops, i.e. crops that are grown on a relatively limited acreage (including most vegetables, fruit, nurseries and flowers). While minor uses are of high economic value for farmers, they are however usually of low economic interest for the agro-pesticide industry. In general, the industry has limited incentives to apply for an authorisation of a plant protection product for minor uses.

The aim of the Commission Report on minor uses was to:

- provide information regarding the situation on minor uses as reported by Member States and stakeholder organisations;
- present the strategy offered in Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 as regards minor uses;
- present the options for action considered in the preliminary study funded by the Commission i.e.
 - Option 1: No funding by the Commission.
 - Option 2: Re-installation of the EU Minor Uses Expert Group.
 - Option 3: Commission partly funding a coordination facility (Technical Secretariat) comprising of an independent central secretariat which coordinates the work between Member States and stakeholders.
 - Option 4: Commission partly funding a coordination facility (Technical Secretariat) and specific projects.

As regards the conclusions, option 3 was considered the most appropriate action. The technical secretariat would be tasked with the coordination of minor uses work between Member States and stakeholders, sharing of information and experience, launching of EU projects, stimulation of harmonisation and the creation and maintenance of a data base on minor uses. A first analysis indicates that Commission funding of 350,000€/year would be sufficient to carry out the necessary measures considered under option 3.

In addition, the Commission will under the EU's 7th Research Framework Programme support the establishment of a so-called European Research Area Network on Integrated Pest Management (IPM ERANET) with a budget allocation of €2 million.

These two activities (the coordination facility and the IPM ERANET) will result in more tools – chemical as well as non-chemical – becoming available for farmers in the field of pest and disease control.

In the AGRIFISH Council meeting on 19 May 2014 strong support for the Report was expressed by all 22 MSs that intervened, underlining the added value of swift action at EU level, as a complement to action in MSs.

A majority supported COM in identifying option 3 as the better solution as a first step, to be evaluated once implemented.

The details of the secretariat as regards the overlap with work at national level, the share of financing contributions between Member States as well as its temporary nature and location has been further discussed at technical level in an expert-meeting with Member State's experts and stakeholders.

As a result of this expert-meeting a draft outline of the Coordination Facility was prepared focussing on the following three areas:

- Operation issues: organisation and structure of the Coordination Facility and related bodies;
- Financial arrangements;
- Location and facilities.

It is envisaged that the Financial Decision will be adopted in October 2014 and published before the end of 2014. The draft outline of the Coordination Facility can serve as input for a proposal to be submitted by an interested party. In that case the technical secretariat can be established early 2015.

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