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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

Accompanying document to the

Proposal for a

REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

concerning statistics on plant protection products

SUMMARY OF THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

{COM(2006) 778 final}
{SEC(2006) 1623}

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The collection of data concerning pesticide sales and use is one of the measures proposed in the framework of the Thematic Strategy on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides¹. In this context, a broad assessment was carried out of its likely impacts, together with the foreseen effects of the other measures contained in the Thematic Strategy².

This impact assessment goes into more detail as far as data collection is concerned. The following four options were assessed:

1. Collection of data mandatory for industry and distributors and voluntary for professional users;
2. Mandatory collection of data on sales, distribution and use (participation to be defined);
3. Recommendation to collect data from distributors and users;
4. No action.

Option 2 was recommended on the grounds that it would have a moderate economic impact and would enable the rapid development of accurate and reliable data on the production, distribution and use of plant protection products in a cost-efficient way.

When this option for mandatory collection of data on sales, distribution and use was considered, it was noted that some obligations for data collection (in connection with production, import/export, placing on the market, etc.) already existed under national or Community legislation.

Despite the fact that few countries were in a position to make an estimate, it was clear that the cost of collecting use data would create the heaviest burden under this option. The overall economic impact depends largely on the approach to collection of such data, on the detail of the information to be collected, on the coverage of the collected data concerning the use of plant protection products and finally on the frequency of data collection.

Estimates of the overall direct economic impact – fully taken over as administrative costs - at Community level range from 10 to 25 million €/year, depending on the level of precision sought. With current expenditure being estimated at between 7 and 10 million €/year, the resultant overall impact ranges from 3 to 15 million €/year per year. In line with the EU

1 Communication from the Commission to Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a thematic Strategy on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides, COM(2006) 372 final.

2 SEC(2006) 894 and SEC(2006)895.

common methodology for assessing administrative costs, a more detailed table of the likely total costs of the various information obligations can be found in annex 8. It is based on the few available case studies and on the same data sets used to achieve the above-mentioned range.

National authorities are likely to experience the most significant economic impact (estimation: total cost of up to 12 million €/year) as a result of increased efforts to establish and organise collection systems. However, when considering the net costs of these measures, it should be noted that some Member States already collect statistics on pesticides on a national legal base (estimated value: 3 m€), that the data produced in application of this Regulation will be used to fulfil other international reporting obligations (FAO and OECD pesticide statistics). Moreover, important benefits can be expected at national level though their expression in monetary terms is difficult. The net additional burden for national authorities is estimated around 9 million €/year.

A total impact of up to 4 million €/year is anticipated for pesticide users and the total costs for the supply chain are estimated to 9 million €/year which would represent an additional burden of 2 million €/year for this sector.

Considering that costs could be significantly reduced by tailoring survey sampling in respect of use data to national requirements, the proposal from the Commission allows the Member States a lot of flexibility in the way they organise data collection.

The objective of this Regulation is to establish a framework for the production of Community statistics on the placing on the market and use of plant protection products by imposing an obligation on all the Member States to produce detailed statistics on a regular basis. To ensure the comparability of these statistics between Member States and at Community level, the Regulation defines the coverage of the statistics, which will be limited to professional use in agriculture, and establishes harmonised rules for data collection and compilation.

These statistics will be essential for estimating the risk to human health and the environment linked to the use of plant protection products, and for measuring the progress made towards the objectives of the Thematic Strategy on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides.

Benefits from this measure should be considered in the light of the overall Thematic Strategy. The general objective for the implementation of the measures of the Thematic Strategy is to achieve environment and health improvements or other societal benefits, as the reduction of external costs due to the use of plant protection products, by a more sustainable use of pesticides. Measurement of the progress can only be based on reliable data and relevant indicators. Direct benefits of this Regulation can be expected at national or Community level from a better knowledge of pesticide use, such as improved monitoring schemes and better targeted and more effective policies. Furthermore, the availability of official statistics all over Europe will create a more transparent market that should improve the competitiveness of the pesticide industry.