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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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REPORT

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on the Environment,
Public Health and Consumer Protection

on the export of various dangerous substances and
preparations and the desirability of increasing the
protection of workers and consumers in the importing
countries and of the European consumer of exotic
foodstuffs

Rapporteur: Mrs V. SQUARCIALUPI

At its sitting of 13 February 1981, the European Parliament referred the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Glinne and others on the export of various dangerous substances and preparations and the desirability of increasing the protection of workers and consumers in the importing countries and of the European consumer of exotic foodstuffs (Doc. 1-903/80) to the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Development and Cooperation for its opinion, pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure.

At its meeting of 2 October 1981 the committee decided to draw up a report and appointed Mrs Squarcialupi rapporteur.

It considered the draft report at its meetings of 1 April 1982, 17 May 1982, 23 June 1982, 19 January 1983, 22 March 1983 and 15 June 1983 and adopted the motion for a resolution unanimously at the last meeting.

The following took part in the vote: Mr RYAN (acting chairman), Mr JOHNSON (vice-chairman), Mrs WEBER (vice-chairman), Mrs SQUARCIALUPI rapporteur, Mr ALBER, Mr BOMBARD, Mr CERAVOLO (deputizing for Mr SPINELLI), Mr GHERGO, Miss HOOPER, Mrs KROUWEL-VLAM, Mrs LENTZ-CORNETTE, Mr LYNGE (deputizing for Mrs VAN HEMELDONCK), Mr MUNTINGH, Mrs PANTAZI, Mr REMILLY, Mrs SCHLEICHER, Mr SCHÖN (deputizing for Mrs SIEBEL-EMMERLING), Mr SHERLOCK and Mrs SPAAK.

The opinion of the Committee on Development and Cooperation is attached to this report.

The report was tabled on 20 June 1983.

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Annex I: Motion for a resolution Doc. 1-903/80

Opinion of the Committee on Development and Cooperation

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on the export of various dangerous substances and preparations and the desirability of increasing the protection of workers and consumers in the importing countries and of the European consumer of exotic foodstuffs

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Glinne and others on the export of various dangerous substances and preparations and the desirability of increasing the protection of workers and consumers in the importing countries and of the European consumer of exotic foodstuffs (Doc. 1-903/80),
 - having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Mrs Van Hemeldonck and others on the export of hazardous products from the United States (Doc. 1-919/82),
 - having regard to the report by the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection and the opinion of the Committee on Development and Cooperation (Doc. 1-458/83),
 - having regard to the sensitivity displayed by European public opinion towards the export to developing countries of pesticides the use of which is forbidden or limited in the countries of the European Community,
- A. noting an increased awareness of this matter on the part of developing countries;
 - B. bearing in mind the willingness shown by the producing industry to deal with the problem of a more appropriate use of pesticides;
 - C. whereas the dangers hardly ever arise from the proper use of pesticides, but rather from their abuse and misuse;

- D. convinced that a proper use of pesticides may help to create better economic and human conditions in the least developed countries and may make a contribution in the fight against hunger in the world;
 - E. awaiting the elaboration, as soon as possible, of a code of conduct which will improve the organization of the market in pesticides, above all in developing countries;
 - F. whereas it is however essential to undertake a serious cost-benefit analysis of the prudent and proper use of pesticides;
 - G. having regard to the positions adopted and consistent action taken in this matter by international organizations, such as the UN, FAO and WHO;
 - H. whereas it would be desirable to link Community measures with those of international organizations operating in this sector;
1. Regrets that important directives - in particular Nos. 78/631/EEC and 79/117/EEC - provide no safeguards for pesticides exported to other countries;
 2. Calls therefore on the Commission of the European Communities to amend Directive 79/117/EEC and Directive 78/631/EEC so that the pesticides can be exported under the following conditions:
 - (a) that the government of the importing country is informed of the particular nature of the product and of the restrictions to which it is subject in the exporting country and the reasons for such restrictions;
 - (b) that the government of the importing country, having received such notification, explicitly requests the purchase;
 3. Believes that legislative and market conditions must be urgently established to ensure that every pesticide covered by the existing Community legislation may be exported only subject to the following conditions:
 - (a) that it is packaged and labelled as described in Directive 78/631/EEC;
 - (b) that the directions for use are written in the most common language of the country of destination, preferably accompanied by diagrams,

unless specified otherwise by the importing countries;

4. Calls furthermore on the Commission to include in development programmes:
 - (a) increased technical aid to developing countries to assist with their independent procedures for the registration and control of pesticides;
 - (b) greater attention to the techniques of integrated pest control so that yield does not depend exclusively on the use of chemical pesticides;
 - (c) more attentive studies on methods of protection for those who use pesticides, it being impossible to transfer the methods used in industrialized countries with a temperate climate;
 - (d) more decisive action on the training of instructors which should also provide for coordination with other international organizations in the use of the mass media and educational publications;
 - (e) closer contacts with the producing industry to study programmes for the training of instructors and methods of information on the dangers deriving from the uncontrolled use of pesticides;
5. Consequently believes that a more sensible policy on the use of pesticides could offer better protection to consumers in Europe and in the developing countries against the potential dangers arising from an improper use of pesticides;
6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission of the European Communities and to the Council.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT1. EUROPEAN PUBLIC OPINION

1.1 European public opinion is more and more frequently expressing concern at what is sometimes an indiscriminate use of pesticides in developing countries. At the same time, European consumers fear that they will have to bear the consequences of such use because pesticide residues may be contained in the foodstuffs imported to Europe from developing countries.

1.2 In recent years, the European Parliament has on various occasions been called upon to consider the problem of pesticides, as a result of outside pressures and petitions on the subject. Among the associations and organizations which have devoted particular attention to the subject of pesticides in developing countries and their effects on the food consumed by European citizens are:

- Mondiaal Alternatief Holland (Global Alternative Foundation)
- Het Vogeljaar
- Anders denke! Anders Doen!
- International Youth Federation for Environmental Studies and Conservation
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
- International Organization of Consumers Unions
- The Youth Forum of the European Community, which has appealed to the European Parliament Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection in a resolution calling for action to:
 1. Ban the export to countries outside the EEC of pesticides which are banned in the European Communities,
 2. Establish a code of conduct for multinational companies based in the EEC which supply pesticides to Third World Countries,
 3. Reduce the subsidies which go towards financing exports of pesticides to developing countries,
 4. Increase subsidies for biological control measures, including the protection of birds and the conservation of natural habitats.

(Bonn-Bad Godesberg 25-28 September 1980)
- Friends of the Earth
- European Environmental Bureau
- OXFAM - Oxford Committee for Famine Relief

1.3 At the symposium on the environment and the future which was held during the extraordinary session of UNEP (2-7 May 1982, in Kenya), 40 non-governmental organizations - NGOs - and the major international environmental associations addressed a message to the European Parliament Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection in which the European Community was asked to:

- (i) make no distinction between domestic and foreign users of pesticides;
- (ii) establish procedures for the control of exports of pesticides banned or restricted in the EEC;
- (iii) support programmes of integrated pest management which emphasize safe, ecologically sound methods and involve traditional skills and community participation;
- (iv) increase information exchanges with and technical assistance to Third World governments to enable them to control and practice safe use of pesticides.

1.4 In addition, two recently published books have had a profound effect on European public opinion. These are:

- The Circle of Poison: pesticides and People in a Hungry World, by David Weir and Mark Schapiro, Institute for Food and Development Policy, San Francisco, USA.
- A Growing Problem: Pesticides and the Third World Poor, by David Bull, OXFAM, UK.

2. THE PRODUCERS OF AGROCHEMICALS

2.1 The following producers' organizations were consulted on this matter:

- (a) GIFAP, International Group of National Associations of Agrochemical Manufacturers, based in Brussels,
- (b) ASSCHIMICI, national association of the Italian chemical industry, based in Milan.

2.2 The statutes of GIFAP, which has members all over the world who produce 90% of the world's agrochemicals, define the following objectives:

'- to promote crop protection by appropriate use of agrochemicals worldwide and to ensure that the properties and application of these products are in conformity with the needs of agriculture and society, i.e. optimal food and fibre protection with minimal hazards for man, animal and environment.

To achieve this, GIFAP's aims are:

- to promote the safe and sensible manufacture, handling, packing and transport of agrochemicals by setting and recommending high standards, in conformity with international acceptable rules.
- to promote the safe and sensible application of agrochemicals, in conformity with national and international standards and regulations for the protection of the user, the environment and the consumer.
- to promote harmonization of national and international legislation and regulations concerning control, testing and approval of agrochemicals.
- to provide a forum for discussion, expert advice and information on international scientific, technical and practical problems such as toxicology, residues, environmental issues, regulatory affairs, information and education, which affect industry, agriculture and society as a whole: and to seek to solve these problems.
- to help the public to understand the purposes and the nature of agrochemicals and the benefits they bring to food production, health, the economy and related areas.'

2.3 Asschimici, for its part, gave the following opinions on the matter:

It is unlikely that an agrochemical would be sold in a developing country without having previously been thoroughly tested in some part of the world, or by reputable international scientific organizations. In fact, many developing countries have already devised their own procedures, and hence established regulations to eliminate all the risks deriving from the use of agrochemicals on their own territory. The other countries, which do not yet have such provisions, purchase and use agrochemicals on the basis of recommendations

drawn up by the FAO and WHO. Indeed, officials from these organizations are on many occasions sent to observe all the operations connected with the use of agrochemicals, paying particular heed to biological processes and to the safety aspects of relevance to the users and the consumers of the foodstuffs produced.

It is therefore of vital interest to every producer to have the pesticide which he intends to put on the market tested by international scientific commissions, so that they can recommend it worldwide for the uses for which it was developed.

2.4 The following salient points have emerged from discussions with representatives of agrochemical manufacturers:

- Pesticide producers number approximately one thousand. The vast majority are multinationals which employ only small workforces, because there is a high degree of automation in their production processes.
- The producers reject the accusation that they encourage the excessive use of pesticides since the cost of the product represents 2-3% of total cost, the bulk of which is taken up by distribution costs.
- In addition, they maintain that it is not for them to take initiatives on the restriction or banning of the export of given pesticides. In their opinion, that is a matter for the politicians in the producing and importing countries.
- DDT is no more dangerous than other pesticides, but is more persistent. (Only persistent pesticides are effective in tropical countries.) It is also relatively cheap. It costs \$25 m to bring a new pesticide onto the market, not counting the cost of manufacturing plant. The time needed varies from 7 to 10 years.
- All pesticides are dangerous if they are badly used, that is, in an inappropriate fashion and in excessive quantities. Special attention is therefore given to the directions for use.
- It is difficult to organize occupational training, given the impossibility of compiling detailed information on pesticide production because there are

a great many small producers, particularly in developing countries, who remain outside all forms of control.

- A leaflet with instructions printed in English and Spanish costs £40,000. If they are to develop their information facilities, the producers will need the help of local governments and/or the international community, and hence the European Community.
- The producers would be willing to accept a code of conduct, provided that steps were taken to ensure that it was universally respected.
- The producers are aware of the problem, but insist that each side must play its part in reaching a solution, as shown by this extract from the GIFAP Bulletin, Vol. 8, No. 8, September 1982:

'We must not impose any system of food production in the Third World countries which does not at least better current production levels. If pesticides are vital to achieve these improvements, and they are, and if there are problems with the use of pesticides, and there are, then it is the problems we must tackle. How? By persuading governments of the Third World to recognize their responsibilities for ensuring the safe use of pesticides. By providing them with information about pesticides used in their countries. By encouraging them directly and through international aid programmes to recognize that education and training of pesticide users is of absolute priority in ensuring safe use of pesticides.

All this is happening at the present time. What is needed is encouragement to make progress more quickly. The agrochemical industry will do what it can.'

3. INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

3.1 The complexity of the problems surrounding the use of pesticides in agriculture and the international implications of such use has been recognized since 1959, when a group of FAO experts, together with experts from WHO, began to study:

- The producers are willing to take further measures to improve the safety of their products.
- The FAO recommends integrated pest control as the best method of controlling parasites which destroy crops, while at the same time furthering the common good and protecting nature.

(b) the particular situation in developing countries

- The trade in pesticides in developing countries is characterized by an acute lack of organization. Many countries have adopted registration systems, but do not have control procedures. The weak point lies in the large number of transactions to which pesticides are subject - they are sold and resold many times. Such transactions go unrecorded and are sometimes even conducted between two different countries.
- Fraud is another problem. Pesticides are often sold wholesale and diluted by local chemists. They are sometimes ineffective and have few active ingredients. Their efficacy very often declines, as in the case of organophosphorus compounds.
- The methods in use in industrialized countries cannot be transferred wholesale to the Third World since even the atmospheric conditions suffice to change the nature of the problem. Indeed, in certain climates, masks and rubber protective garments cannot be worn when pesticides are being applied, because they would cause other illnesses. It is better to have cotton clothing, which should be washed daily wherever possible.

(c) labelling

- Products must be labelled in the language of the country where they are to be used.
- The directions for use should, whenever possible, be accompanied by clear and detailed diagrams.

4. Special attention should be paid to pesticides that are banned from use in the country of origin.

(Geneva, 18-22 January 1982)

3.5 The World Health Organization estimated in 1972 that there were 500,000 cases of pesticide poisoning every year, including 9,200 fatalities. Approximately 50% of the cases of poisoning and almost three quarters of the deaths occur in Third World countries, although these countries account for only 15% of world pesticide consumption. If the incidence of poisoning since 1972 has increased in proportion with pesticide consumption (namely by 5% per year), then one can calculate that 400,000 people in the Third World will be poisoned this year and around 10,000 will die. It is, however, probable that these figures come nowhere near to conveying the dimensions of the problem. It would in fact also be necessary to consider the long-term effects on health, and anyone who is poor, undernourished and without a settled home is certainly more vulnerable in this respect.

3.6 The Council of Europe publishes documents from time to time, giving guidelines for the conduct of studies on pesticides, their uses and restrictions.

3.7 The following points have emerged in consultations with the above-mentioned international organizations:

(a) general situation

- The problem of the noxiousness of pesticides does not stem from the use that is made of them, but rather from their abuse and misuse.
- It is necessary to keep in mind the reasons which led to the banning of a product. Not many pesticides are totally banned, but a large number are forbidden in particular circumstances and are only permitted in the absence of alternatives.
- It is in the interest of the producers that their products are used correctly, but they cannot take positive action without government assistance.
- It is easy to condemn when one forgets the benefits which can be derived from pesticides. The advantages must be weighed against the disadvantages.

- suggest tolerances (now called maximum concentration limits) for agrochemical residues contained in foodstuffs;
- recommend reliable methods of chemical analysis which government authorities can then use in their own control procedures.

The information and recommendations are constantly updated in the light of the most recent findings, and are published and distributed all over the world.

3.4 The UN General Assembly¹ and the Council of Administration of the United Nations Environment Programme² have recently launched an urgent appeal for the regulation and limitation of exports of potentially dangerous chemical products. In particular, the IRPTC - International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals of the United Nations Environment Programme - has published the following recommendations:

1. It is recommended that good application practice should imply that pesticides will be increasingly used in a discriminate way, e.g. by adopting the concept of integrated pest management. The efforts of both the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization in this field as well as in relation to training and the dissemination of adequate information are recognized and should be strengthened.
2. There are no safe pesticides, only safe methods of application. Persistence per se has been found from experience to pose ecological problems: the environmental disadvantages of persistent pesticides have to be balanced carefully against the benefits to be obtained from their use.
3. Whenever possible, formulations should be avoided that contain, apart from the active ingredient, other highly toxic or persistent materials.

¹ UN Resolution No. 34/173 of 17.12.1979

² UNEP Resolution No. 8/8 of 29.4.1980

- the risks to the consumer arising from agrochemical residues contained in foodstuffs intended for human and animal consumption;
- the criteria for establishing tolerance limits for pesticides;
- the possibility of compiling an international register of the toxicological data and information on residues necessary to ensure the correct use of agrochemicals.

3.2 More specifically, the FAO commission on the use of agrochemicals in agriculture is divided into various working groups, which include:

- the FAO Panel of Experts on Pesticide Specifications, Registration Requirements and Application Standards, which has the task of drawing up specifications for the pesticides on the market, and hence of defining the relative chemical and physical properties and above all the maximum concentrations of impurities which constitute a toxicological danger. The panel studies all the technical and scientific documentation published by the companies which developed the product; it also receives technical and experimental back-up from the best qualified national and international organizations, such as the WHO Committee on specifications for agrochemicals used for civil purposes (Public Health) and CIPAC (Collaborative International Pesticide Analytical Council).

The FAO publishes the results of this work in pamphlets with worldwide distribution which give information and instructions on the correct use of the agrochemicals recommended by the organization.

3.3 The FAO Panel of Experts on pesticide Residues and the Environment, which works in close collaboration with the equivalent group of experts in WHO. In fact, the experts from the two groups hold joint meetings every year, in which they examine the results of the toxicological research and the studies of residues conducted by the companies which intend to develop the product. They obtain their information either from the various national scientific organizations or from documentation. The purpose of this working group is to:

- determine the acceptable daily intake (ADI) of individual agrochemicals on the basis of the available toxicological evidence;

(d) occupational training

Priority should be given to the training of instructors, so that instruction can be passed on more easily to all farmers:

- The training courses should, however, cater for many types of instructors - from doctors to traders.
- The various media (radio, tv) should be used in order to obtain a wider audience for the courses.
- The instructions should be very clear and indicate both the dangers deriving from the treatments and the directions for use, the quantities to be used and the period between the application of the pesticide and the harvesting of the crop.

(e) containers

One cannot assume that the packaging and containers for pesticides will be destroyed. In developing countries, metal drums, or indeed cardboard boxes and plastic bins are valuable items, highly sought after for further uses. It is better to publish information on how the containers can be properly cleaned, rather than expect them to be destroyed.

(f) residues

The nature and quantity of residues are determined by the dosage, the climate, crop yield and the length of time between the application and the harvest.

- Imports from developing countries are not dangerous on account of pesticide residues, and any risks which do arise are of an exceptional, rather than regular, character. In fact, no serious problems in this connection have emerged up to the present time. On the other hand, no information is available on pesticide residues contained in foodstuffs consumed in developing countries. The FAO is currently drawing up an ad hoc regulation.

- Developing countries are displaying a growing interest in the work of the FAO/WHO Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR). It has been stressed that information would be extremely useful on the equipment available in industrialized countries for analysing pesticides, and for toxicological tests.

(g) code_of_conduct

- During a recent meeting of the FAO at its Rome headquarters (11-15 October 1982), the principles were agreed for a code of conduct governing the international trade in pesticides, with the aim of clarifying the relations between producers, distributors, suppliers of information, users, farmers, gardeners, as well as amateurs and ecologists.
- WHO believes that the code of conduct should contain indications for governments on sales restrictions, but should also cover the advertising of the product, information on its use, checks at sales points, guidelines for the training of workers.
- In the opinion of OXFAM, a code of conduct should not be regarded as a substitute for legislation, but rather as a base on which to construct legislation.