

Priorities of the European Plant Protection Industry until 2030

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Date: 06.11.2020 *Issue:* 11/2020



Manufacturers of synthetic and biological plant protection products join forces to make clear commitments in support of the EU Green Deal

On 7 September 2020, the European Crop Protection Association (ECPA) organized a round table in Brussels to present the industry's commitments until 2030 in support of the Green Deal, including investments of over EUR 14 billion in new technologies and more sustainable mechanisms.

In addition to these investments, ECPA also plans to increase waste collection and raise the level of training among farmers in Europe as part of the measures in response to the EU "Farm to Fork" and Biodiversity

strategies.

Geraldine Kutas, Director General of the European Crop Protection Association, stated: „With its ambitious European Green Deal, the European Commission has given a flying start to the EU’s drive towards a more sustainable, climate-neutral future. We have serious intentions to contribute to the policy initiatives of the Green Deal. That is why our companies have united in support of the idea of setting voluntary, sector-specific, measurable targets for ourselves.“

The six commitments adopted by ECPA will guide the sector over the next decade in key areas of agricultural innovative technologies, the circular economy and better protection of people and the environment:

- **Innovation & Investment:** By supporting innovation and the deployment of digital and precision tools, as well as biopesticides, we support the European Commission’s ambition for **environmental restoration**. By 2030 we will invest EUR 10 billion in innovation in precision agriculture and digital technologies and EUR 4 billion in innovation in biological plant protection products. All investments to which the industry is committed will only be beneficial if there is an appropriate regulatory framework allowing innovation to reach European farmers.
- **Circular economy:** By increasing the collection rate of empty plastic packaging from plant protection products to 75% and establishing a collection system in those EU Member States that currently do not have one by 2025, we will contribute to the EU’s circular economy objective, which is aimed at minimizing waste and resources used and at reducing the impact of plastic packaging on the environment.
- **Protection of people and the environment:** By training farmers in the implementation of integrated pest management, water protection and the importance of personal protective equipment (PPE), our industry aims to further minimize exposure and reduce the risks from the use of plant protection products, while contributing to the overall objectives of the Sustainable Use Directive and the EU “Farm to Fork” strategy, aimed at producing sufficient food in a sustainable manner.

Geraldine Kutas added: „We all agree on the direction we are taking; what is important now is that these measured steps reach the final goal. The implementation of these commitments will be a challenge for our companies. However, we are committed to delivering on what we have set out, and we call on the European Commission to support sustainable agriculture with an appropriate regulatory framework allowing innovations to reach farmers.“

„This is only the beginning; we will monitor the progress of our industry over the decade and will openly share how far we have come,“ she concluded.

In Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Crop Protection Industry Association (BCPIA), as a member of ECPA, represents the crop protection industry at national level in support of sustainable and environmentally friendly agriculture and helps to develop innovative plant protection products and technologies and their implementation in Bulgaria.

The genuine commitment of BCPIA to the implementation of the outlined industry objectives for the next decade is, in practice, already a fact.

BCPIA created the first truly operational system in Bulgaria for the collection of empty plastic packaging from plant protection products, with the aim of reducing the risks associated with the use of plant protection products (PPP) – easily accessible to farmers, in compliance with the legal standards for protecting human health and the environment. The implementation of this project, with the support of ECPA and CropLife International, has ranked our country among the leading countries in Europe in terms of best performance on a key environmental indicator – the collection and recycling of packaging from plant protection products in agriculture.

In addition to the system for collection and management of packaging from plant protection products, the activities of BCPIA contribute to enhancing the knowledge and competence level of all stakeholders involved in ensuring environmental and health requirements and rules when using plant protection products. We organize events and training sessions jointly with the competent authorities, and we develop materials, guidelines and brochures to disseminate the key messages on the correct and safe application of plant protection products and the implementation of good practices.

The initiatives undertaken by BCPIA are in full compliance with the Directive on the safe and sustainable use of plant protection products, meet the objectives of the new EC Green Deal and are a natural extension of the activities of the BCPIA member companies, whose duty and priority are the protection of human health and the preservation of the environment.