



Bruxelles, 30 September 2021

1 Million EU citizens call for the end of the pesticides era

While signatures are still flowing in on the last day to support the [Save Bees and Farmers](https://www.savebeesandfarmers.eu)¹ European Citizens' Initiative (ECI), their supporters feel they are close to a historic success. If this ECI is validated by the European Commission, both the European Commission and the European Parliament will have to reply to citizens' demands for a synthetic pesticide-free and bee-friendly agriculture.

The organisations behind this ECI are anxious to find out the outcome of a 2-year long campaign that led to collecting over 1 million signatures across the EU. The *Save Bees and Farmers* ECI asks for 1) a reduction of 80% in the use of synthetic pesticides by 2030 and 100% by 2035 in the EU, 2) measures to restore biodiversity on agricultural land and 3) massive support to farmers to transition towards agroecology.

An ECI is accepted by the European Commission if it reaches over 1 million validated signatures, while experience shows that the invalidity rate is 10-15%. The organisers consider the ECI will be successful if it reaches a minimum of 1.15 million signatures, taking into account the thousands of paper signatures that still need to be counted and included in the final calculation.

Sonia Conchon, from the *Save Bees and Farmers* office says: *"The Covid situation has made this campaign very difficult due to the lack of visibility as there were no public events during most of the campaign. Reaching the million finishing line therefore truly reflects the determination of citizens, for this second anti-pesticides ECI"*.

Dr. Helmut Burtscher-Schaden, campaigner at Global2000 and representative of the ECI citizens committee said: *"This ECI sends a clear message to the EU: European citizens support the pesticide reduction goal of the European Green Deal but demand more than the proposed 50% reduction, which scientists say would not prevent the collapse of biodiversity. Synthetic pesticide-free agriculture in 15 years must be the goal"*.

Dr. Burtscher-Schaden adds: *"In 2017, NGOs had successfully collected over 1.3 million signatures over 6 months in the frame of the STOP Glyphosate ECI, bringing an end to the secrecy surrounding industry studies across the EU. Having a second successful anti-pesticides ECI is extremely meaningful, and we expect from the European Commission to upgrade their plans in order to transition towards nature-friendly farming"*.

¹ www.savebeesandfarmers.eu

Up to now, only 6 of the 108 launched ECIs have been successfully validated by the European Commission (<6%). Successful ECIs impose for the European Commission to analyse and answer citizens' demands while the European Parliament will receive the 7 members of the Citizens Committee in a hearing and have the possibility to write and vote on a resolution based on the citizens' demands.

Press contact: Helmut Burtscher-Schaden, helmut@global2000.at, +43 699 142 000 34