



PRESS RELEASE: Save Bees and Farmers European Citizens' Initiative: Will the citizens win or not?

The EU Pollinator Week starting today is a perfect occasion to garner more support for the 'Save Bees and Farmers' European Citizens' Initiative that has four more days to reach its target of 1 million signatures.

The timely and ambitious European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) 'Save Bees and Farmers' is going strong with over 954 000 signatures so far. However, for the initiative to be successful more than 70,000 signatures are still required with only four days to go.

An ECI is a European tool of participatory democracy: citizens need to gather 1 million validated signatures across the EU. A successful ECI means the European Commission and the European Parliament will work on how to address the demands of the civil society. Since ECIs are allowed in the EU in 2012, many ECIs were launched but very few have succeeded.

The Save Bees and Farmers ECI asks for 1. A phasing out of synthetic pesticides over 15 years 2. Restoration of biodiversity on agricultural land and 3. Massive support to farmers in their transition towards agroecology.

The outcome of the initiative remaining ambiguous, as a 10-20% invalidity rate needs to be taken into account and to be on the safe side, the supporters of this ECI need to collect 1.1-1.2 million signatures.

For 2 yearsⁱ, over 200 organisations are supporting this ECI and it has garnered broad support from all corners including support from the Pope, politicians, and artists. With our biodiversity under attack from the pesticides industry and its allies, there has never been a more prudent time for citizens to come together and raise their voices.

The success of this ECI is crucial because of its infinite potential in paving a transformation in our agriculture. A similar citizen's initiative – Stop Glyphosate – led to the European Commission deciding to finally give access to toxicology studies from the pesticides industry, which was an enormous success!

Dr. Martin Dermine, Health and Environment Policy Officer at PAN Europe and a co-initiator of this ECI says, "*The overwhelming support for the ECI only shows how concerned citizens are about our broken agricultural system. The current model of farming has led to a huge deterioration of nature with many birds and bees disappearing and pesticides contaminating citizens' food and homes. We need important changes backed by strong political will today more than ever. The transition to pesticide-free agroecological practices cannot wait.*"

The over 200 organisations alliance has until 30 September to collect the needed signatures. Over 954 000 signatures have been collected up to now.

For any questions, contact Dr. Martin Dermine, martin@pan-europe.info, +32 486 32 99 92

ⁱ <https://www.savebeesandfarmers.eu/eng>