

27 May 2026

His Excellency the President of the Republic of Cyprus
Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment
Honourable Director General of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment
Honourable Director of the Department of Agriculture

Your Excellency Mr. President,
Honourable Madam Minister,
Honourable Director General,
Honourable Director,

Subject: **Concerns regarding the “Food and Feed Safety Simplification Omnibus” proposal, commonly referred to as the “Pesticide Omnibus”**

Following Cyprus’ successful Presidency during this semester, from which our country emerges strengthened and with enhanced standing, we are concerned by reports indicating that Cyprus supports the controversial measures being promoted at European level to simplify pesticide authorisation procedures.

As you are aware, this initiative, known as the Food and Feed Safety Simplification Omnibus, raises serious concerns, as it introduces the possibility of unlimited approval periods for most pesticide active substances. Consequently, it weakens regular scientific reassessment and reduces the level of protection afforded to human health and the environment. This is particularly concerning in Cyprus, where, together with Bulgaria, the highest number of pesticide-use violations recorded by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has been reported. Effective oversight therefore remains of critical importance.

During this year’s Pesticides Conference (February 2026), organised by the Cyprus International Institute for Environmental and Public Health (CII) of the School of Health Sciences at the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT), in cooperation with Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe, the following serious risks and concerns were highlighted:

- Intensive pesticide use in Cypriot agriculture continues, while experts and scientists warn of risks associated with cancer, neurological disorders, and adverse impacts on children's development.
- Although the European Union aims to reduce pesticide use, Cyprus continues to face shortcomings in enforcement, limited implementation of sustainable agricultural practices, and insufficient monitoring of pesticide use.
- Recommendations have been made for stricter controls by supermarkets, the establishment of a national pesticide registry, and improved farmer training; however, progress remains slow and lacks a comprehensive national strategy.

We therefore, particularly concerned by the proposals currently under discussion in the Council, which would allow unlimited approval periods for the majority of pesticide active substances. Even more concerning is the information suggesting that Cyprus appears willing to accept these simplifications in order to facilitate progress on the “Omnibus” file during our Presidency.

On the contrary, we urge Cyprus to oppose any Council position supporting unlimited approvals, as this would significantly weaken the European Union's precautionary framework and reduce incentives for regular scientific reassessment in light of new evidence.

The current assessment of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) itself indicates that there is no evidence that unlimited approvals would effectively resolve the existing delays in pesticide assessments. At the same time, such measures would jeopardise important safeguards for human health and the environment. Instead, EFSA identifies as more effective solutions the improvement of the quality of dossiers submitted by industry and the strengthening of its scientific capacity through additional funding. As EFSA has stated, an additional €15 million for the recruitment of scientific staff would enable the rapid assessment of the accumulated dossiers (see the relevant document: <https://www.pan-europe.info/sites/pan-europe.info/files/public/resources/press-releases/re-omnibus-x-efsa-needs.pdf>).

We therefore call on the Cyprus Presidency to support reforms that address administrative delays without lowering the European Union's existing level of protection or undermining the precautionary principle.

A second issue that we consider equally important in this context is that substances not permitted within the European Union continue to be exported to third countries and subsequently re-enter Europe through imported food products. In practice, this creates a double standard regarding what ends up on our plates, undermining consumer protection and creating unfair competition for European producers.

Having taken courageous and leading positions on various pan-European issues, we respectfully ask you, Mr. President and Madam Minister, to set an example on this matter, which affects all European citizens and Cypriots in particular.

Specifically, we urge Cyprus not to support any Council position that introduces unlimited approval periods for pesticides under the Food and Feed Safety Simplification Omnibus proposal. You have already demonstrated that the size of our country is not a determining factor in the influence Cyprus can exert. On the contrary, our small size is an additional reason why we should be particularly cautious, as other Member States, such as the Netherlands, already are. We urge you to make use of Cyprus's role and the respect it enjoys, in order to promote policies based on the precautionary principle and to ensure a high level of protection for public health, farmers, and the environment.

Yours sincerely,

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