



Council of the European Union  
General Secretariat

**Brussels, 26 August 2020**

**WK 8588/2020 ADD 6**

**LIMITE**

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**CONTRIBUTION**

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Working Party on Agricultural Questions (Pesticides/Plant Protection Products)
Subject:	Report on Directive 2009/128/EC - PT comments

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Delegations will find in Annex comments from Portugal on the Report on Directive 2009/128/EC.

With the informal conference on July the 22<sup>nd</sup> the REFIT reports on the evaluation of Regulation (EC) n. 1107/2009 and Regulation (EC) n. 396/2005 and on the experience gained by MS on the implementation of their National Action Plans and progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Use Directive 2009/128 were presented by the Commission. As a follow-up of the Council Working party “Agricultural Questions (Pesticides)” the DE PRES has invited MS to comment on these reports by the 21<sup>st</sup> August and has asked MS to consider the questions presented below. The Portuguese comments are the following:

### **General comments**

The Portuguese authorities welcome the Commission REFIT reports and acknowledge the significant effort and work involved in the whole processes. PT also shares most of the views and findings therein and acknowledges that overall the REFIT programme was able to identify a number of deficiencies and hurdles in the implementation of the legal framework under scrutiny notwithstanding the significant progress made so far towards the objectives of achieving high levels of protection of human and animal health and the environment, improving the EU internal market and trade and also towards an increase in the sustainable use of pesticides.

PT welcomes the actions already planned by the Commission and also recognises the relevance of initiatives and legal instruments already in place or to be produced towards increasing transparency and better implementation and alignment of the legislation. It is also particularly noteworthy the intention of initiating training initiatives under the BTSF training program towards improving MS expertise for risk assessment of micro-organisms and other biopesticides, bio and environmental monitoring of pesticides and fostering research and additional funding for the development of alternative methods and technologies in order to effectively promote a more sustainable crop protection and production. This is particularly critical given the further need to improve the implementation of the sustainable use Directive and overall the F2F strategy.

### **Specific comments**

In order to address the following questions presented for consideration the Portuguese comments are as follow:

#### **II. REPORT ON DIRECTIVE 2009/128/EC**

##### **a) How can the implementation of the integrated pest management be improved?**

Improvement of IPM implementation in MS is strongly dependent on agronomic, agricultural and phytosanitary conditions including pest pressure and also plant health agreements related to fruits and vegetable international markets. The expertise of professional users and or access to proper advice as well as the availability of appropriate tools for pest and disease monitoring, and for decision making are also cornerstone to this process, however are strongly dependent on public or private applied agriculture research and or advisory systems. Incorporating alternative methods and technologies requires adaptation, adequate investment and demonstration that changing practices is still cost effective and does not represent an increased economic burden for farmers. The role of

demonstration farms and advisory systems in this process is particularly important. On this note there is a need to further discuss the appropriate legal frame of precision agriculture technologies such as the use of drones in the application of plant protection products and work towards demonstrating that the use of low flying drones is an effective mean of reducing exposure and environmental risks in comparison to other aircrafts.

The importance of an EU wide harmonised legal framework for the use of biological control methods in crop protection is also seen as an important step forward towards full implementation of IPM tools and merits therefor further discussion at EU level.

It would also be appropriate to promote the discussion on the establishment of concrete legal measures under the frame of the SUD towards IPM enforcement by member States.

It is further seen as an opportunity in the framework of the future Common Agricultural Policy that IPM elements of the SUD are considered as statutory management requirements and that relevant IPM indicators are progressively included as part of the common conditions that farmers should comply to benefit from direct payments under the various income support schemes.