EU 'Green Deal' softens hard-line proposals for extensive restrictions on pesticides as food security concerns escalate

EU countries are pushing back against the European Commission's plans to radically slash the use of pesticides in the bloc, arguing now is not the time to put food production in jeopardy.

EU ambassadors agreed on [November 16] to ask the Commission for additional analysis on its [proposal](#) to halve the use of pesticides in the bloc by 2030, four diplomats told POLITICO. A last-minute climbdown from the Commission, in which it said it would water down significant parts of the bill, failed to sway the diplomats. The move will likely set the proposal back by months, or could even kill it if the bill isn't finalized by the end of the Commission's mandate in 2024.

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The Commission shared a paper, [obtained by POLITICO](#), which suggested it is open to climbing down on on key areas of its bill after months of refusing to [budge](#). In a stark acknowledgement of the opposition the bill faces, the EU's executive said: "The Commission's proposal is seen as too ambitious and affecting a disproportionately high area of Member States' territory."

The Commission said it could water down its proposed ban on all pesticide use in so-called [sensitive areas,](#) a part of its original proposal that has been fiercely contested by agriculture ministries which say it will curtail food production.

Instead it said it could move away from a "total ban" on all pesticides in favor of prioritizing the use of low-risk ones, while still allowing "most pesticides" to be used in ecologically sensitive areas and slimming down the total area of those protected zones to the "most relevant areas" only.

…

But the diplomats were not swayed. "That was a last minute effort, trying to salvage the whole thing, they utterly failed," one diplomat said.

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