



Joint Press Release



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SOS Bedroom: dozens of endocrine disrupting, neurotoxic and carcinogenic pesticides found in Flemish bedrooms

Every year, concerned citizens reach out to Velt (Flemish environmental NGO) because they are exposed to pesticide sprays. This is the reason Velt carried out the 'SOS Bedroom' citizens survey. "The goal was to see if we find pesticides in our bedrooms. And if so, in what quantity", explains Geert Gommers, pesticide expert at Velt. [The results](#) were published today.

112 bedrooms investigated

As many as 2847 families applied to participate in the study. From these, 112 locations were selected to analyse bedroom dust. "The results are staggering. In total, we found 137 different pesticides. An average of 21 per bedroom. In one bedroom we even found 52 pesticides." says Gommers.

Reprotoxics and carcinogens in our bed?

Remarkably, all the bedrooms studied contained substances that are **endocrine disruptors**. Ninety nine percent of the bedrooms contain one or more pesticides that have a negative impact on our reproduction. 97 percent of bedrooms contained neurotoxic pesticides. Carcinogenic pesticides were found in 38 percent of bedrooms. "You do not expect to find such substances in a bedroom. Certainly not because we spend quite a bit of time in our bedrooms, and consider them clean places. Moreover, more and more research is showing links between pesticides and neurodegenerative diseases, such as Parkinson's Disease. That worries us", Gommers explains.

Agriculture

Pesticides enter with the dust in our bedroom in a variety of ways. "We distinguish three major categories: through use by a neighbouring farmer, through the treatment of pets against parasites (fleas, ticks) and through all kinds of uses (mosquito plugs, ant bait boxes) and applications (preservatives in clothing, bedding and other items) indoors." In Velt's research, it can be concluded that **70 percent of found pesticide residues are attributable to use by a nearby farmer**.

Public wants to play it safe

These findings are in line with previous studies (see hereafter). The urgent need to reduce pesticides is loudly called for by citizens. During multiple consultations (e.g. the Conference for the Future of Europe) and Eurobarometers, as well as through two [European Citizens' initiatives](#), Europeans expressed their will to ambitiously reduce pesticides. An [IPSOS Poll of 2023](#), across 6 EU member states, showed a high agreement on the need for protective pesticide legislation, uptake of alternatives to pesticides and ending financial support to harmful agricultural practices. The [European citizens' initiative \(ECI\)](#) is the main way for citizens to ask for new and better policies regarding major issues affecting them. However, the Save Bees and Farmers (2023) ECI, which demands ambitious reductions of pesticide use, is still waiting for concrete answers and actions from EU policy makers.

"The presence of carcinogenic, neurotoxic, endocrine disrupting and fertility-harming pesticides in bedrooms, and in and around houses in general, should keep policy-makers up at night. Children are shown to be particularly vulnerable. Their organs and nervous systems are still developing, both pre-birth and after-birth.

They play on the floor, and consume more food relative to their body weight.”, says Kristine De Schamphelaere, Policy Officer Agriculture at PAN Europe.

Policy action needed

PAN Europe demands that EU and national policy makers urgently ensure:

- The full implementation of the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive 2009/128/EC (SUD) to protect citizens and the environment from pesticides.
- Effective implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM). IPM, mandatory through the SUD since 2014 but very poorly implemented, is essential to ambitiously reduce pesticide dependency.
- Particularly toxic pesticides, including candidates for substitution and other carcinogenic, mutagenic, reprotoxic, endocrine disrupting, neurotoxic and PFAS pesticides, must be banned immediately.

Information on results from similar past studies

These results by Velt confirm other data of pesticide residues in indoor dust. [A study from 2021](#), initiated by the European Citizens Initiative (ECI) *Save Bees and Farmers*, found significant numbers of pesticide residues in bedroom dust in rural areas in 21 member states. 30 pesticides substances were tested. In all samples pesticide residues were found, with an average of 8 and a maximum of 23 different pesticide residues in the Belgian sample. Pesticides suspected of causing cancer in humans, according to EU authorities, were detected in every fourth sample. Suspected endocrine disruptors or substances toxic to reproduction were commonly found.

Research carried out in the framework of the [Horizon 2020 Sprint project](#) ([Silva et al., 2023](#), [Navarro et al., 2023](#)) also found high numbers of pesticide residues in indoor dust of farmhouses. 115 indoor dust samples were analysed across 10 European countries. In total, 197 different pesticide residues were found. All samples contained mixtures of pesticides, with a maximum and minimum of respectively 121 and 25 residues in individual samples. 66% of the residues found have negative health impacts, and 43% are linked to highly severe effects, such as endocrine disruption or carcinogenicity.

More information:

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Pesticide Action Network (PAN Europe) is a network of NGOs working to reduce the use of hazardous pesticides and have them replaced with ecologically sound alternatives. We work to eliminate dependency on chemical pesticides and to support safe sustainable pest control methods. Our network brings together over 45 consumer, public health and environmental organisations and women's groups from across Europe.

