

FACTUAL SUMMARY REPORT

March 2018

Public Consultation on the REFIT evaluation of the EU legislation on plant protection products and pesticide residues

Introduction

The public consultation opened on 13 November 2017 and closed on 12 February 2018. The overall number of responses submitted was 9879. This number includes 32 duplicates that were removed, resulting in **9847 responses** that will be subject to analysis.

The open public consultation aimed to collect the views of citizens and individuals on plant protection products and pesticides residues in the EU. In particular, it sought to gather information on how well-informed citizens feel about pesticides and their residues and the EU decision-making. The survey focussed particularly on the perceptions of the public in relation to how pesticides and their residues are regulated. The results of the consultation are important to identify the impacts of the existing rules and will be used to assess to which extent the existing rules are fit for purpose.

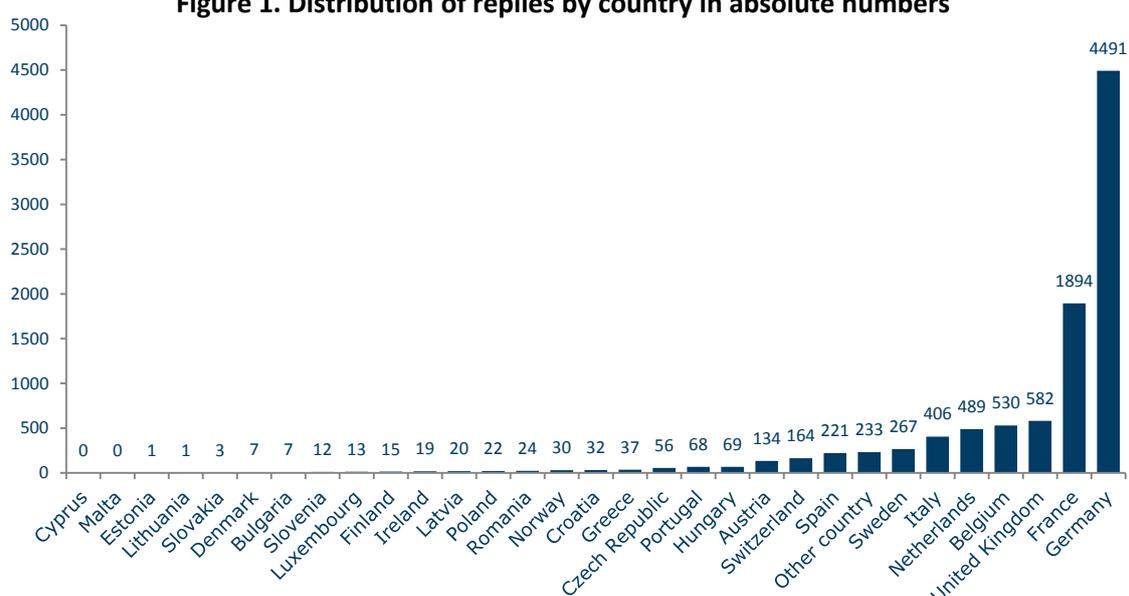
The survey was available online via EU survey in 23 official languages of the EU. It could be accessed via the European Commissions' public consultation website. Contributions received by post were encoded into the EU survey.

The factual summary report provides an overview of the number of responses, some characteristics of the respondents as well as some of their views and concerns.

Who contributed?

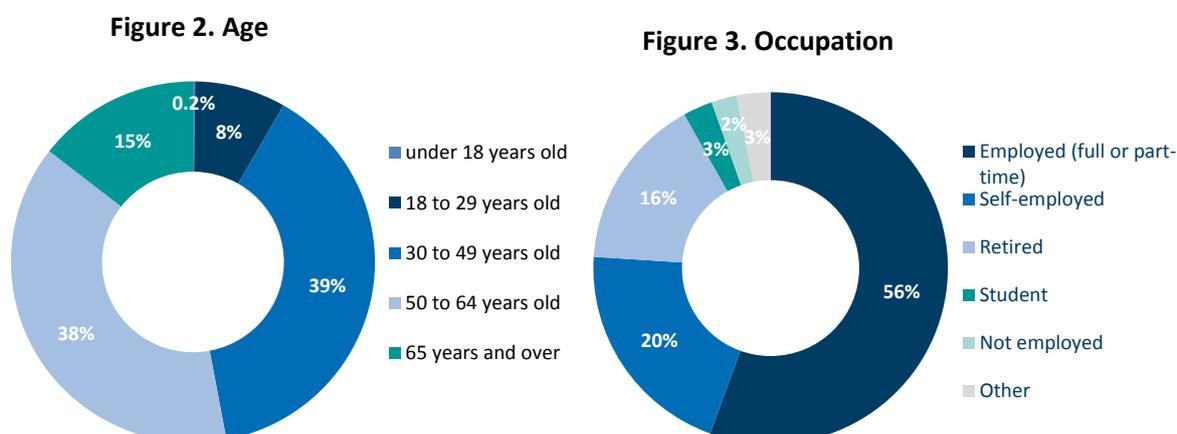
The majority of replies were submitted by individuals in Germany and France, see figure 1. Of all the replies, 4.3% are from respondents in non-EU countries. 55% of the respondents consider that they are living in rural areas, compared with 45% living in urban areas.

Figure 1. Distribution of replies by country in absolute numbers



This document should be regarded solely as a summary of the contributions made by citizens and individuals in the open public consultation on the REFIT evaluation of the EU legislation on plant protection products and pesticide residues. It cannot in any circumstances be regarded as the official position of the Commission or its services.

Most of the contributions received came from individuals aged between 30 to 64 years, see figure 2. A majority of respondents are working, either as employed or self-employed. 16% of respondents are retired and 3% are students, see figure 3.



Whom are they representing?

The public consultation collected views from individual citizens only. A targeted stakeholder survey was held for those representing companies, associations and organisations. In the public consultation, the respondents were asked if the rules on pesticides are relevant to them in their professional work and, if so, what they work with.

56% of the respondents indicated that the rules on pesticides are relevant to their business or professional work. Table 1 lists the type of employment.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by type of employment

Are you...	Total	% of Total
Involved in farming	2,069	21.01%
Working for a business/ private company in the pesticides industry	2,082	21.14%
Working for a business/ private company in the food and feed industry	364	3.70%
Working for a non-governmental organisation	367	3.73%
Other	4,386	44.54%
Not applicable (N/A)	579	5.88%
Grand Total	9,847	100.00%

What aspects are addressed?

The questionnaire was structured into five parts. The first section concerned information about the respondents such as age, country of residency, occupation, etc. The second section asked general questions about pesticides and their use. For instance, if the respondents feel safe consuming food that has been grown or treated with pesticides. Respondents were also asked if they use pesticide themselves and whether they feel informed about the types of pesticides available and how to use them.

This document should be regarded solely as a summary of the contributions made by citizens and individuals in the open public consultation on the REFIT evaluation of the EU legislation on plant protection products and pesticide residues. It cannot in any circumstances be regarded as the official position of the Commission or its services.

The third section asked questions regarding how the use of pesticides is regulated in the EU. Questions were related to human health, the environment and animal welfare. One question asked about the perception how the use of pesticide has developed over the last ten years. The section also contained questions related to the competitiveness of farmers in the EU.

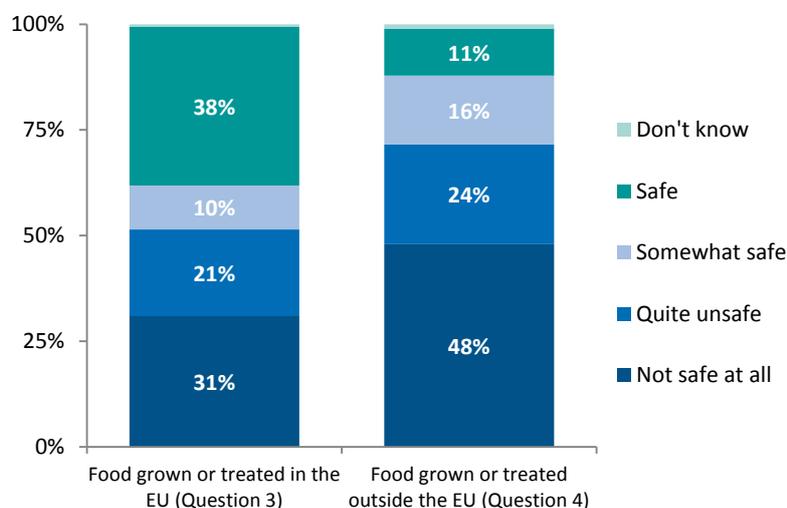
The fourth section asked questions related to pesticide residues. For instance, if respondents are aware that pesticide residue levels are set at levels that are harmonised across the EU. Respondents were also asked about their perception what effect this harmonisation have had on competitiveness and free movement of food and feed in the EU.

The last section explored the public perception of decision-making in the EU. For instance, if respondents feel well informed about the decisions made in the EU, and how easy it is to access information on pesticides and their residues.

What are their views and concerns?

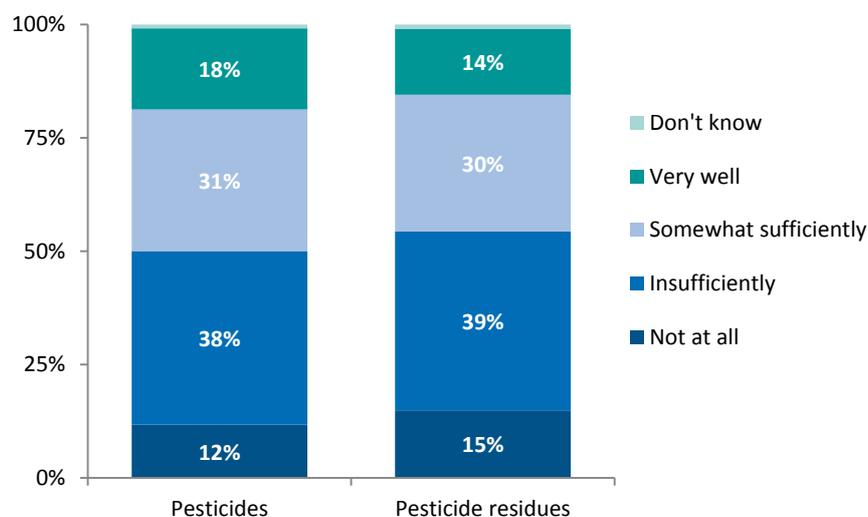
One of the concerns expressed in the public consultation is related to the levels of pesticide residues that are left on the food after it has been treated with pesticides. For example 52% of the respondents do not feel safe at all, or quite unsafe, consuming food that has been grown or treated with pesticides in the EU, see figure 4. When asked if they feel safe consuming food that has been grown or treated with pesticides outside the EU and then imported into the EU, 72% of the respondents do not feel safe at all, or quite unsafe.

Figure 4. Do you feel safe consuming food that has been grown or treated with pesticides?



Another concern expressed relates to communication and how well-informed respondents feel about pesticides and their residues and the decision-making process in the EU. When asked if they feel well-informed about the decisions made in the EU, 50% of all respondents indicate that they do not feel informed at all or insufficiently informed about decisions with regard to pesticides, see figure 5. 54% do not feel informed at all or insufficiently informed about decisions with regard to pesticide residues.

Figure 5. Do you feel well-informed about the decisions made in the EU with regard to pesticides and their residue levels?



The evaluation process

The Better Regulation agenda is one of the main priorities of the European Commission. Part of this is the Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme, known as REFIT, which includes both fitness checks and evaluations. REFIT is a rolling programme to keep the entire stock of EU legislation under review and ensure that it is 'fit for purpose'; that regulatory burdens are minimised and that all simplification options are identified and applied.

The public consultation is one part of the data collection for an external study commissioned by DG Health and Food Safety in order to collect evidence for supporting the REFIT evaluation of the EU legislation on plant protection products and pesticide residues. Stakeholders and the public are consulted extensively. In addition to the public consultation, other consultations were launched simultaneously in November 2017: one survey to Member State Competent Authorities, one SME survey aimed to collect the views of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, and one survey addressed to stakeholders such as business associations, non-governmental organisations, international organisations and third countries.

Over the next weeks, the contributions received will be analysed. A summary of the results of the consultation will be published.

The external study is expected to be finalised in the summer of 2018. The Commission will then draft a staff working document and the evaluation report is expected to be sent to the European Parliament and the European Council during the first half of 2019.