

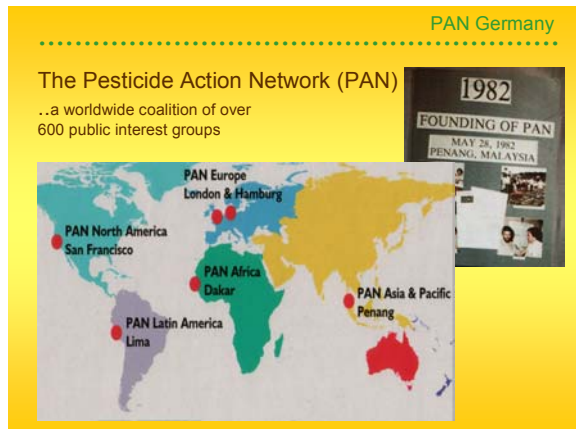
Introducing the background and reason for this seminar from the PAN point of view

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It's really a great pleasure to give you a warm welcome to this Seminar. We will have a day together filled with an interesting programme of presentations and discussions looking towards safer food for European consumers. Food safety is a common aim – and that also includes the support of sustainable, that means low input agriculture and environmental protection. It is great to see, that there is an excellent basis for discussion, as seven countries are represented here by non-governmental organizations, and also by official bodies and the science.

We will highlight the new European legislation on food residues and the results of food monitoring. We also want to take into account the specific situation in the new EU Member States and the accession countries.

Before starting with some short introductory remarks, please allow me to say some words of thank. I would like to thank the Center for Sustainable Alternatives (CEPTA) our cooperating partner for all the efforts made to provide an excellent organizational framework for today's seminar and the field trip tomorrow. In addition I would like to thank our donor who financially have made this seminar possible: the Sigrid Rausing Trust.



The Pesticide Action Network was founded 1982 in Malaysia as a global Network with five Regional Centres in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin and North America. PAN is an international coalition of over 600 citizens groups in more than 60 countries working to oppose the misuse of pesticides and to promote sustainable agriculture and ecologically sound pest management. PAN Germany was established in 1984 as part of this global network.

Before the Berlin wall came down, and even during the 1990s there were only sporadic contacts between PAN Europe and its facilitating organizations PAN Germany and PAN UK and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Central and Eastern European countries.

However, with the integration of Europe, it became obvious, that NGOs, representing the interests of the civil society, need a more balanced geographical representation. Therefore PAN Germany started a project on NGO capacity building in Central and Eastern European Countries in 2001 to engage NGOs in dialogue with governments, authorities and other stakeholders in the field of pesticides and plant protection issues. On the other hand we can learn from Central and Eastern European experiences, especially on the traditional farming systems, which we need to conserve within the EU.

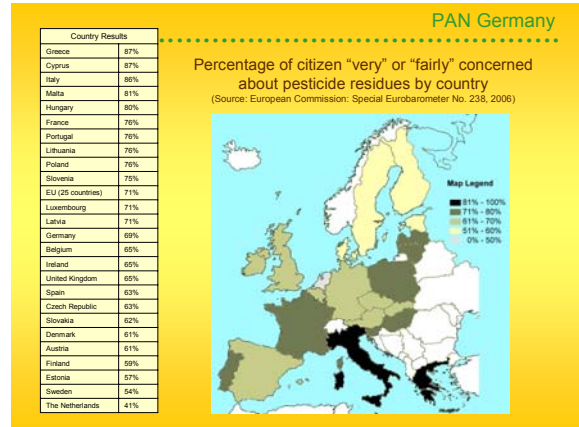
Pesticides are hazardous substances. People are exposed to pesticides via several ways: food, air, drinking water or dust. These facts about the fate of pesticides raise concern because there

has been a steady increase in our scientific understanding of the “behavior” and the toxicological properties of pesticides. We know that some pesticides can cause immunological or endocrine disrupting effects, neurotoxic disorders or cancer. And there is growing concern about health effects of exposure to very small quantities of pesticides and about specific sensitivities of vulnerable groups such as children.

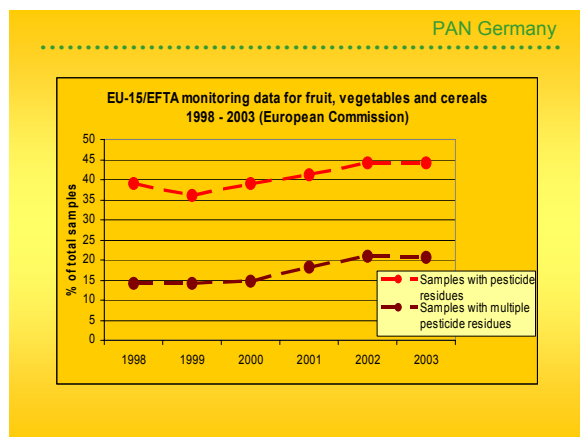
To protect us and our environment from these unwanted effects, a complex system to regulate pesticides has been developed. The first session of the seminar will highlight the European legal framework on pesticide residues in food.

Today we know that in spite of all the regulations, safe pesticide use is still not possible, even in rich and highly regulated countries. Consumers in Europe are concerned about pesticide residues in food.

A recent survey by the European Commission show that 71 per cent of the EU-25 citizens are worried about pesticide residues in fruit, vegetables and cereals and that people in some new Member States are more concerned than the EU average.



The European citizens have good reasons to be concerned. In the year 2003 over 40 per cent of the food of plant origin tested for pesticide residues contains at least one pesticide and 5.5 per cent of these samples exceed the legal limit. These results are presented in the latest report on pesticide residues in products of plant origin by the European Commission. The report also shows that there is a steady increase in the percentage of samples with detected residues and in the percentage of samples with multiple residues in the EU since 1999.



The next report from vom 2004 will includes data from the new EU Member States for the first time. The publication is to be expected for end of the year 2006. In order to get an idea of the residue situation in the new Central and Eastern European Countries we want to compile available national monitoring data from several new EU-Member States, the accession country Bulgaria and Germany in the second session of this seminar.

The third session shows different concrete NGO activities towards reduced pesticide residues and strengthened consumer protection. Such approaches are quite different and can focus on NGO participation in official processes and strategies as well as on NGO campaigns to promote private initiatives, e.g. by supermarket chains.

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Pesticide residues in food is an strong indicator for farmer’s dependency on pesticides in the conventional agriculture and also indicate environmental impacts. Bearing in mind that PAN’s aim is to avoid the use of pesticides as much as possible the intention of this seminar is to have a look at those initiatives aiming to improve data availability and to call for pesticide-free food.

