

LE/16/GT/25844
5 September 2016

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Dear Ms Verheecke

Nomination for the Democracy for Sale Awards

Thank you for your letter of 1st September 2016 to my colleague Euros Jones, and for the opportunity to comment.

Like your organisation, ECPA values the importance of democracy. This is why, as an organisation, we participate fully in the democratic process as we, you and any other interested stakeholder is fully entitled to. There are many definitions of democracy, but if you look at it as being an organisation or situation in which everyone is treated equally and has equal rights, then we have an obligation – and make no secret – of the fact that we represent the interests of our members, much in the same way as your respective organisations represent yours.

I'm not sure how you can make the leap from us legitimately representing our interests, engaging in dialogue and urging the EU & US to adopt a framework for pesticide regulation that is both predictable and robust – to accusing us of collusion. It's a jump that would be like us accusing NGOs of collusion if they receive funding from the European Commission and then go on to successfully achieve an outcome that's in their favour.

Constructive dialogue, and differing opinions, are a healthy part of democracy. We recognise there are concerns about pesticides and these are concerns that we are happy to address in an open and honest debate. In fact we are currently planning an event in November where we will encourage parties from all sides of the argument to take part – we hope we can count on your participation. There are different reasons for the existence of all of our organisations, and for us it's to ensure our members can continue to provide the tools farmers need to produce a safe, sustainable and affordable supply of food for the growing world population: I'm sure that is in all of our interests.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Taylor
Director of Public Affairs