

**Press Meeting statement, Dr Jobien Wind, Parkinson Vereniging (Dutch Parkinson's Association)**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for giving me the floor. I have Parkinson's Disease. Please forgive me if I stutter or hesitate: this is part of the deep impact of this disease on my life. And I cry very easily, I hope you will not see this today.

My name is Jobien Wind. I studied Biochemistry and worked as a scientist for 8 years. Most of my life I worked as a business coach. Since 2 years I work as advocacy and policy officer for the Dutch Parkinson's association.

As prof. Bas Bloem stated: " Parkinson's disease is the fastest-growing brain disease in the world, including Europe. Numerous European and other international scientific studies consistently show a link between the occurrence of Parkinson's disease and prior exposure to pesticides. This is not a mere association: exposure of rodents to pesticides causes degeneration of the nerve cells in the substantia nigra, which is the brain area involved in causing Parkinson's disease. Farmers show an higher percentage of PD prevalence. But also people living nearby sprayed fields."

I am 59 years of age, I was diagnosed with PD when I was 52, but with hindsight I have had symptoms of PD from my late teens. Unaccountable muscle ache, obstipation, pain when trying to sleep.

Parkinson's is harsh because one keeps on losing functions. Like, losing muscle strength, losing smell and taste, getting tremors, problems with walking and balance, problems with blood pressure, swallowing, losing one's voice. But also mental problems, losing cognition, or initiative, getting depressed, having anxiety attacks. It is not easy.

For me, I suspect that peeling flower bulbs in summer, in a shed all day with no ventilation, has contributed to my Parkinson's. Flowers are exposed to a lot of diff. pesticides. Also, during my PhD, I worked with pesticides in the lab, even when I was pregnant.

I am not the only one exposed to pesticides. Parkinson's disease numbers are exploding. At the Dutch PD association, we have documented over 150 stories of people with PD who suspect pesticides caused their PD. Half farmers, half 'bystanders'.

I stand before you, your excellency, ladies and gentlemen, not for me. I already have PD.

I stand before you for our children. For those who cannot choose *not* to be exposed. I urge you to rigorously improve the evaluation procedure, both for individual chemical pesticides and for cocktails of such pesticides. For all European citizens who are at risk because pesticides have found their way into our foodchain.

I stand before you for all the preventable cases of this debilitating disease. For our farmers, who really shouldn't be the ones to fall ill while providing us with our daily food. I urge you to proactively support them in finding new sustainable, innovative ways for crop management a.s.a.p.,( for example by securing access to the market for low-risk alternatives. )

For me it's too late. But if I can make you listen to the heart of the matter and act accordingly, at least it will not have been in vain. Thank you.