

A New Chance for EU Member States to Improve the Protection of Bees

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EU Member States continue to postpone the adoption of an EFSA guidance document which envisages improved protection of bees from dangerous pesticides. After its failure to adopt the 2013 Bee Guidance document last October, the Standing Committee on Pesticides (SCoPAFF) has a new chance to revindicate its commitment to the protection of bees, pollinators and biodiversity. The committee will hold a new session on phytopharmaceuticals on December 12 & 13, giving them a chance to stand right with bees and prove their commitment before the end of 2018.

Earlier this year, Member States took a historic step to protect pollinators by voting to ban all outdoor uses of three neonicotinoid substances. Therefore, a lack of will to further improve protection measures seems illogical, mainly since it involves the implementation of a guidance document that the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has drafted as a necessary step to update the assessment methods of the risks that pesticides pose to bees. The same document, in fact, served as the foundation for the restriction of neonicotinoids in 2013 and their ban earlier this year. Five years later after its publication, it is time for Member States to adopt the document, thus continuing to strengthen the protection of bees and pollinators in the EU.

While the ban on neonicotinoids was cause for celebration, it was not the final effort towards improved bee protection. Actually, several other bee-harming products continue to be released into the market and the fields, and authorities do not count with the necessary tools to assess their risks. Products containing deltamethrin, cypermethrin, chlorpyrifos, as well as newer substances as sulfoxaflor, cyantraniliprole, flupyradifurone, continue to worry researchers, environmentalists and beekeepers. These substances have been shown to affect bees, having a negative impact on their health through acute or chronic toxicity.

Hence, current challenges regarding bee health require a more comprehensive range of assessment for substances. EFSA has provided the Bee Guidance Document to tackle previous deficiencies in risk assessment, and now it is just a matter to make use of such a valuable tool.

President of BeeLife, Francesco Panella, stated that "Member states must be coherent. It is not possible that politicians continue to enact a favourable attitude towards the protection of bees, but that it is not followed by the necessary measures to have real changes. The only hurdle for EFSA's guidance document to be adopted is the lack of political will by Member States. It is time to put other interests aside and to set their priorities straight. Our bees, our pollinators and the biodiversity of our fields depend on it".

Next week can be a turning point for Europe. The adoption of the EFSA's Bee Guidance Document would not only

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NOTE TO EDITORS: BeeLife European Beekeeping Coordination is an association formed by professionals of the beekeeping sector from different countries of the European Union. Its main activity is the study of the impact on bees of environmental threats such as pesticides or genetically modified organisms (GMOs). BeeLife works for the protection of bees based on the principle that 'bees serve as the canary in the gold mine', sounding the alarm that something is 'wrong in the environment'. Not least, bees create 30% of all our food by pollinating fruits, vegetables and arable crops such as sunflower and oilseed rape, having an inherent value that the Coordination is working to protect.

IMPORTANT: A draft letter is available so that organisations and citizens can sign and send it to their respective ministers before the next SCoPAFF meeting on December 12 and 13. We invite you to download, sign it and send it so we can all call together for the implementation of the Bee Guidance Document in Europe.

Download the Draft Letter in [English](#), [French](#) or [Spanish](#)

Tags: EU Member States SCOPAFF Bee Guidance Document English



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