



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Bees & Pesticides: Commission to proceed with plan to better protect bees

Today, EU Member States did not reach a qualified majority – either in favour or against – in the Appeal Committee¹ which discussed a Commission proposal to restrict the use of 3 neonicotinoid insecticides.

Tonio Borg, Health and Consumer Commissioner, said: *"Although a majority of Member States now supports our proposal, the necessary qualified majority was not reached. The decision now lies with the Commission. Since our proposal is based on a number of risks to bee health identified by the European Food Safety Authority, the Commission will go ahead with its text in the coming weeks."* To conclude: *"I pledge to do my utmost to ensure that our bees, which are so vital to our ecosystem and contribute over €22 billion annually to European agriculture, are protected."*

15 Member States supported the restriction, 8 Member States voted against and 4 Member States abstained during the appeal committee vote.

Main elements of the proposal

The proposal restricts the use of 3 neonicotinoids (clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiametoxam) for seed treatment, soil application (granules) and foliar treatment on bee attractive plants and cereals.

In addition, the remaining authorised uses are available only to professionals.

Exceptions will be limited to the possibility to treat bee-attractive crops in greenhouses, in open-air fields only after flowering.

The restrictions will apply from 1 December 2013.

As soon as new information is available, and at the latest within 2 years, the Commission will **review the conditions of approval of the 3 neonicotinoids** to take into account relevant scientific and technical developments.

Next steps

In absence of an agreement between Member States, it is now for the Commission to decide on the adoption of the proposed restriction.

¹ An appeal committee is a committee comprised of EU-27 high level representatives and is convened when a standing committee of Member State experts fails to reach a qualified majority.

Background

Following the request of the European Commission, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published, on 16 January, its scientific findings on the risks associated with the use of three pesticides, belonging to the neonicotinoid family, on bee health. On the basis of this opinion, the Commission tabled a proposal for discussion with Member States.

Experts representing the EU-27 met in the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health on 15 March and failed to reach a qualified majority - either in favour or against - the proposal to restrict the use of three neonicotinoid. 13 Member States supported the restriction, 9 Member States voted against and 5 Member States abstained. The proposal was then referred to the appeal committee on 29 April.

For more information:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/liveanimals/bees/neonicotinoids_en.htm

EFSA's website:

<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/topics/topic/beehealth.htm?wtrl=01>

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Contacts :

[Frédéric Vincent](#) (+32 2 298 71 66)

[Aikaterini Apostola](#) (+32 2 298 76 24)