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Give bees a chance!

New campaign priority of the Greens/EFA Food-GMO campaign



Beekeepers appeared in front of the Petitions Committee today to highlight the real threats to their industry and livelihoods. One petition highlights the sharp rise in mortality among bees in the EU due to the extensive use of pesticides and the other asks for the protection of bees and beekeepers from GMO contamination. The Greens/EFA group is calling for the EU to **Give Bees a Chance**! We support the beekeepers' petitions and demand an end to the negative impacts of pesticides and GMOs on bees and related food products.

The alarming decline of bee populations, the role of human activities, pesticides and GMOs, and the urgently-needed EU policy response will be addressed at a press conference Tuesday morning (22nd January). The Greens/EFA group will also launch a new campaign on bees at the press conference.

- Press conference livestream and On Demand recording

BEE HEALTH:

On the 24th of January in the ENVI Committee(1), the first exchange of views on the Honey Directive will take place as well as an oral question on restricting the use of neonicotinoids. It will refer to the beekeepers' petition as well as the study commissioned by the European Parliament, and the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) conclusions on this issue. The Greens/EFA group has been calling for greater scrutiny of the effects of neonicotinoid insecticides on Bees for many years and last week EFSA identified them as a risk. Bees and other pollinators are essential for our food and are indicators of agro-ecosystem health: intensive farming reliant on pesticides is a key factor leading to their sharp decline, as indicated by recent studies. The effect of pesticides and in particular neonicotinoids cannot be denied anymore. Independent science may start to turn the tide and vindicate the Greens/EFA alternative resolution on bee health of 2011.

NO GMOs:

Beekeepers are facing increasing difficulties due to contamination of their products by GMO pollen. Genetic contamination damages the image of honey and other bee products as healthy foods. It impacts on consumers' confidence and consequently on beekeepers livelihood.

Our demands:

- An urgent transition to bee-friendly, sustainable farming;
- Put sustainable agricultural practices at the heart of the CAP, by supporting the application of a package of practices that exclude the use of pesticides and include crop rotation, permanent pasture, cover crops and ecological focus areas;
- An immediate ban on the most toxic bee-killers - systemic neurotoxins such as neonicotinoids and a rapid reduction in the use of other pesticides;
- A ban on GM crops;
- Mandatory labelling of GMO-contaminated honey;
- No change to the Honey Directive (2001/110/EC).

Campaign activities:

The **'Give Bees a Chance**' campaign is coordinated by the Greens/EFA Group in the framework of its broader Food /GMO Campaign. MEPs and citizens supporting the campaign are encouraged to use the tools and images dedicated to the campaign. The main developments related to our work in the EP will be posted on the Greens/EFA website and related campaign websites. This year a Public Conference will also be held, which will bring together the different stakeholders of honey production, MEPs, EU and Member State authorities, as well as EU honey trading partners in order to find ways to preserve honey quality.

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