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Bee crisis and insecticides

Neonicotinoid ban urgently needed, wider EU action also necessary

populations and the impact of insecticides, the Greens have called for a ban on controversial neonicotinoid insecticides and other systemic neurotoxins. With the European Food Safety Authority having last week published a report highlighting concerns with neonicotinoids (1), and the European Environment Agency becoming the latest to do so in a report published today (2), the Greens believe there is now sufficient evidence to introduce a ban. Commenting ahead of the debate in the EP's environment committee, Green MEP **Bart Staes** (Belgium) said:

"While scientists and beekeepers have been sounding the alarm for almost two decades, there is now a wide and growing body of evidence on the devastating impact of neonicotinoids on bee populations. The only responsible course of action is to immediately push ahead with an EU-wide moratorium on neonicotinoids and other systemic neurotoxins.

"Bees play such a crucial role in our food chain and for natural ecosystems. We cannot afford to take further risks. Given the toxicity and long half-lives of these substances in the environment, and the clear evidence of their disastrous impact on bees, an outright ban would be the most prudent option."

Commenting on wider issues impacting on beekeepers, notably GMO labelling in the context of the current review of EU legislation on honey, **Bart Staes** added:

"The EU's Honey Directive should be designed first-and-foremost to protect European beekeepers. Regrettably, the EU Commission seems to have lost sight of this.

"The concerns of beekeepers, both as regards their bees and their product, must be heeded. This implies maintaining provisions on compulsory labelling of honey containing genetically-modified pollen. This is essential for the viability of EU beekeepers and the credibility of consumers, who view honey as a natural product. There is a need to step up enforcement of GM labelling rules on honey. It is also crucial to ensure that EU rules do not allow heavily processed sugary syrups to be marketed as honey. This would further undermine confidence in honey as a natural product, which is in the interest of beekeepers."

(1) European Food Safety Authority report on neonicotinoids:
<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/130116.htm>

(2) European Environment Agency report - Late Lessons 2: www.eea.europa.eu/publications/late-lessons-2

* The Greens/EFA group has launched a campaign to try and promote EU action on bees. More information on the 'Give Bees A Chance' campaign can be found at: <http://www.greens-efa.eu/give-bees-a-chance-9012.html>

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Bart Staes

Member

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