en

Press release | 15.03.2013

Bee decline/neonicotinoid ban

Inconclusive outcome keeps hopes alive for proposed EU neonicotinoid suspension

Crucial proposals from the European Commission to suspend the use of neonicotinoid insecticides - due to their damaging impact on bee populations - were today voted on by EU member states. The outcome of the vote in the Standing Committee on Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH) was inconclusive, with no qualified majority either for or against the proposals, which means the prospect of the suspensions being implemented remains (1). Reacting to news of the vote, Green environment and food safety spokesperson **Bart Staes** (MEP, Belgium) urged the European Commission to push ahead:

"Today's inconclusive outcome keeps hopes alive that the proposed neonicotinoid suspensions can be implemented soon. The Commission's proposal is the only logical course of action in the face of the overwhelming and growing body of evidence on the disastrous impact of these insecticides on pollinators, and we urge the Commission to push ahead with its plans to ensure the suspension can be implemented as soon as possible (1).

"Thankfully, some of the reticent EU governments responded to pressure from civil society and EU citizens by not blocking the proposals today, as had been feared. We call on all reluctant EU governments not to heed the misleading lobbying from the insecticide industry (2) and to prioritise a solution to the decline of bee populations and not the short-term interests of the industry. This means voting in favour of the proposals, rather than abstaining.

"The Commission's proposal to suspend the use of 3 neonicotinoids came on the back of reports from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on the toxicity risk to bees of the neonicotinoid insecticides. Suspending the use of these insecticides was the only responsible course of action in response to the report, which highlighted the failures of the European and national risk assessment and monitoring systems, which enabled neonicotinoids to harm bees for a long period. This is a minimum first step and we call on EU governments not to delay this essential measure to simply placate disingenuous agro-chemical firms (2).

"In reality, the suspension proposed by the Commission is only a first step. A complete ban of all neonicotinoids is clearly essential to prevent the collapse of our bee colonies, as only a full ban will stop the exposure of non-target insects to these persistent, systemic compounds that stay in the soil and find their way to nectar and pollen over many years. A cross-party group of MEPs has written to health commissioner Borg to this end (3)."

(1) At today's meeting of the Standing Committee on Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH), 13 member states voted for the proposed suspensions, with 9 against and 5 abstentions. The weighted voting in council meant there was no 'qualified majority' in support of the proposals however. The European Commission can now appeal this outcome and, if a further vote proves inconclusive, can then push ahead with the suspensions without a final decision.

(2) See this Green briefing dismantling some of the claims made by the industry in their arguments against the suspension: http://www.greens-efa.eu/syngenta-lies-pesticides-9372.html

(3) A cross-party group of 90 MEPs wrote to Commissioner Borg on a Green initiative, calling for a total ban on neonicotinoids: http://www.greens-efa.eu/total-ban-on-the-use-of-neonicotinoid-insecticides-needed-9097.html

Recommended

Opinion

© Christian Kaufmann



Healthy food starts with healthy farming. Europe must …

04.11.2026

Press release

sebastian-johann



Commission launching an attack against nature

04.11.2026

Press release

Image by joakant from Pixabay



The World must triple efforts to save nature

29.10.2026

Press release



Conservatives and Social Democrats Put Jobs at Risk

22.10.2026

Responsible MEPs



Bart Staes

Member

Please share

- E-Mail