



**Pesticide
Action
Network**
Europe

PRESS RELEASE

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EFSA confirms that the still authorised neonicotinoids intoxicate our bees, Health Canada as well!

Based on the confirmatory data for the toxicity of 3 neonicotinoid insecticides provided by Bayer and Syngenta, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) confirmed last week that the ban on neonicotinoids should be extended to all their uses: these chemicals are highly toxic to bees and have a long persistence in soils. Two days ago, Health Canada indicated neonicotinoids should be banned to protect the environment. The end of the road is close for these compounds...

Despite the 2013 partial ban on neonicotinoids to protect bees, many uses for these insecticides are still authorised. Last week, EFSA concluded that those remaining uses should also be banned as they pose a high risk to bees: neonicotinoids contaminate soils and the environment in a long-lasting way.

The producers of neonicotinoids had to provide, by 31 December 2014, confirmatory data for a series of endpoints, which would allow EFSA to complete its assessment on the risk to bees: chronic toxicity to bees and their larvae, toxicity to bumble bees, solitary bees, etc. In its conclusions of the peer-review on the toxicity of the neonicotinoids imidacloprid and clothianidin (Bayer), EFSA confirms the high-risk of these substances for bees. For several toxicity endpoints, the confirmatory data provided by Bayer was still insufficient for a complete risk assessment. Similar conclusions are expected to be published soon on thiamethoxam (Syngenta).

The 'confirmatory data' regime permits the European Commission to authorise a pesticide without having full certainty about its safety for humans or the environment. This regime is constantly used and abused by Commission's Health Directorate DG SANTE, the responsible DG for the authorization of pesticides in the EU. This led the [EU Ombudsman](#) to qualify these practices as 'maladministration' and demand DG Sante to stop these abuses. According to Regulation 1107/2009, confirmatory data are requested in order to '*increase confidence in the decision*' on the safety of a substance following its authorization. But in the case of neonicotinoids, EFSA had already concluded back in 2013 that they were highly toxic to bees. This led to a limited ban despite EFSA's negative conclusions. Neonicotinoids could for example still be used for winter cereals, beets or sprayed after blooming of bee-attractive crops. In the meantime, bees are still exposed to important amounts of these chemicals in nature.

Through the confirmatory data procedure, the European Commission and Member States have been giving a respite to this top-selling class of insecticides. Bayer and Syngenta either failed to provide confirmatory data or the ones provided led to the conclusion of a 'high toxicity to bees'.

Martin Dermine, PAN Europe's bee project coordinator said: *'The EFSA conclusions are a strong signal for a better protection of our pollinators. In some countries, like the Netherlands, the 2013 partial-ban resulted to just a 15 % reduction of the uses. Even [Health Canada](#), not known to be a pro-environment agency, published two days ago its draft risk assessment indicating neonicotinoids needed to urgently be banned. We will write to DG Sante Commissioner Andriukaitis to ask for a rapid withdrawal of the authorisation of these products, based on article 21 of regulation 1107/2009. We will work with our members throughout Europe to let citizens know that bee-toxic pesticides are still used in their country and force decision makers to finally protect our pollinators'*.

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