

New EFSA reports confirm high risk posed by neonicotinoids to bees

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published today 3 reports on the new scientific findings on the toxicity of imidacloprid, thiamethoxam and clothianidin (neonicotinoids) to bees. The Authority highlights that most studies show that neonicotinoids have a negative impact on bees' health, from damaging their orientation capacity to impairing their reproductive ability. On 24 March, the European Member States will have the possibility to vote for a ban on neonicotinoids; hopefully these reports will contribute to a total ban.

In the frame of the restrictions on the use of neonicotinoids in 2013, the European Commission committed to initiate a review of the ban within 2 years. The EFSA was given a mandate to collect all available scientific evidence on the toxicity of neonicotinoids on bees. The data were then analyzed by the Authority and today, it has published an opinion on imidacloprid, thiamethoxam and clothianidin.

The Authority concludes that the majority of the studies show a negative impact to honey bees, bumble bees or wild bees. Furthermore, the Authority points at the high level of contamination of the environment as the majority of the studies could not be included in the opinions as their controls were contaminated with neonics.

Based on a November 2016 report from the EFSA, the European Commission has made a proposal to Member States to ban neonicotinoids except for glasshouses. The report at the time indicated that, based on new industry data, there was no safe use of the 3 substances. The proposal was nevertheless not put to a vote in the Standing Committee on phytopharmaceuticals as several Member States asked to wait for the publication of today's report.

Martin Dermine, PAN Europe's pollinators expert said: *„In 2013, there was enough evidence to totally ban neonicotinoids. In the meantime, an impressive amount of additional evidence has been piling up over the last years and the EFSA reports are a small glimpse of such evidence as the EFSA limited its study to bees and to the evidence available until June 2016. EU pollinators are facing a dramatic decline and neonics have now clearly been shown to be one of the major causes. Member States have no choice but to ban neonicotinoids“*

As a member of the **Save The Bees Coalition**¹, PAN Europe will be advocating, together with nearly 100 NGOs across Europe, to finally obtain a full ban on neonicotinoids.

Contact: PAN Europe, Martin Dermine, +32 486 32 99 92, martin@pan-europe.info

¹ www.beecoalition.eu