



**Pesticide
Action
Network**
Europe

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Brussels 20 May 2021

World Bee Day: European bees abandoned by policy makers

While European decision makers all claim we need to do more to protect bees and biodiversity, the latest developments in bees' protection against pesticides shows us that decision-makers still give priority to agribusiness over protection of the environment. The Bee Guidance Document, Sulfoxaflor and Cypermethrin are some of the ongoing discussions at EU-level that tell us that Member States keep pushing for maintaining bee-toxic pesticides in our environment.

Martin Dermine, policy officer at PAN Europe said: "Indeed, over the last decade, the European Commission and Member States took some strong measures like banning neonicotinoids to protect bees but since then, we can observe an increasing resistance from Member States to protect bees and the environment". In 2013 and 2018, European Member States have restricted then banned the use of bee-toxic neonicotinoid insecticides. In 2013, Member States' experts, the European Food Safety Authority and the European Commission agreed to reform the way pesticides are authorised and become more protective to bees with the publication of a new Bee Guidance Document.

Martin Dermine to add: "The 'We love bees' message is just greenwashing: ministries of agriculture have blocked the implementation of the Bee Guidance Document, some countries including Spain, Greece and Hungary push to accept 23% mortalities due to pesticides in the hive. We have received information that the European Commission is now proposing to renew cypermethrin¹, despite the fact this insecticide is classified 'high risk to bees', just as neonics". Indeed, the European Food Safety Authority has lately classified 2 substances as presenting a high risk to bees: cypermethrin and sulfoxaflor, a new-generation neonicotinoid. Discussions have been going on for months between the Commission and Member States to decide on the future of these extremely toxic insecticides.

"Even the European Food Safety Authority who had used their work on bees' protection to improve their image is now playing a role in the watering down of bees' protection: they organise secret meetings with Member States, they make use of models developed by Syngenta²". In 2019, the EFSA had received a

¹ Draft renewal proposal [here](#)

² <https://www.pan-europe.info/press-releases/2020/07/mourning-protection-pollinators-eu-how-european-commission-member-states-and>

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe is a network of NGOs working to reduce the use of hazardous pesticides and have them replaced with ecologically sound alternatives. We work to eliminate dependency on chemical pesticides and to support safe sustainable pest control methods. Our network brings together 40 consumer, public health, and environmental organisations, and women's groups from across Europe.



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mandate from the Commission to review its 2013 Bee Guidance Document, despite the fact not a single bit of evidence has shown it was not up to date! “The EFSA is now one more political player on that file, they have lost their scientific credibility” added Dermine.

Before the lack of actions on behalf of Member States and the European Commission, PAN Europe has been one of the initiators of the *Save Bees and Farmers*³ European Citizens Initiative. By collecting 1 million signatures across the EU until 30 September 2021, the 200+ organisations coalition hopes this will force decision-makers to finally respect the law and protect bees against pesticides. The initiative has already collected over 600 000 signatures.

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³ www.savebeesandfarmers.eu

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