

A new guidance document to better protect bees against pesticides

PAN Europe welcomes the new EU Guidance Document on the risk assessment of pesticides on bees. After more than 10 years of political blockade the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is now implemented.. This new version of the guidance document confirms that an urgent upgrade of the way pesticide toxicity is assessed in the EU is needed. PAN Europe supports a quick implementation of the guidance at EU- and national-levels.

Martin Dermine, PAN Europe's executive director said: "After a massive campaign from the agrilobby, EU Member States have blocked the implementation of the 2013 version of the guidance document. With this new version, the EFSA confirms the urgent need to upgrade the way we test the toxicity of pesticides on bees".

In 2019, following the constant blockade of the implementation of the initial version of the Bee Guidance Document (BGD), Commissioner Kyriakides sent a mandate to EFSA to update it, in light of the new state of the science, involving more closely the Member States. PAN Europe was involved as a member of the commenting stakeholder group.

Martin Dermine added: "With this new version, bumble bees and solitary bees are also taken into account. Considering their importance in the pollination of our crops and wild plants, this is a major step forward. PAN Europe nevertheless regrets that Member States decided to authorise a mortality of 10% of the bees, following exposure to a pesticide".

In 2021, the EU Member States agreed to accept up to 10% reduction in honey bee colony size, following a single exposure to a pesticide¹. PAN Europe considers that this is not acceptable. Firstly because no scientific evidence underpins this political decision: Member States have taken this decision despite the knowledge of the current collapse of insects. PAN Europe and other NGOs advocated for a maximum reduction of 3%.

Martin Dermine concluded: "This update of the 2013 version of the BGD confirms that an urgent improvement of the risk assessment of pesticides on bees is needed. Despite the weaknesses of this new guidance document, PAN Europe considers that it represents an improvement, compared to the past situation. We hope Member States will swiftly endorse it and implement it".

Read: [Bees and pesticides: updated guidance for assessing risks](#)

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¹ <https://www.pan-europe.info/press-releases/2021/06/european-countries-%E2%80%9Cimprove%E2%80%9D-bees%E2%80%99-protection-against-pesticides-allowing>

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 over 45 consumer, public health and environmental organisations and women's groups from across Europe.

