



**Pesticide
Action
Network**
Europe

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To: Mr. Tonio Borg
European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy
European Commission
B-1049 Brussels.

Concerning : Temporary authorisations of neonicotinoids and fipronil in Member States

Dear Commissioner Borg,

The European Commission has partially banned in 2013 the use of three neonicotinoids (imidacloprid, clothianidin and thiamethoxam) as well as fipronil in European agriculture in order to protect bees. PAN Europe, as other NGOs', has welcomed this wise decision.

In the last weeks, a series of Member States have given temporary authorisations to some of the banned substances, under article 53 of regulation 1107/2009.

Finland has provided an authorisation for thiamethoxam on oilseed rape and turnip rape, two major bee attractive crops. One argument is based on the absence of alternatives to fight flea beetle. This is not true: λ -cyhalothrin is efficient against flea beetles larvae. Furthermore, the cabbage stem flea beetle being a soil born pest (limited dispersal capacity), crop rotation is an effective means to limit damages under economical threshold.

Seed producers knew since the beginning of 2013 that the European Commission might take measures to reduce risk to bees and that there was a non-negligible probability to have a ban on coated seeds. We therefore consider that getting rid of treated seeds stocks is not an acceptable argument either.

Germany has authorised fipronil granules use on potatoes to protect them from potato wireworms. This threatens wild pollinators that visit flowering potato crops and puts at risk bees harvesting on bee-attractive succeeding crops.

Efficient alternatives to fipronil exist to limit damages of wireworms, such as crop rotation (including alfalfa and Brassicas), use of trap crops margins (wheat),

amendment with organic matter (compost) and use of the entomopathogenic fungus *Beauveria Bassiana* strain ATCC 74040. Resistant potato varieties also exist.

Romania has authorised thiamethoxam on sunflower and maize, two major bee attractive crops. Use of neonicotinoids and fipronil seed coating can typically be replaced by crop rotation for these crops. The example of the Italian ban on seed coating on maize in 2008 is eloquent therefor: no drop down in Italian maize productivity was observed after the ban. Furthermore, efficient entomopathogenic nematodes are present on the market!

PAN Europe would like to bring to your attention that Finland, Germany and Romania do not respect article 53 of regulation 1107/2009. This article states that temporary authorisation can be provided when “such a measure appears necessary because of a danger which cannot be contained by any other reasonable means”. We consider that means to protect crops against the pests mentioned in the temporary authorisations from these three Member States exist and have been proven to be efficient.

Furthermore, by failing to act to oblige these Member States to respect the law, the European Commission is permitting a distortion of competition between Member States on the one hand and is giving a strong signal to Member States to not respect the ban on neonicotinoids and fipronil.

For these reasons, PAN Europe kindly requests you to act and to launch infringement procedures against these Member States.

Sincerely yours,

Martin Dermine
PAN-Europe

