



Pesticide  
Action  
Network  
Europe

# PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 10-08-2015  
Tel: +32 (0)486 32 99 92  
Info: Martin Dermine  
[martin@pan-europe.info](mailto:martin@pan-europe.info)

## Is Juncker's Commission running for pesticide companies? The come-back of bee-killing neonicotinoids

EFSA concluded in March 2015<sup>1</sup> that the pesticide Sulfoxaflor is highly toxic to bees and several required safety tests are missing (exposure of bees via nectar and pollen...). Despite this opinion, Sulfoxaflor was approved by the European Commission for use in agriculture and the approval was published on July 27<sup>2</sup>. For 3 neonicotinoid insecticides (imidacloprid, thiamethoxam, clothianidin), chemicals with a related structure, similar EFSA opinions (toxicity, data gaps.....) made Commission put in place a "moratorium" in 2013 because of the risks for bees. An EFSA guidance document on the protection of bees, taking into account current scientific knowledge, was apparently not used by the Commission.

This authorisation clearly indicates that a rapid implementation of the new Guidance Document on the risk assessment of Plant Protection Products on bees (GD), published back in 2013 by EFSA, is necessary. The implementation of the document would permit a better protection of bees by taking into account, inter alia, sub-lethal effects such as disorientation. A few months ago, DG Sante started to write a roadmap in order to prepare the discussions on the GD between different Commission's DGs. Discussions between DGs did not even start. Such discussions might lead to an impact assessment and delay even more or water down EFSA's GD. In the meantime, such delays permit toxic chemicals such as sulfoxaflor to keep on being authorised without a proper risk assessment.

Martin Dermine, PAN Europe's bee expert said: "In the US, beekeepers are suing US Environment Protection Agency for authorising this pesticide<sup>3</sup> because of the toxicity observed on bees. The delays the European Commission seems to deliberately take in implementing the EFSA GD and now this EU authorisation are not a good premonition for the review of the neonicotinoid ban that will occur in the coming months. This also confirms the limited will of the Commission to protect bees: the highly toxic neonics were only partially banned and now a new one is coming up. This will not stimulate EU farming sector to stop the systematic use of bee-toxic pesticides and convert towards more environmental-friendly practices".

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/doc/3692.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32015R1295&qid=1438859690142&from=EN>

<sup>3</sup> <http://earthjustice.org/news/press/2013/beekeeping-industry-sues-epa-for-approval-of-bee-killing-pesticide>