

## Press release – MEPs block member states' move to weaken bee protection from pesticides



The European Commission's [draft proposal](#) was intended to incorporate into EU law the European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) 2013 [guidance](#) to cut the use of pesticides that harm bees. The guidance indicated how pesticides should be tested, in order to protect bees from both acute and chronic exposure. Pesticides would remain available on the market only if they pass these new tests.

However, most EU member states opposed the provisions, forcing the Commission into a compromise to keep on board only provisions that protect bees against acute exposure.

"It is unacceptable that Member States oppose the full implementation of the 2013 EFSA bee guidance", says a Parliamentary [resolution](#) adopted on Wednesday. The draft "only introduces modifications (...) with regard to acute toxicity to honeybees, but remains silent on chronic toxicity to honeybees, as well as on toxicity to bumble bees and solitary bees". Moreover, the Commission's text "does not represent the most recent developments in scientific and technical knowledge" and "would not change the level of protection" already in place, says the text.

MEPs also stress that the European Commission should not have given in and should have made full use of its powers, as the 16 member states impeding the application of the protection criteria did not form a qualified majority.

The resolution therefore calls on the Commission to table new legislation based on the latest scientific and technical knowledge.

### **Quote**

“By opposing evaluation criteria which are far too weak given the danger that pesticides pose to bees, we wanted to ask a simple question: are we serious about protecting the environment? Are we serious about protecting living organisms? Are we serious about the Green Deal?” said Environment Committee Chair Pascal Canfin (Renew, FR). “The result is very clear: thanks to our mobilisation, a very large majority of the European Parliament did not want watered-down legislation on the protection of bees. We are now asking the Commission to review its text, and to present us with legislation that eliminates pesticides that pose the greatest danger to pollinators”, he added.

### **Next steps**

Parliament blocked the Commission proposal by adopting the resolution with an absolute majority of its members, with 533 votes to 67 and 100 abstentions. The European Commission now has to submit a new proposal.

### **Background**

Members highlight that [according to the Commission](#), there is a “dramatic decline in the occurrence and diversity of all kinds of European wild insect pollinators, including wild bees, hoverflies, butterflies and moths. Numerous pollinator species are extinct or threatened with extinction”.

In the EU alone, around 84 % of crop species and 78 % of wild flower species depend, at least in part, on animal pollination. Up to almost EUR 15 billion of the EU’s annual agricultural output is directly attributed to insect pollinators.

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**[Press release – Brexit: statement by EP President Sassoli following vote in Westminster](#)**



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“I think it is advisable, as requested by President Donald Tusk, that the European Council should accept this extension.

“This extension will allow the United Kingdom to clarify its position and the European Parliament to exercise its role.”

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## [Press release – Election of EU Ombudsman](#)



The names of the five EU Ombudsman candidates for the next five-year term are:

- Giuseppe Fortunato
- Julia Laffranque
- Nils Muižnieks
- Emily O'Reilly
- Cecilia Wikström

The call for nominations was published in the [EU Official Journal](#) on 30 August. Each nominee required the backing of at least 40 MEPs, from at least two EU member states. The closing date to submit an application was 30 September.

Candidates will be invited to present their priorities in a hearing held by the Petitions Committee on 3 December. The full house is expected to elect the new Ombudsman by secret ballot during the December plenary session.

More information on the election procedure and documents related to the candidates is available [here](#) on the Parliament's dedicated website.

## **Background**

The European Ombudsman conducts inquiries into cases of maladministration by EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, acting on his or her own initiative or on the basis of complaints from EU citizens. Every year, the Ombudsman submits a report to Parliament on the outcome of their enquiries.

The Ombudsman is elected by the Parliament at the start of each parliamentary term. The current European Ombudsman, Emily O'Reilly, was elected in July 2013 and was re-elected in December 2014 for a five-year term.

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