Resolution on the draft Commission regulation amending Regulation (EU) No 546/2011 as regards the assessment of the impact of plant protection products on honeybees

2019/2776(RPS) - 23/10/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 533 votes to 67, with 100 abstentions, a resolution objecting to the draft Commission regulation amending Regulation (EU) No 546/2011 as regards the assessment of the impact of plant protection products on honeybees.

The objective of the European Commission's draft proposal was to introduce into European law the 2013 European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) guidelines to reduce the use of pesticides harmful to bees. In 2013, EFSA updated the risk assessment methodology accordingly, inter alia taking into account chronic effects on bees as well as adverse effects on bumblebees and solitary bees.

Parliament considered it unacceptable that Member States oppose the full implementation of the 2013 EFSA bee guidance and thereby impede the proper application of the approval criteria with regard to bees.

Members also regretted that the Commission did not make use of its powers, thereby effectively leading to 16 Member States, which nonetheless did not form a qualified majority, being successful in impeding the proper application of the approval criteria with regard to bees.

Parliament regretted that the draft Commission regulation only introduces modifications indicated in the 2013 EFSA bee guidance with regard to acute toxicity to honeybees, but remains silent on chronic toxicity to honeybees, as well as on toxicity to bumblebees and solitary bees. It also considered that the draft Commission regulation did not represent the most recent developments in scientific and technical knowledge, which, also undermined the purpose of that Regulation, namely to achieve a high level of protection of animal health and the environment.

On the basis of these considerations, Parliament opposed the adoption of the draft regulation and asked the Commission to withdraw its draft regulation and submit a new one to the Standing Committee without delay.

The Commission is called on to:

- ensure that the new draft is based on the latest scientific and technical knowledge, and thus proposes modifying the uniform principles not only with regard to acute toxicity for honeybees, as in the current draft, but at least also with regard to chronic toxicity and larval toxicity for honeybees and acute toxicity for bumblebees, in particular given that OECD test guidelines are available for all of those parameters;

- make full use of its powers under Decision 1999/468/EC to obtain the submission of a proper proposal for scrutiny by the European Parliament and the Council.