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FEDIOL concerns on Commission proposal to suspend for two years the use of neonicotinoid pesticides in crops attractive to bees

Following the release, in January, of the EFSA risk assessment¹ on the effects of three neonicotinoid pesticides on bees, the Commission has submitted a proposal to ban their use on certain crops.

Given the importance of bees for the ecosystem and for the food chain, FEDIOL fully subscribes to the need for their protection and for addressing the root causes of their disappearance.

Yet, doubts have been raised on the value of the assessment delivered by EFSA, which acknowledged a high level of uncertainty in its evaluation. The assessment did not consider all available scientific studies nor any of the risk mitigation measures in place to ensure safe use. Third country experiences with the use or restriction of neonicotinoids do not confirm a clear link between bee-health and neonicotinoid pesticides use.

Considering that a number of different diseases seem to pose serious threats to bee health, FEDIOL is concerned that such drastic and disproportionate decision, based on highly uncertain scientific evidence, would have no beneficial impact. At the same time, losing neonicotinoid pesticides, in the absence of equivalent alternatives, will particularly impact rapeseed and sunflower seed yields and affect oilseed production in Europe. It will not only be highly damaging for farming in Europe, but also affect the supply of downstream processing industries.

FEDIOL calls on the Commission and Members States to carefully reconsider this proposal.

¹ EFSA Journal 2013;11(1):3067 [68 pp.] / EFSA Journal 2013;11(1):3066 [58 pp.] / EFSA Journal 2013;11(1):3068 [55 pp.]