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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Question for Oral Answer B7-0564/2010

pursuant to Rule 115(5) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in the beekeeping sector

Paolo De Castro

on behalf of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

European Parliament resolution on the situation in the beekeeping sector

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 9 October 2003 on the difficulties faced by the European beekeeping sector¹,
- having regard to Directive 2004/35/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 on environmental liability with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage²,
- having regard to its resolution of 22 April 2004 on the proposal for a Council regulation on actions in the field of beekeeping³,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 of 22 October 2007 establishing a common organisation of agricultural markets and on specific provisions for certain agricultural products (Single CMO Regulation)⁴, which lays out special provisions for the apiculture sector in the European Union,
- having regard to its resolution of 20 November 2008 on the situation in the beekeeping sector⁵,
- having regard to Commission Directive 2010/21/EU of 12 March 2010 amending Annex I to Council Directive 91/414/EEC, as regards the specific provisions relating to clothianidin, thiamethoxam, fipronil and imidacloprid⁶,
- having regard to Commission Decision 2010/270/EU of 6 May 2010 amending Parts 1 and 2 of Annex E to Council Directive 92/65/EEC as regards the model health certificates for animals from holdings and for bees and bumble bees⁷,
- having regard to the Commission report of 28 May 2010 on the implementation of Articles 105 et seq. of Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 on measures improving the general conditions for the production and marketing of apiculture products (COM (2010)0267),
- having regard to the EFSA scientific report of 11 August 2008⁸, as well as the scientific report commissioned and adopted by EFSA on 3 December 2009⁹, both of them on Bee

¹ OJ C 81E , 31.3.2004, p. 107.

² OJ L 143, 30.4.2004, p. 56.

³ OJ C 104 E , 30.4.2004, p. 941.

⁴ OJ L 299, 16.11.2007, p. 1.

⁵ OJ C 16E, 22.1.2010, p. 65.

⁶ OJ L 65, 13.3.2010, p. 27.

⁷ OJ L 118, 12.5.2010, p. 56.

⁸ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scdocs/doc/154r.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scdocs/scdoc/27e.htm>

Mortality and Bee Surveillance in Europe,

- having regard to Oral Question (O-119/2010 – B7-0564/2010) of 1 September 2010 on the situation in the beekeeping sector,
 - having regard to the Rules 115(5) and 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the national programmes for the European beekeeping sector, drawn up by Member States for a period of three years, have been used by all 27 EU Member States, with an average usage rate of 90%; whereas the Commission stated, in its abovementioned report of 28 May 2010, that the national beekeeping programmes have been beneficial over recent years,
 - B. whereas in 2010, the European Year of Biodiversity, the beekeeping sector throughout the world is gravely threatened, registering losses 100 to 1 000 times worse than normal; whereas the sector plays a strategic role in society, providing a public service of environmental value, and whereas beekeeping is a valuable example of a ‘green occupation’ (improving and preserving biodiversity and the ecological balance and conserving plant life) and a model of sustainable production in a rural environment,
 - C. whereas the current programmes come to an end in 2013; whereas the current EU support for the beekeeping sector depends on existing modalities of the CAP; whereas operators need to plan for the time after 2013; whereas the Commission intends to publish its Communication on the future CAP by November 2010,
 - D. whereas agriculture has a major interest in maintaining bees as pollinators; whereas the FAO has alerted the international community to the alarming reduction in numbers of pollinating insects, including honey bees; whereas 84% of the plant species and 76% of food production in Europe are dependent on pollination by bees, the economic importance of which is much greater than the value of the honey produced,
 - E. whereas bee mortality is an increasing problem in many regions owing to a synergy of factors, including bee diseases, bees’ weakened immunity to pathogens and parasites, climate and, to some extent, land use change, with periods when there is a lack of food and foraging for bees, and also owing to the progressive eradication of melliferous plant species and the use of plant protection products and unsustainable farming techniques,
 - F. whereas decreasing numbers of colonies in some Member States cannot with certainty be linked to the use of genetically modified organisms (GMO), as their cultivation is insignificant for the moment, and whereas a rise in the number of monocultures is leading to the disappearance of melliferous flora,
 - G. whereas a global multitude of bee-diseases is constantly increasing so that *Apis mellifera* risks becoming an endangered species, especially because of the increasingly destructive presence of the *Varroa* mite, which compromises the bees’ immune system, causes all kinds of related diseases and is hence a major health problem affecting the European bee population,
 - H. whereas more research is needed in the interests of reversing pollinator species declines,

in order to avoid situations like those in other parts of the world, where low rates of natural pollinators mean that fruit, vegetable and some arable production require human-induced pollination, at considerable additional expense to farmers,

- I. whereas 40% of the European honey market depends on imports; whereas the EU's lack of independence of honey supply leads to significant volatility in prices, resulting also from adulteration in the global market, as the past opening up of the EU market for honey from third countries has placed beekeepers across the EU at a competitive disadvantage,
- J. whereas both Member States and operators from the sector have expressed concrete needs as regards improvements to the implementing rules and continuation of support in the long term,
- K. whereas there is a need for better cooperation between all Member States and beekeepers' associations in the devising of programmes, so that each Member State is able to request information and, if relevant, to disseminate it in the context of the European organisations to which it belongs,
- L. whereas the abovementioned EFSA scientific report of 11 August 2008 highlighted the scarcity and variability of monitoring systems among Member States and the lack of harmonisation of common performance indicators,
- M. whereas, in accordance with Directive 2010/21/EU, Member States are required to ensure that, from 1 November 2010 onwards, certain labelling requirements for plant protection products are put in place, risk-mitigation measures are included in product authorisation, and monitoring programmes to verify the direct and indirect exposure of honey bees to certain active substances are carried out,
 - 1. Welcomes the abovementioned Commission report of 28 May 2010; notes, however, that the current programmes come to an end in 2013 and is concerned about the numerous challenges and problems still faced by the European apiculture sector, among them marketing issues, price volatility, recruiting young beekeepers to the sector, the ageing profile of beekeepers in the European Union, decreasing numbers of colonies and the general difficulties emerging from multifactorial bee mortality;
 - 2. Calls on the Commission to respond positively to the requests from both Member States and operators, for example by improving statistical data in relation to production forecasts, including the application of the same quality requirements for honey, and improving and harmonising monitoring and research programmes for apiculture;
 - 3. Calls on the Commission to consider, in the framework of the legislative proposal on agricultural quality policy, changing the rules on origin labelling of honey in order to avoid misleading information to consumers, especially in case of a blend of honeys originating from EU and non-EU countries;
 - 4. Stresses the need to improve sanitary conditions for the product by harmonising border controls, especially for third-country imports, since low-quality honey imports, adulteration and honey substitutes distort the market and exert constant pressure on prices and the final quality of the product on the EU's internal market; takes the view that the

name of the product or any graphic or other visual element on the label or on the packaging of the product should make reference to honey only if at least 50 per cent of the sugar content originates from honey;

5. Calls on the Commission to consider the consultation of beekeepers by European and national authorities as obligatory during the development of beekeeping programmes and of related legislation in order to ensure the effectiveness of those programmes and their timely implementation;
6. Calls on the Commission to draw up three-year programmes based on a declaration by all Member States of the number of hives actually registered rather than on estimated figures;
7. Recognises that the development of innovative and effective treatments against *Varroa* mites, implicated in considerable annual losses in certain regions, is of high importance; takes the view that there is a need to make effective veterinary treatments against *Varroa* mites and all kinds of related diseases more widely available throughout Europe; asks the Commission to introduce common guidelines regarding veterinary treatment in the sector, for which cooperation with beekeepers' organisations is vital;
8. Calls on the Commission to adapt the scope and financing of European veterinary policy to take account of the specific nature of bees and beekeeping with a view to ensuring more effective bee-disease control and availability of effective and standardised veterinary medicine throughout the Union, in collaboration with beekeepers' organisations;
9. Calls on the Commission to improve coordination of the various research programmes carried out in Member States with a view to establishing an action plan for tackling bee mortality; points out that this should include mainstreaming sustainable, pollinator-friendly farming practices by avoiding monocultures without rotation;
10. Calls on the Commission to implement the recommendations of the abovementioned scientific report adopted by EFSA on 3 December 2009, notably funding 'specific studies that build on the existing work in progress to improve the knowledge and understanding of factors that affect bee health';
11. Calls for independent and timely research into bee mortality, and for the Commission to ensure that data on the effects on the environment and specific species of plant protection products (such as coated seeds), genetically modified crops and the spread of toxins via pollen are made public and that any new initiatives are based on sound science and statistical evidence; calls on the Commission to launch a study on those matters and to present its results in a reasonable timeframe;
12. Calls on the Commission to ensure that existing support for the apiculture sector and the future of this policy is maintained and strengthened in the CAP after 2013, guaranteeing the continuation and improvement of this sector; welcomes the Commission's decision of July 2010 to increase the budget for beekeeping programmes; acknowledges that this is a method of supporting the future development of European apiculture, contributing to the preservation of biodiversity; acknowledges, furthermore, the importance of bees in maintaining the level of production, in arable farming and in the horticultural sector, and considers it important to provide remuneration for the provision of this environmental

public good;

13. Calls on the Commission to ensure there is financial support for education, information campaigns and training of new and professional apiarists, with a particular focus on encouraging new apiarists to gain a foothold in the sector, including the possibility of exchanges of experience with those in other countries;
14. Calls on the Commission to study, in agreement with Member States, and in coordination between veterinary services and beekeeping organisations, as already provided for in some Member States, the opportunities for the establishment of an EU veterinary guidance plan on bee health with a view to ensuring access to veterinary medicine where necessary, which would be financed under the European veterinary policy;
15. Asks the Commission to improve coordination of, and knowledge transfer between, applied scientific research, apiculture and agriculture;
16. Takes the view that, owing to the possible influence of plant protection products on colony development in addition to the effects on adult bees, plant protection product effects on the whole hive should be considered as well; recalls in this respect that the Commission stated in plenary, at the time of the adoption of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009, that when revising the data requirements for active substances and plant protection products, as referred to in Article 8(1) (b) and (c) thereof, the Commission would pay particular attention to follow-up examinations and to study protocols, making possible risk assessment which takes into account the direct and indirect exposure of bees to these products, in particular through nectar, pollen and water, which can contain traces of pesticides originating from water collected by bees;
17. Calls on the Commission to follow a comprehensive and sustainable approach in its future development of the implementation of Community aid schemes in the field of beekeeping, in particular rural development, climate change and biodiversity, especially by supporting measures to maintain and expand flower pastures;
18. Calls on the Commission to support the European apiculture sector in an even wider and coherent manner by using additional instruments in the future CAP, including measures to enhance biodiversity, mitigate the effects of climate change, preserve the heritage of national traditions and cultures which provide employment for many European families, and to safeguard and improve the quality and effective functioning of the market for apiculture products;
19. Calls on the Commission to coordinate national monitoring programmes for labelling requirements and risk mitigation measures which should be included in plant protection product authorisation, as well as exposure monitoring programmes for plant protection products;
20. Calls on the Commission to promote the direct sale of apiculture products to consumers in the local marketplace;
21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.