

**Question for written answer P-012723/2015
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Norbert Erdős (PPE)

Subject: On what basis does the Commission decide to uphold or reverse the suspension of use of seed dressings whose active substances are neonicotinoids?

This September EFSA will review the ban on the use of plant protection products containing neonicotinoids as their active substance.

Scientific researchers consider that at least some of studies which led to the Commission's decision in 2013 to suspend the use of seed dressings containing neonicotinoids were manipulated (<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/environment/article4286838.ece>).

Further studies carried out by the Commission after the ban revealed that the number of beehives in the EU did not fall but rather rose by 900 000 in the preceding two decades. Studies carried out on wild populations shows that the reduction in bumble bee populations is due to climate change and the loss of habitats, as unlike most animal species bees are unable to move away from habitats affected by warming (<http://www.sciencemag.org/content/349/6244/177>).

The absence of neonicotinoid seed dressings has led to the wider spread of a greater number of pests and falling average yields in the past growing season, as a result of which the production of oilseed rape and sunflowers in the European region is expected to fall considerably compared to previous years

(http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Oilseeds%20Market%20Update_Vienna_EU-28_8-5-2015.pdf).

1. On the basis of precisely what methodology and what scientific evidence will the Commission carry out its review?
2. In its evaluation of the relevant data, what relative weight will it give to theoretical laboratory research and to the results of studies based on application in the field reflecting real circumstances of use?
3. Does the Commission recognise that the application of seed dressings containing neonicotinoids – where used in accordance with the rules – has less of an impact on the environment than that of sprays?