

**Question for written answer E-011265/2010  
to the Commission**  
Rule 117  
**Isabelle Durant (Verts/ALE)**

Subject: Assessment of toxic effects of pesticides on bees

Keen, rightly, to review the assessment mechanism for systemic substances, DG Sanco commissioned the European Plant Protection Organization (EPPO), as a body expert in the field, to carry out this work. As EPPO was also aware of flaws in the assessments, it asked the International Commission for Plant-Bee Relationships (ICPBR) to come up with new assessment guidelines for the Commission.

The ICPBR assigned this work to three working groups. The fact that two of these were chaired by representatives of phytopharmaceutical companies (Roland Becker from BASF-Agro and Mike Coulson from Syngenta) gives rise to serious concerns. In the view of some people it is not at all surprising that their conclusions minimise chronic toxicity: chronic toxicity is quite simply not taken into account in the new guidelines published by EPPO. The way in which the Commission is handling this subject and has delegated the public expertise is rather surprising, and the refusal to assess the chronic toxicity of pesticides is perplexing, to say the least, as it is an obvious fact that living organisms are chronically exposed to pesticides.

It would appear evident that the ongoing review of procedures to assess the effects of pesticides – and more specifically of neurotoxic insecticides – on bees must incorporate the real risks to bees and be based on more credible guidelines than those published by EPPO. What guarantees can the Commission give in this respect?