

**Question for written answer E-5896/2010
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Elena Oana Antonescu (PPE)

Subject: Food security

In 2006, a new term entered into veterinary medical vocabulary: colony collapse disorder. That disorder relates to a reduction in bee numbers and is linked to viruses, pollution levels, radiation levels and pesticide levels. Bee numbers are believed to have fallen by 25% in Germany, and by around half a million in France. In response to this, clothianidin, which is a pesticide observed to be poisonous to bees, has been banned in Germany. The French State has taken similar measures to Germany and has banned imidacloprid, which is another pesticide linked to colony collapse disorder.

Commission studies show the contribution pollination makes to European agriculture to be worth at least EUR 22 million a year. Researchers at the University of Reading have suggested that ever-decreasing levels of pollination will mean an inevitable rise in the price of foodstuffs and biofuels. 84% of crops need pollination. An FAO study entitled 'Economic Valuation of Pollination Services' has shown fruit and vegetables such as apples, oranges, onions, carrots, potatoes sunflowers and coffee to be the plants most affected.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has made protecting bees a priority in its Strategic Plan 2011-2015, owing primarily to the contribution bees make to global food security.

In view of the WHO's Strategic Plan, does the Commission plan to take fresh measures to protect bees?

Will the Commission create a mechanism for informing farmers on new findings published in specialist journals?