

**Question for written answer E-002694/2013  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

**Karl-Heinz Florenz (PPE), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE), Małgorzata Handzlik (PPE), Alojz Peterle (PPE) and Anne Delvaux (PPE)**

Subject: Moratorium or partial ban on neonicotinoids, postponement of vote

At the start of 2013 the EFSA identified a number of risks posed to bees by three neonicotinoid insecticides (clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam). Although the EFSA could not finalise the risk assessment due to shortcomings in the available data, on 31 January the Commission decided – presumably guided by the precautionary principle – to call for a partial two-year ban on the three neonicotinoids in question, which would have applied to the cultivation of maize, sunflowers, rape and cotton. The use of pesticides on winter cereals and plants which do not attract bees would still have been allowed. The ban would have entered into force in the summer. According to the press, however, the vote which was originally scheduled for the end of February has now been cancelled, apparently because the Commission needs to negotiate further with the Member States. Various environmental organisations have suggested that the vote has been postponed because of pressure from the chemical industry.

1. On what grounds has the Commission postponed the vote?
2. What factors or new developments have led to the Commission changing its position on the possibility of a ban it proposed a few weeks ago?
3. Before announcing its intention to impose a ban, did the Commission obtain an assessment of its potential impact or the claims to which it may give rise?
4. What other research will be commissioned by the Commission, via the EFSA or similar bodies, in order to allow the risks to be evaluated in (more) detail?