

**Question for written answer E-012978/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Risk assessment of plant protection products on bees

Following the publication of its scientific opinion on the science behind the risk assessment of plant protection products on honey bees, solitary bees and bumblebees¹, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has revised the assessment scheme of the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO) and created a new Guidance Document (GD) on the risk assessment of plant protection products on bees². In its scientific opinion, EFSA criticised the absence of any assessment of the sublethal effects of plant protection products (PPP) on bees.

1. Why are sublethal toxicity tests not addressed in the proposed EFSA GD? It is the sublethal toxicity of plant protection products that independent scientists and beekeepers are warning of. The homing flight test, for instance, is well described in the open literature and was promoted in the EFSA scientific opinion. Information on it was present in the first draft of the GD but was then removed. One single test covers learning, orientation, memory and mobility.
2. What is DG SANCO planning to do in order to swiftly obtain protocols usable by the industry, given that no international protocol exists for chronic toxicity tests or hypopharyngeal tests? Is DG SANCO planning to provide EFSA with a mandate to gather international experts to draw up these tests? Will there be a budget to ensure that independent experts will be reimbursed for their time and travel?
3. The development and ring-testing of such tests is usually carried out at OECD level. OECD methodologies are not developed in an independent manner, as industry is always well represented and is involved in the drafting of the protocols. Industry and civil organisations do not only have consultative power in this context; they can influence the final outcome of protocols. Can you guarantee that EFSA will take the lead in the establishment of such protocols, to ensure that organisations with strong conflicts of interest like the OECD or EPPO do not influence EU policy, as has been the case in the past?

¹ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/2668.htm>

² <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3295.htm>