

ESA_13.0324: ESA-Info on COM announcement to move forward with ban of neonicotinoid pesticides after also Appeal Committee fails to reach qualified majority

Following an indecisive vote of the Appeal Committee today, the Commission (SANCO) announced that it intends to move forward with its plans to restrict the use of three neonicotinoid pesticides (imidacloprid, clothianidin and thiamethoxam) in view of their alleged link with bee deaths across the EU from December 1st.

While a majority of member states backed a European Commission proposal today, the required 'qualified' majority of governments was not reached either for or against. Some 15 member states supported the proposal, eight were opposed and four abstained in a second vote in the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH). (The first vote last month brought no qualified majority either, leading the Commission to put the plan to an Appeal Committee).

Our information on the voting of MS is as follows:

In favour of SANCO proposal : 15 MS : BE, BU, DK, DE, EE, SP, FR, CY, LV, LU, SI, MT, NL, PL, SE : 187 votes

Abstention : 4 MS : IE, GR, LI, FI : 33 votes

Against SANCO proposal : 8 MS : CZ, IT, HU, RO, SK, AT, PT, UK: 125 votes

In such a case of absence of a qualified majority, the COM may now put its proposal for final adoption to the College of Commissioners.

It is not yet clear how quickly this may now happen and if an under what conditions the required unanimity of the College may be achieved.

We expect the process to take around two weeks with final publication in the Official Journal in 4 weeks and coming into force right after.

Next steps:

Attached you will find the text as voted in the Appeal Committee (esa_13.0325).

According to our interpretation, this text can NOT be changed in the discussion of the College.

Any change would trigger a new proposal to be discussed again at the Standing Committee / Appeal Committee.

This is highly unlikely.

However, ESA will issue a Press Release calling for such further considerations, together with our principal criticism of today's decision (content and process).

n.b.: The Commission had originally wanted the restrictions to come into force on July 1st in order not to affect the sowing season for maize.

According to the SANCO proposal, the measures should now come into force on December 1st which would mean that the products can still be used for OSR this summer.

SANCO also stated that as soon as new information is available, and at the latest within 2 years, the Commission will review the conditions of approval of the 3 neonicotinoids, taking into account all relevant scientific and technical developments.

This point needs further discussion, also with the alliance of ESA/ECPA/COPA to consider how we can speed up this process.

A first respective meeting will be scheduled shortly.

We will keep you updated on any further developments.