

**Question for written answer E-004617/2013
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Ivo Vajgl (ALDE)

Subject: Measures to protect bees and other insects against certain pesticides to improve food security in the EU

On 15 March 2013 the Commission proposed a two-year ban on the use of pesticides called neonicotinoids, which are toxic to bees and other pollinators. That proposal failed to gain the required majority, with the UK and Germany among those who voted against. The toxicity of neonicotinoids has been confirmed by several scientific studies, including research carried out in 2012 by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and a Greenpeace study published on 9 April 2013. Neonicotinoids can be lethal to bees and other pollinators. Even small doses lower their resistance to disease and parasites, impair their health and reduce their chances of survival.

Food production is highly dependent on bees and other insects, which play a vital role in pollinating plants, but the lives of those insects, and therefore the future of farming, are endangered by pesticides. Greenpeace points out as that one-third of European food is produced with the help of pollinating insects, *'a collapse in bee populations would put agriculture at risk, with dire consequences for European food security'*.

How does the Commission intend to continue its efforts to achieve a ban on as many as possible of the pesticides which are toxic for bees and other pollinators?

What specific measures will the Commission adopt in 2013 to encourage a transition from intensive to ecological agriculture as quickly as possible, as that too could protect bees against death and disease?