



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Deputy Director General for food sustainability

Brussels
SANTE.E4/ (2021)5580710

Dear Dr Url,

Subject: Mandate to EFSA to revise the Guidance on the risk assessment of plant protection products on bees (*Apis mellifera*, *Bombus* spp. and solitary bees)

On 11 March 2019, the Commission sent a mandate (Ref. Ares(2019)1608315) to EFSA with the request to review the Guidance Document on the Risk Assessment of Plant Protection Products on Bees¹ by March 2021.

As specified in the terms of reference to this mandate, EFSA was requested to take into account planned and on-going discussions initiated by the Commission on defining specific environmental protection goals and to review the risk assessment guidance based on the specific protection goals agreed during this process.

I would hereby like to inform you that, at the AGRIFISH Council of 28 June 2021², Ministers overall supported a specific protection goal for honeybees for the entire EU corresponding to a value of 10% as the maximum permitted level of honey bee colony size reduction following pesticide exposure. Therefore, EFSA should take into account this specific protection goal for honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) for the further work on the review of the Bee Guidance Document.

I would also like to thank EFSA for the excellent support provided during the last months in preparing scientific information, which was essential for the discussions involving different fora on setting this protection goal. Recognising that, as pointed out by EFSA, there are still data gaps as regards knowledge on wild bees, I count on your continued support to enable pragmatic decisions for setting specific protection goals for bumblebees and solitary bees.

¹ EFSA (European Food Safety Authority), 2013. Guidance on the risk assessment of plant protection products on bees (*Apis mellifera*, *Bombus* spp. and solitary bees). EFSA Journal 2013;11(7):3295, 268pp., doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2013.3295

² [Farming ministers reaffirm need for a new approach to protecting honey bees - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/press/2021/06/28/20210628-agrifish-council)

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EFSA published an outline for the revision of the Bee Guidance Document in 2019 upon agreement with the Commission. An update of this outline seems necessary given the time that was needed to set specific protection goals for bees and the difficult working conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic. I hereby ask EFSA for an updated outline to be agreed between EFSA and the Commission within 3 months of receipt of this letter.

My services remain at your disposal for further information.

Yours sincerely,

Claire Bury

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