



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**Louvain la Neuve, April 27, 2016**

**Thiacloprid honey:  
European beekeepers oppose the raising of  
Maximum Residues Limits (continue...)**

**Recently, the Commission and EU member states agreed to raise the Maximum Residue Limit (MRL), for the pesticide thiacloprid in honey, to 0.2 mg/kg. As a direct result, bees, pollinators and people will be exposed to even higher concentrations of this neonicotinoid insecticide. In respect of bees, these increased levels of thiacloprid exceed those which produce toxic effects. Consequently, this action will damage biodiversity, by increasing the loss of bees and pollinators, indirectly affecting productivity in farming areas. It will also erode the iconic status of honey as: a healthy, nutritious, pesticide-free food.**

On 15 April 2016, the **Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed** passed an amendment, proposed by Germany, to increase the MRLs for the thiacloprid in honey. Thiacloprid is a neonicotinoid not yet target of any restriction in use, differently from other molecules like imidacloprid, clothianidin and thiamethoxam. This decision was rushed through in a vote without previous discussion; the process was done by plant protection experts, instead of by experts in chemical residues and food safety. France and Slovenia abstained.

This seemingly small regulatory change directly threatens the health of European citizens; thiacloprid is classified by the European Chemical Agency (ECHA) as a carcinogen (class 2) and also as repro-toxic (class 1b). Moreover, the increase of MRLs, for thiacloprid in honey, directly threatens both bees and the entire beekeeping sector.

Francesco Panella, president of Bee Life, said:

*"This is yet another example where society is forced to bear the health and environmental costs, while business reaps the financial profits. It also shows the lack of global vision of the Commission on the pesticide problem. Raising pesticide residue levels in our honey puts the 'profit motive' above: consumer health, environmental protection and agricultural productivity. To place bees and pollinators at even greater risk than they already are, is both immoral and impractical. At a time when the European Union is fighting against endocrine disruptors and requires the industry to eliminate PCBs and phthalates from their products, she encourages farmers to spread on the field another endocrine disruptor and multiply by four the "precaution" dose for human consumption, even if it is impossible to determine a no risk dose. We beekeepers will undoubtedly suffer a loss of consumer confidence in the purity of our products; we face increased costs for laboratory-analysis and we must endure even greater poisoning and deaths among our bees.*

*We - the citizens of Europe - witness, yet again, a declining environmental quality in terms of: air, water and food. Thank you decision makers!"*

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