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18 August 2020

[Martin Häusling MEP, 60 Rue Wiertz, B-1047 Bruxelles](#)

Frans Timmermans

Executive Vice President of the European Commission for the European Green Deal

Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius

Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries

Commissioner Stella Kyriakides

European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety

Subject: Use of neonicotinoids in France

Dear honourable Executive Vice-President Timmermans,
dear honourable Commissioner Sinkevičius,
dear honourable Commissioner Kyriakides,

it has come to our attention that France intends to use neonicotinoids for their upcoming sugar beet harvest, drawing on emergency authorisation for these banned insecticides.

Neonicotinoids act on bees' central nervous systems, killing them or crippling them so they cannot return to their hives. Their use thus seriously endangers our ecosystems and biodiversity and has therefore been banned in the EU in 2018.

Granting France emergency authorisation will put in place a chain reaction: other countries will feel entitled to likewise refer to emergency authorisations rather than investing in alternatives. The French environment minister has come up herself with a number of non-deadly alternatives to neonicotinoids when growing sugar beets. She speaks of organic production and smaller plots in her tweet on the intended neonicotinoid use. She also intends to intensify research into alternatives. This could long have happened.

Allowing for the use of neonicotinoids will once more attempt to treat the symptoms of a broken system rather than to focus on prevention. Climate change has no doubt contributed to the situation that France experiences now: a mild winter and a hot April have made aphids thrive. Unfavourable climatic conditions will certainly become the new normal as global temperatures are



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on the rise. A short-sided allegedly ‘remedy’ as this intended use of neonicotinoids, will not provide for the urgently needed green transition.

I therefore urge you to not grant France emergency authorisation, making use of article 53 of the EU pesticide regulation.

We are looking forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Häusling, MEP