



COM Envi Calls for Step-Up in Pollinator Protection

March 19, 2020



In response to the EU Pollinators Initiative [1], launched by the European Commission in 2018, the Committee on the Environment, Health and Public Safety (COM Envi) of European Parliament calls for improved measures for the protection of managed and wild pollinators. In a Motion for a Resolution [2], MEPs take into account many complex aspects relevant to the health of pollinators. Considering challenges from directives and procedures, and valuing the role of pollinators for biodiversity, this new call opens new possibilities for the future.

[- European Parliament's MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission pursuant to Rule 132\(2\) of the Rules of Procedure on the EU Pollinators Initiative\(2019/2803\(RSP\)\) - COM ENVI -](#)

The European Parliament recognises the importance of the proper development of the EU Pollinators Initiative. It is an opportunity for European institutions and EU Member States to develop a new outlook on the pollinators crisis. First, the motion recognises the critical role that pollinators play in agriculture and biodiversity. The call is not only for improved protection of managed honeybees but also of wild pollinators. Better efforts would also be a response to the conclusions by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) [3], which “issued an urgent call to massively scale up species conservation action in response to the escalating biodiversity crisis”.



A key point mentioned in the motion is the connection between unsustainable use of plant protection products use and pollinator decline. Not only pesticides but also herbicides impact the overall health of pollinators [4], therefore requiring further attention by policymakers.

The protection of pollinators also requires more indirect measures. The conservation of an adequate habitat in which pollinators can thrive is necessary. Therefore, efforts shall include the preservation and restoration of indigenous flowers and overall sufficient resource availability for pollinators.

Another important point mentioned by the motion that is often left aside is the social and cultural value that pollinators have: “in the form of remedies, products, art and traditions”.

Finally, the motion links pollinator protection to the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). It recognises that, up until now, “agri-environmental measures have not been implemented on a sufficient scale across the EU to compensate for the loss of pollinator habitats and the decline in habitat quality; whereas greening has failed to provide significant improvement”. Efforts to tackle the pollinators decline then require significant improvements. Devising and implementing such new efforts become a priority previous to the adoption of the new CAP.

The motion mentions some key measures that BeeLife fully supports and continues to provide further insights. Among these, we highlight:

- Insisting on the importance of pollinators for agriculture and food security.
- Targeting the **improved protection of over approximately 2000 species of pollinators**.
- Promoting **biodiversity in both rural and urban areas**.
- **Integrating the EU Pollinators Initiative and its results into the development of the post-2020 EU Biodiversity Strategy [5]**.
- **Boosting biodiversity** and thereby **fostering the occurrence and quality of pollinators’ habitats on agricultural land** must become a principal aim in the development of the future CAP.
- **Pesticide reduction plan should be set out in each Member State’s National Action Plan, to be later reviewed by the European Commission**.
- Development and promotion of **high-quality advice for farmers** on how to promote and protect biodiversity.
- **In case Member States issue emergency authorisations for neonicotinoids, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) should be systematically consulted**. The European Commission should also **enforce the minimum standards that these notifications of emergency authorisations should abide**.
- **“Calls on the Commission and Member States to ensure the full adoption of the 2013 EFSA bee guidance as a matter of urgency**, including the requirements relating to chronic and larvae toxicity as well as species other than honeybees”.
- **Introduction of a pollinators indicator in the CAP**, currently under development following the EU Pollinators Initiative.
- **Supporting eco-innovation in agriculture and cooperation with researchers**.



These and other remarks in the European Parliament's motion for a resolution need to be implemented for the future of pollinators. The engagement towards better conditions for pollinators and their value demand their serious consideration and effective implementation. The legislative body of the European Union is paving the road to change the troubling status of biodiversity and pollinators. BeeLife fully supports these improved measures for the future of our pollinators.

For more information on BeeLife's recommendations for the future of the Common Agricultural Policy, visit: <http://bit.ly/CAPforPollinators>

Also read our proposal for the development of a pollinator index, an indicator for the impact of policies on the environment based on the status of pollinators: http://bit.ly/Pollinators_Policy

And our response for the ideal shaping of the EU Pollinators Initiative: <http://bit.ly/IdealPollinatorInitiative>

[1] European Commission. (2018). COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS EU Pollinators Initiative, COM(2018) 395 final:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1528213737113&uri=CELEX:52018DC0395>

[2] European Parliament. (2019). Motion for a Resolution MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure on the EU Pollinators Initiative(2019/2803(RSP)). Recovered from:

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/B-9-2019-0233_EN.pdf

[3] International Union for Conservation of Nature. 2019. IUCN calls for halt to species decline by 2030. Recovered from:

<https://www.iucn.org/news/species-survival-commission/201910/iucn-calls-halt-species-decline-2030>

[4] Bohnenblust, E. W., Vaudo, A. D., Egan, J. F., Mortensen, D. A., & Tooker, J. F. (2016). Effects of the herbicide dicamba on nontarget plants and pollinator visitation. *Environmental toxicology and chemistry*, 35(1), 144-151.

[5] The next EU Biodiversity strategy is expected to be published in 2021, a consultation period has recently been closed in January 2020.