



Louvain-la-Neuve, June 3, 2013

Subject: European Week of Bees and Pollination - Concerns about the partnership with the 'Bees Biodiversity Network'

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

The 2<sup>nd</sup> European Week of Bees and Pollination <sup>1</sup> will take place at the European Parliament in the beginning of June 2013. The European Beekeeping Coordination <sup>2</sup> and Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe <sup>3</sup> welcome the interest of such event on bee welfare and bee health. However, we would like to bring to your attention our concerns about the partnership with the 'Bees Biodiversity Network' <sup>4</sup>, a French network which was in charge of the event organisation in 2012 and which is a partner this year.

We are concerned regarding the fact that the Bees Biodiversity Network's position goes against the claims of almost the whole beekeeping sector. While the majority of beekeepers express that bees suffer predominantly from the use of powerful neurotoxic pesticides, the Bees Biodiversity Network restricts their negative impacts on bees to situations where farmers are misusing these pesticides <sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, this network diverts the discussions towards less controversial risk factors as pathogens or the lack of nutritional sources. These are in fact factors to be considered when understanding bees's health. However, we have observed that intentions of this Network are to completely neglect the impact of agro-chemicals and the present intensified agricultural model on the bees' good development.

Indeed, this network is supported by the pesticide company BASF and several French grain cooperatives, belonging to one of the most intensive user of pesticides in the European farming sector <sup>6</sup>.

Finally, the Bees Biodiversity Network has no representativeness within the European or French beekeeping sector, or civil society. While Europe counts hundreds of thousands of beekeepers, the Bees Biodiversity Network gathers only sixty.

We believe it is essential to make the distinction between independent and representative stakeholders when dealing with the protection of pollination, bees and wild pollinators. We hope this information would be of interest for you.

Yours sincerely,

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Spokesman for the  
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## Notes

1 <http://www.gembloux.ulg.ac.be/beeweek2013/>

2 The European Beekeeping Coordination gathers beekeeping associations in the EU. Its main activity is to study the impact of environmental threats on bees, such as pesticides or GMOs. [www.bee-life.eu](http://www.bee-life.eu)

3 Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe has worked for years to minimize the negative impacts and to replace the use of harmful pesticides by environmentally friendly alternatives. - <http://www.pan-europe.info>

4 <http://www.jacheres-apicoles.fr/index/chap-accueil/>

5 <http://www.jacheres-apicoles.fr/168-la-surmortalite-des-abeilles-faits-et-chiffres.html>

6 [www.jacheres-apicoles.fr/index/chap-qui\\_sommes\\_nous/](http://www.jacheres-apicoles.fr/index/chap-qui_sommes_nous/)