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EU Court puts end to emergency use of bee-toxic pesticides

The EU's highest court ruled on 19 January 2023 that EU countries should no longer be allowed temporary exemptions for banned, bee-toxic neonicotinoid pesticides, putting half of all such derogations to an end.

The ruling came in the wake of a request for annulment before the Belgian Administrative Court on the derogation given by Belgium for the use of these bee-toxic insecticides on sugar beets. The request was brought by campaign groups Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe and Nature & Progrès Belgium together with a Belgian beekeeper.

The plant protection products in question – imidacloprid, clothianidin and thiamethoxam – belong to a class of pesticides known as neonicotinoids, which are chemically similar to nicotine, and target insects.