



SUMMARY REPORT

Working Group on “*Apiculture and Bee Health*” European Bee Week 2016

4 February 2016
European Parliament, Strasbourg
Part I

The working group on “*Apiculture and Bee Health*” of the EP Intergroup on “*Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Sustainable Development*” gathered to discuss the 5th edition of the European Bee Week taking place 13-17 June 2016 in Brussels.

Mariya Gabriel, MEP and Chair of the Working Group on “*Apiculture and Bee Health*” recalled that the working group aims to ensure that all topics related to bee health and pollination remain on the EU agenda as well as reinforce awareness of decision-makers and citizens, while providing a platform to tackle the challenges that beekeepers face. The first half of the meeting was dedicated to discussing the upcoming 2016 Bee Week.

Pierre Testu, Réseau Biodiversité pour les Abeilles presented a short background to the European Week of the Bee and Pollination as well as an outline for the upcoming edition. It was emphasised that the spirit of Bee Week is the exchange of views that takes place with all stakeholders including scientists, beekeepers, farmers, policy-makers, MEPs, NGOs, and international agencies. It was said that Bee Week is a positive event where the aim is to find solutions by thinking in collaborative models in order to improve the situation for bees and beekeepers. The week consists of a series of events, which includes a Scientific Symposium, a High-level Conference, the Bee Village outside the Parliament showcasing products and projects from Member States, an Exhibition inside the Parliament, and a Beekeeper and Farmer Forum. Bee Week was established in 2012 with the theme “*Biodiversity, a culture to share*”, which featured a green exhibition outside of the Parliament showcasing a mix of flowers, and representing in a symbolic way a bee. It is hoped that something similar can be organised for the 5th edition as the exhibition had a very strong impact. The importance of involving MEPs was also underlined as it assures that Bee Week gains the attention it deserves as well as helps keep bees high on the agenda. It was stressed that Bee Week must also be echoed within the Member States where MEPs can help by engaging with beekeepers and farmers in the field. The involvement of the Commission, international agencies, and the scientific community also make it a high-level event providing further credibility. It was underlined that industry is also an important participant as it is essential to engage with all stakeholders. In 2013 with the theme “*Protecting Bees*” an international scientific conference was added to the agenda gathering scientist from around the world. In 2014 “*A new spring for bees*” H.S.H Prince Albert II of Monaco attended the high-level conference providing further visibility. The theme for 2015 was “*New challenges for bees*”



where a Beekeepers Forum was added further enlarging the dialogue. Since its establishment a multitude of actors have engaged from across Europe on topics related to bee health, pesticides, biodiversity, wild pollinators, indicators, and EU strategy to name a few. It was stressed that this yearly event helps maintain issues related to bee health and pollination on the EU agenda. The 5th edition of the European Bee Week will be held from 13-17 June 2016. A scientific symposium will be held on 13 June in Gembloux followed by the high-level conference in the Parliament on 14 June where Prince Albert II of Monaco has confirmed his attendance. The Bee Village will be featured all week in front of the Parliament, and an exhibition will be set up inside. A movie screening will take place as well as the beekeeper forum, which will also include farmers to further enhance the dialogue.

The discussion that followed highlighted the importance of involving beekeepers and farmers from all constituencies, and the Chair called for the creation of a task force of MEPs to prepare for this established and key event. MEPs from Bulgaria, Austria, Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Croatia, United Kingdom, and Slovenia participated and agreed to create the task force. The discussion also highlighted various topics, which should be raised at the upcoming edition including cooperation between beekeepers and farmers, pesticides, the impacts of climate change on bees and pollinators, imports of honey and beehive products from outside Europe, mortality rates, and reproduction of queen bees. Moreover, MEPs agreed to consult with beekeepers from their regions in order to highlight further priorities.