

European countries can ban pesticides even if approved by EU, continent's highest court rules

Europe's highest court [European Court of Justice, ECJ] has concluded that member states have the right to ban pesticides even if they are permitted at the EU level, provided they officially inform the European Commission.

The [ruling](#), issued on Thursday (8 October), was taken after the French government made the decision to prohibit the use of certain neonicotinoid pesticides authorized by the EU executive.

Neonicotinoids are a class of pesticides which are chemically similar to nicotine and target insects. They have come under fire in recent years for contributing to the decline of bees through disrupting their sense of orientation, memory and mode of reproduction.

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Following the decision, the French crop protection association, the *Union des industries de la protection des plantes* (UIPP), brought an action before the French highest administrative court, the Council of State.

The pesticide industry's lobby sought the annulment of the government act on the basis that it was incompatible with the EU regulation which harmonizes the authorization of active substances and plant protection products (PPPs) in the 27 member states.

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The ECJ ruling will set a precedent upon which other national courts or tribunals will base decisions when a similar issue is raised.

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