

The European Union's top court on Thursday upheld the EU's partial ban on three insecticides linked to harming bees, preventing their use on certain crops.

The European Court of Justice dismissed an appeal by Bayer to overturn a lower EU court's 2018 decision to uphold the ban.

The ruling covers three active substances - imidacloprid developed by Bayer CropScience, clothianidin developed by Takeda Chemical Industries and Bayer CropScience, as well as Syngenta's thiamethoxam.

A Bayer spokesperson said it was disappointed by the verdict and stood by the safety of the products, which continue to be used in other regions with appropriate risk mitigation measures applied.

"The verdict seems to allow the (European) Commission almost carte blanche to review existing approvals upon the slightest evidence, which need not even be new scientific data," the spokesperson said.

The Commission in 2013 restricted the use of the neonicotinoids, meaning they could not be used on maize, rapeseed and some spring cereals. They could still be used for other crops, such as sugar beet.

The Commission had reviewed the approvals because of the loss of bee colonies due to the misuse of pesticides.

Bayer had said there was insufficient new scientific knowledge to justify the restrictions. The EU's highest court on Thursday dismissed that appeal and ordered Bayer to bear its own costs plus those of other parties.