



Brdo pri Lukovici, 02. February 2026

Subject: Requesting to expedite measures that will protect European beekeeping from an influx of fraudulent honey

Dear Commissioner Hansen,

On behalf of the European Beekeeping Association (EBA), which represents more than 420,000 beekeepers from 32 countries, we are writing to express our profound concern regarding the potential implications of the EU-Mercosur trade agreement for European beekeeping and the integrity of honey quality standards within the European Union. As members of the EBA Scientific Committee on the Quality of Bee Products, we have been tasked with conveying the Association's position on this critical matter. The impending ratification of this agreement has once again exposed critical gaps in our capacity to monitor and verify the authenticity and quality of honey entering the European market.

The Mercosur agreement will significantly increase honey imports into the EU. The EBA firmly supports the principle of free trade but believes this must be predicated on a fundamental requirement: all honey entering our market must be produced according to the same rigorous standards we demand of European beekeepers. Without adequate verification mechanisms, we risk undermining both consumer protection and the viability of European beekeeping. In addition, it is essential to emphasize that while honey can be traded internationally, the critical ecosystem service of pollination cannot be imported. European beekeepers provide irreplaceable pollination services that underpin European agricultural production. The economic viability of European beekeeping operations depends significantly on honey production revenues, which enable beekeepers to maintain healthy colonies and provide essential pollination services.

Currently, the European Union lacks the essential infrastructure needed to ensure effective market surveillance:

- There is no designated EU reference laboratory for honey authentication and quality assessment. This represents a significant institutional deficit that leaves us unable to establish standardized testing methodologies, validate fraud-detection methods, or provide authoritative technical guidance to member states.



- Sophisticated honey fraud techniques—including adulteration with undeclared syrups, misrepresentation of geographical origin, and falsification of botanical source—require advanced analytical capabilities that are not uniformly available across the EU.

Recently, the EU Honey Platform was established to address these challenges precisely. However, progress has been insufficient given the urgency of the situation. The EBA respectfully calls upon the Commission to:

- accelerate the Honey Platform's work with concrete timelines and deliverables
- prioritize the establishment of technical working groups on authentication methods
- ensure adequate representation from scientific institutions with proven expertise in honey analysis
- allocate appropriate resources to translate Honey Platform recommendations into binding regulations

The EBA urges the Commission to immediately designate and fund an EU Reference Laboratory (EURL) for honey. This laboratory should be tasked with:

- Developing and validating harmonized analytical methods for honey authentication
- Providing reference materials and proficiency testing for national laboratories
- Offering scientific and technical support to enforcement authorities

We emphasize the urgency of immediate action rather than deferring this critical infrastructure for another decade. The legal framework for establishing a European Union Reference Laboratory (EURL) for honey is clearly defined in Regulation (EU) 2017/625. The Honey Platform must operate within this established framework and should urgently promote the adoption of delegated acts to establish the Honey EURL in full accordance with Articles 92–94 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625.

However, establishing an EURL alone will not adequately address the systemic challenges we face. A second critical deficiency exists in border control legislation, where honey is classified as a low-risk public health product. Consequently, only proportionate physical checks are applied at borders, permitting the majority of imported shipments to enter the EU without comprehensive controls. In practice, this classification has facilitated honey fraud at EU entry points.

The EBA therefore respectfully proposes that the Commission consider introducing a targeted exception within border control legislation to ensure that physical checks systematically apply to products classified as high-risk for fraud, regardless of their classification regarding public health risk. Almost all EU directives and regulations contain provisions for such exceptions. If



European
Beekeeping
Association

Head office: Brdo pri Lukovici 8
1225 Lukovica, SLOVENIJA
eba@ebaurope.eu
<https://ebaurope.eu/>

there exists a genuine commitment to combating food fraud, these provisions must be appropriately enforced.

European beekeepers operate under some of the world's most stringent regulations regarding veterinary treatments, environmental protection, and production practices. These standards come with high costs. When imports enter our market without the same level of scrutiny, we create an uneven playing field that threatens the economic viability of sustainable beekeeping across Europe. Moreover, this is fundamentally a consumer protection issue. European citizens have the right to know that the honey they purchase—whether of European or third-country origin—meets the quality and authenticity standards they expect.

On behalf of the EBA, we respectfully urge you to treat this matter with the urgency it deserves. The establishment of an EU Reference Laboratory for honey and the acceleration of the Honey Platform's work should be immediate priorities. European beekeepers, consumers, and the integrity of our market depend on swift and decisive action.

The EBA and its Scientific Committee on the Quality of Bee Products remain available to provide scientific support for any initiatives in this area.

Respectfully,

President Boštjan Noc – President of European Beekeeping Association

Dr. Nik Lupše –Head of EBA Scientific Committees, on behalf of the Scientific Committee for Safety and Quality of Bee Products

Contributing members of the Scientific Committee for Safety and Quality of Bee Products:

Dr. Juraj Majtan

Prof. Dr. Dražen Lušić



European
Beekeeping
Association

Head office: Brdo pri Lukovici 8
1225 Lukovica, SLOVENIJA
eba@ebaurope.eu
<https://ebaurope.eu/>

Prof. Dr. Andreas Thrasyvoulou

Dr. Alviija Šalaševičienė

Sent for information to:

- The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI)
- Members of the EU Parliament
- Published on the EBA website and social media

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