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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate E – Markets  
The Director (acting)

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**Subject:** Protection of the European honey market and need to reinforce the fight against fraud

Dear Mr Noc,

Thank you for your letter of 2 February addressed to Commissioner Hansen on the protection of the European honey market and the need to strengthen the fight against fraud. The Commissioner has asked me to reply on his behalf.

First, I would like to reassure you that the Commission is fully aware of the importance of beekeeping for agriculture, notably through its contribution to the environment and pollination. All honey marketed in the EU—without exception—must comply with quality and labelling requirements laid down in the Honey Directive <sup>(1)</sup>, subject to controls and, in case of non-compliance, sanctions by Member States' competent authorities.

With regard to imports, market access volumes included in the EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement may contribute to meeting EU demand for honey while ensuring the diversification of imports into the Union. A safeguard mechanism is also put in place to protect the EU market in the event of serious harm caused by imports.

As you are aware, the project to harmonise analytical methods (HarmHoney project) is ongoing. It has entered the interlaboratory validation phase, and results are expected by the end of next year. High-quality research requires time for the scientific process to unfold and cannot be meaningfully accelerated.

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<sup>(1)</sup> Council Directive 2001/110/EC of 20 December 2001 relating to honey. OJ L 10, 12.1.2002, pp. 47–52  
ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2001/110/oj>

The Commission is mandated by the Council and the Parliament to adopt, by 14 June 2028, implementing acts laying down methods of analysis to detect adulterated honey. This legal framework will enable national authorities to further strengthen official controls and traceability measures for both EU-produced and imported honey.

The Commission takes note of issues raised in relation to the classification of honey within the Union's risk-based framework for official controls. Under the current legislative set-up, the organisation of controls at border control posts is determined primarily by considerations linked to public and animal health risks.

Within this framework, the prevention and detection of food fraud also constitute important objectives of the Union's control system. Controls are therefore planned and carried out on the basis of risk assessment, complemented where appropriate by enhanced cooperation, information exchange and coordinated actions at Union level. In light of evolving evidence and risk analyses, the Commission will continue to reflect on whether further adjustments may be justified for products identified as potentially vulnerable to fraudulent practices, while ensuring that any such considerations remain proportionate and fully consistent with the existing legal framework.

Regarding the possible establishment of a European Union Reference Laboratory (EURL) for honey, this issue was discussed during the Honey Platform meeting of 12 November 2025. The state of play of the legal framework for establishing a European Union Reference Laboratory (EURL) or a European Union Reference Centre (EURC) was presented, and the importance of avoiding overlaps with existing laboratories, ensuring financial viability, and maintaining coherence with the broader EU authenticity and integrity strategy was highlighted.

In this context, members of the Honey Platform have been invited to reflect on the scope, structure and expected benefits of a potential EURL or EURC dedicated to honey before any further steps are taken. These matters may be discussed again at one of the forthcoming Honey Platform meetings.

Finally, I would like to thank you and the other members of the Honey Platform for your valuable work in providing the Commission with advice, data and information. Your contributions support reflection on possible future delegated and implementing acts, as foreseen in the Honey Directive.

Yours sincerely,

Electronically signed

Brigitte MISONNE