

REQUESTS FROM NORDIC AND BALTIC BEEKEEPERS' ORGANISATIONS TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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European Commission:

Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development

Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety

On protection of EU honey market and emergency support for beekeepers

On behalf of the Nordic and Baltic beekeepers' organisations that have signed this letter, we ask the European Commission to provide immediately an effective solution to protect honey market and preserve beekeeping sector of the European Union (EU), which is currently in a crisis due to large amount of adulterated honey and cheap third-country honey imports from China, Ukraine, which distort EU honey market and destroy EU local beekeepers.

In 2023, the European Commission published main findings of the EU coordinated action "From the Hives"¹. The results of this coordinated action were alarming - 46% of the analysed samples did not meet the requirements of the Honey Directive².

In 2024, the European Professional Beekeepers Association (EPBA) published results of a study³, which analysed honey from German supermarket chains (it should be noted that Germany is the largest honey importer in the EU). These honey samples were tested in Estonian laboratory using DNA sequences analyses, it was found that 80% of these samples did not meet the criteria for natural honey and they are fake honey. The results of these analyses had reaffirmed existence of problems of the fake honey in the EU common market and highlight shortcomings of EU policies to protect EU honey producers.

Due to large amounts of cheap imports of honey from China and Ukraine⁴, wholesale prices of honey have decreased significantly, for example, in Lithuania wholesale price for multi-floral honey is very low - 1.9 EUR/kg. Many Nordic and Baltic beekeepers are forced to sell honey below cost at very low prices to at least partially cover production costs.

The current crisis in honey market demonstrates that there are insufficient EU - wide measures to protect the EU beekeeping sector. The EU safeguard measures are not working effectively enough to prevent decline of beekeeping industry and protect from adversely affect the European Union market of honey. Therefore, these measures shall be immediately revised in order to protect EU honey producers from cheap EU import of honey and fraud with fake honey.

Despite the fact that the European Union has already adopted several important decisions and amendments in Honey Directive, such as, on indication of origin on honey labels, Honey Platform, future EU reference laboratory for honey to improve controls and detect adulteration, however implementation of these decisions in practice is too slow.

¹ EU coordinated action "From the Hives" (Honey 2021-2022) ([internet site about results](#))

² Council Directive 2001/110/EC of 20 December 2001 relating to honey

³ Press release from the President of the European Professional Beekeepers Association 27.09.2024 ([video of press release](#))

⁴ Average unit value of imported honey from China is 1.28 EUR/kg and from Ukraine is 1.75 EUR/kg (January-June 2024) (https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/farming/animal-products/honey_en)

Unfortunately, the new rules adopted in 2024 on the indication of the origin of honey on the label are not yet operational in the EU practice, because these measures on labelling shall apply only from 14 June 2026. There are still no harmonised analysis methods in the EU, which are important for detecting adulterated honey. Under the Honey Directive, the European Commission's plans to adopt implementing acts by 14 June 2028 laying down analytical methods to detect adulterated honey are far too late to protect EU beekeeping sector from collapse and honey consumers from being subject to fraud. As a result of that, there is still no effective solution for this crisis of honey market, European Union's beekeeping sector and many of beekeepers are currently not protected from bankruptcy.

Therefore, on behalf of the Nordic and Baltic Beekeepers' Organisations, we ask the European Commission **immediately**:

- 1) to ensure accreditation of European Union laboratories and approve effective validated analysis methods for detecting adulterated honey.
- 2) to protect the EU common market from adulterated honey entry and ensure effective control mechanisms.
- 3) to implement strong measures to protect the EU honey market from cheap honey imports from third countries, the price of which is currently much lower than the cost of honey in the Nordic and Baltic countries.
- 4) to provide emergency economic incentives for beekeepers in the form of support to ensure the long-term viability of beekeeping farms.

We are looking forward to EU measures finding the appropriate and immediate solution for protection of our beekeepers.

This letter has been signed by the following organisations:

Ålands Beekeeping Association
Danish Beekeepers Association
Estonian Beekeepers' Association
Finnish Beekeepers' Association
Latvian Beekeepers' Association
Lithuanian Beekeepers Association
Norwegian Beekeepers Association
Swedish Beekeepers Association
Swedish Professional Beekeepers Association

Annex

Official approval letters by organisations (9 pages)