



Issue 23 · May 2026

NO BEES LIFE

EBA MAGAZINE

32 COUNTRIES

FROM WHICH EBA HAS MEMBERS (64 beekeeping organizations)

In order of confirmation of the Statute of EBA

430.134 beekeepers



- Serbia
- Slovenia
- North Macedonia
- Bulgaria
- Greece
- Romania
- Malta
- Germany
- Hungary
- Ukraine
- Montenegro
- Lithuania
- Bosnia and Hercegovina
- Sweden
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Poland
- United Kingdom
- Netherlands
- Italy
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TWO YEARS SINCE TAKING OVER THE POSITION OF PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION (EBA)



Dear beekeepers, dear friends of beekeeping,

In February 2024, we founded the European Beekeeping Association (EBA) in Belgrade, and on 22 April 2024, I was unanimously elected as its President. Today, EBA already brings together 32 countries and more than 430,000 beekeepers. This is not just a number – it is a great European family of people united by their love for bees, care for nature, and dedication to producing high-quality bee products.

During these two years, I have devoted an enormous amount of time, energy, and heart to EBA. I perform this work entirely on a voluntary basis – I have not received a single euro for my work, nor reimbursement of material costs.

Everything I do, I do out of conviction, enthusiasm, and the desire to improve conditions for European beekeepers and to protect consumers of bee products.

I am especially pleased that EBA has no membership fee and that there will be none until the end of my presidency. We do not wish to place additional burdens on beekeeping organizations, and therefore I sincerely thank all sponsors who help us so that our work can continue smoothly.

Unfortunately, the truth is also that most of the work rests on a small group of dedicated people. My sincere thanks go to Vice-President Rodoljub Živadinović, Secretary Biljana Tomić, Head of the Scientific Committees Dr. Urška Ratajč during EBA's first year, and Dr. Nik Lupše,



who leads the Scientific Committees today, as well as all members of the Executive and Supervisory Boards who contribute their knowledge, time, and goodwill to building EBA.

Above all, I am grateful and honored that members of the Scientific Committees are part of the EBA family, giving their time, knowledge, and energy to EBA free of charge.

At the same time, I often ask myself why individuals from the Scientific Committees sometimes invest more energy than the leadership of EBA member organizations. Why do we not all become more actively involved? Why are there not more initiatives, proposals, or even criticism? Only together can we grow. Let us be aware that no one else will solve the problems in the beekeeping sector for us.

When I look back, I am proud despite all the challenges. EBA has become an important partner in the international arena. The voice of European beekeepers is now heard in the European Parliament, the European Commission, and

beyond. I thank many Members of the European Parliament for their support, as well as European Commissioner Mr. Hansen. I am convinced that our perseverance, and above all our sincere and concrete initiatives, will ultimately be rewarded.

It is also important that the establishment of EBA has encouraged the activity of other beekeeping organizations across Europe. I welcome this – every positive initiative is valuable.

You can read about what we have done during these two years here:

<https://ebaeurope.eu/a-new-era-for-european-bees-the-ebas-first-two-years-of-success>

You can read about our plans for 2026 here:
<https://ebaeurope.eu/regular-annual-assembly-of-eba>

Everything about the work of EBA is presented in detail in EBA Magazine:

<https://ebaeurope.eu/magazine-no-bees-no-life>

Unfortunately, these two years have not passed without shadows. Alongside the work, I

have also faced many obstacles, lies, and even threats. If I had expected this from multinationals or trade lobbies, I did not expect it from those who should act in unity for the good of beekeepers. That hurts. It hurts deeply.

But I never run from difficulties. Difficulties are a challenge that only makes me stronger. Therefore, until the end of my mandate, I will use all my knowledge, energy, and determination to help European beekeepers drive unfair competition of fake honey from the market. If we stand united, we will succeed.

Consumers deserve to enjoy genuine bee products, real honey, which alone strengthens health. Fake honey, which according to European Commission data accounts for 47% of the market (and according to our data, significantly more), can even be harmful to health.

I sincerely wish that all European beekeepers stand together. That we overcome differences, resentments, and divisions. That we show what a connected, united, and strong beekeeping sector in Europe means. Therefore, I extend a hand of cooperation to all beekeeping associations across Europe. There is no need for formal unification, but it is important that we act together on common goals.

Dear beekeepers, be proud that you are part of a European beekeeping family of more than 420,000 members. Be proud of your work, because beekeeping is not just an activity – it is a mission.

22 April is also Earth Day. Let us remember: without bees, the world would have more than one-third less food, and nature would be far poorer and less balanced. Through pollination, bees preserve plants, enable the production of fruit and many crops on which the nutrition of people and animals depends.

But sadly, without beekeepers in the modern world, the very existence of bees would also be in great question, because it is beekeepers, through their knowledge, dedication, and care, who preserve bee colonies and thereby protect the future of our planet.

Therefore, from the bottom of my heart:
Thank you, beekeepers, for taking care of bees.

Thank you for being part of the largest beekeeping family in Europe – part of EBA!

Boštjan Noč
President of EBA

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EBA WARNS OF “SYSTEMIC FAILURE” IN HONEY MARKET INTEGRITY AT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SUMMIT

April 22nd at the European Parliament, policymakers, scientists, and industry leaders gathered for the high-level conference “EU Honey Market Integrity: Trade Importance and Fraud Risks.” Hosted by MEP Elena Yoncheva, the event addressed a deepening crisis regarding the survival of the European beekeeping sector in the face of sophisticated fraud and a flood of low-priced imports.

Representing over 420,000 beekeepers across 32 countries, Dr. Nik Lupše, head of the Scientific Committees for the European Beekeeping Association (EBA), delivered a sobering assessment of the market. He warned that while the EU is only 63% self-sufficient in honey, domestic producers are being driven out of business by imports entering the Union at prices below €2/kg, which is significantly lower than the European production cost of €8–€12/kg.

Dr. Lupše highlighted a staggering enforcement gap, noting that despite findings that more than half of honey from major exporters is non-compliant, these products continue to reach shelves because the EU lacks the essential infra-

structure to stop them. Specifically, the EBA pointed to the absence of a designated EU Reference Laboratory (EURL) for honey authentication.

Without legally binding analytical methods, Border Control Posts remain powerless to refuse entry to suspicious consignments. The EBA argues that scientific progress via projects like HarmHoney is insufficient without the “legal teeth” – if this trend continues, fraudsters will always be ahead of trusted local producers if lack of political will to tackle this issue continues.

The integrity of the market is further threatened by preferential trade agreements, not only with Mercosur countries, but also countries like Vietnam, Ukraine, and Mexico. The EBA presented data suggesting these nations may be acting as trade hubs, where honey is imported from elsewhere, blended, and re-exported as local product to evade tariffs.

Dr. Lupše emphasized that existing safeguard mechanisms are purely reactive, often only taking effect after the damage to beekeepers is irreversible. He noted that while you can trade



honey, you cannot import pollination, placing the security of the European food chain at risk.

Beyond economic concerns, the EBA raised alarms regarding public health. Fake honey, which is often an overload of refined sugars, lacks the natural enzymes and antioxidants of genuine honey and may contribute to chronic health issues like diabetes and kidney damage. To combat this, the EBA proposes three urgent policy shifts: the reclassification of honey as a high-risk product for fraud to mandate reinforced physical checks, the immediate establishment of an EURL, and the implementation of real-time digital traceability from the hive to the border.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Lupše warned that upcoming mandatory labeling regulations will be technically unenforceable without improved analytical methods and stricter oversight. It was emphasised that the EBA remains ready to provide technical expertise to transform existing legislative tools into a robust shield for European consumers and producers alike.

Thank you to Ms. Yoncheva for organizing the event and expressing her concern. Thank you

also to all participants who were united by the message of the European Beekeepers' Federation. It is now up to politicians to heed the voice of experts and to really protect bees, beekeepers and consumers . . . with actions!



SPEECH BY THE HEAD OF THE EBA SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEES AT THE CONFERENCE IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

EU Honey Market Integrity Conference on Trade Importance and Fraud Risks, hosted by MEP Elena Yoncheva.

Safeguarding the Integrity of the European Honey Market

Distinguished Members of the European Parliament, Esteemed Scientists, and Honored Guests,

I stand before you today representing the European Beekeeping Association and over 420,000 beekeepers from over 30 European countries who serve as the backbone of European agriculture. We find ourselves at a critical crossroads. While we gather to discuss trade and market dynamics, we are actually discussing the survival of an essential ecosystem service, a strategic agricultural sector, and the protection of the European consumer. You can trade honey, but you cannot import pollination.

The European honey market is currently under siege. Despite being approximately 63% self-sufficient—producing 282,000 tonnes against a consumption of 435,000 tonnes—our beekeepers are being driven out of business. The issue is not a lack of demand; it is a systemic failure of market integrity. We are witnessing a flood of low-priced imports, often entering the Union at prices below €2/kg, while European production

costs range between €8 and €12 per kg. This is not fair competition; it is a structural displacement caused by sophisticated fraud, legislative gaps and lack of political will.

The Enforcement Gap: A Crisis of Infrastructure

The "Report from the Hive" reveals a staggering reality: in recent years, up to 63% of honey from certain major exporters was found non-compliant with EU requirements and deemed suspicious («fake»). Yet, these products continue to reach our shelves. Why? Because the European Union currently lacks the essential infrastructure to stop them.

We face a significant institutional deficit. There is no designated EU Reference Laboratory (EURL) for honey authentication. Under Regulation (EU) 2017/625, Border Control Posts often identify "suspicious" consignments, but they are powerless to refuse entry because the analytical methods used are not yet legally binding. We are caught in a cycle where fraudsters use advanced syrups and falsified origins to bypass checks, while our authorities wait for validated methods that are admissible in court.

Concerning the commissioner Hansen's reply to our requests and letters. Indeed, the Harm-Honey project is a step forward, but scientific progress without legal teeth is insufficient. The

comments EBA makes are scientifically based and backed up by eminent scientists that constitute our scientific committees and beyond, and we are well aware that science takes time. However, this is not about science – its a legislative failure. Again, we plead the Commission to immediately designate and fund an EURL to harmonize testing and provide the legal basis for enforcement. We cannot afford to wait another decade for "reflection" while our sector collapses.

Trade Agreements: The Siege of Preferential Access

The integrity of our market is further threatened by a wave of preferential trade agreements that create an uneven playing field. For non-EU countries without agreements, a Common Customs Tariff of 17.3% applies. However, a growing network of deals is dismantling these protections:

Mercosur: The 2026 Partnership Agreement introduces a 45,000-tonne duty-free quota. In these countries, direct production costs are between 3.5 and 4.7 times lower than in Europe. Paradox, real high quality honey which is often more expensive than the European one stays in South America because it is a product for middle to upper classes and is appreciated as such there, with stringent national controls.

EU has implemented safeguard mechanisms, indeed-. HOWEVER, these safeguards are inherently ex-post. They require a formal demonstration of "serious harm," meaning action is only taken after the damage has already materialized and beekeepers have already gone bankrupt. Second, the safeguard is temporary and difficult to trigger in a market where prices are already artificially depressed by fraud.

For a sector under prolonged structural strain, relying on reactive measures is like reaching for a fire extinguisher after the house has already burned down. We need proactive



prevention at the border, not just reactive clauses in a treaty.

Vietnam: Under the EVFTA, duties were eliminated immediately with unlimited quantities. Vietnam produces approximately 25,000–50,000 tonnes annually, yet its export data shows a staggering "export gap" of over 24,000 tonnes.

Ukraine: In 2024, Ukraine produced 53,000 tonnes but exported over 85,000 tonnes globally, with 54,019 tonnes going to the EU alone. Even with "emergency brake" mechanisms and duties, the import price of €1.76/kg remains several times lower than European production costs.

Mexico: The modernized agreement grants a massive 35,000-tonne duty-free quota, leading eventually to full liberalization. This is particularly concerning as Mexico's current production and consumption levels suggest they cannot even cover this quota with purely domestic honey.

The data suggests a chilling reality: countries like Vietnam, Ukraine, and Argentina are acting as trade hubs. The significant "export gaps"—where exports far exceed domestic production—indicate that honey is being imported (often from China), blended, and re-exported as local product. This laundered honey benefits from reduced tariffs while undermining the very definition of "origin."

Policy Requests: Traceability, Control, and Deterrence

We are not asking for protectionism; we are asking for market integrity. We propose three urgent policy shifts:

1. **Reclassification of Risk:** Honey is currently classified as a "low-risk" public health product, leading to minimal physical checks. However, it is a high-risk product for fraud. We request a targeted exception in border control legislation to mandate reinforced physical checks and laboratory testing for authenticity prior to release for free circulation.

2. **Immediate Establishment of EURL and NRLs:** The Commission must adopt the delegated acts under Regulation 2017/625 to create a functional network of National Reference Laboratories. This is a legal obligation that has been pending since 2018.

3. **Real-Time Traceability:** We must move beyond "reactive" safeguard mechanisms. By the time a "surge" in imports is proven to cause harm, the beekeepers are already bankrupt. We need mandatory, digital traceability that tracks honey from the hive to the border, ensuring that "duty-free" honey is actually produced in the country of origin.

Mandatory labelling of countries of origin and percentages

Regulation (EU) 2024/1438 mandates that by June 2026, honey labels must list all countries of origin in descending order with their specific percentages. While this aims to end decades of misleading blends, major structural risks exist, as you have just seen. To repeat, no analytical method can scientifically verify these percentages, rendering the rule technically unenforceable. In addition, the absence of minimum pollen thresholds in genuine honey, the unregulated removal of HMF and addition of industrial enzymes make proving geographic origin unrealistic at best, and Traces documents are easily switched when blending honey consignments, thus masking the country of origin and substituting it with country of export.

Conclusion

European beekeepers operate under the world's most stringent environmental and veterinary standards. We accept these costs because we value quality and safety. But we cannot compete with "honey" that is produced in a laboratory or laundered through third countries to evade tariffs.

Moreover, fake honey lacks the natural enzymes, antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals that give real honey its protective properties. Instead, it delivers an overload of refined sugars, which may contribute to obesity, hyperglycemia, diabetes, liver fat, chronic kidney damage, and other harmful effects. Some adulterants may also introduce chemical residues or heavy metals, further increasing health risks.

If we do not act now to strengthen controls and ensure deterrence, we are not just losing a commodity; we are losing the pollinators, our consumers and the security of our food chain.

If these systemic failures are not addressed, the outcome will be devastating: genuine local honey will disappear, consumers will turn away from the category entirely due to a lack of trust, and the essential pollination of our crops will fail. We urge the Commission to implement the legal tools that already exist to protect the integrity of our market.

We remain at your disposal to provide the technical expertise needed to turn these legis-

lative tools into a shield for European integrity. Thank you.

Dr Nik Lupše
Head of the EBA Scientific Committees



BUY LOCAL HONEY

European
Beekeeping
Association



OPINION FROM GERMANY AT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SUMMIT

Jürgen Binder from Germany was preparing his opinion for European Parliament summit:

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank MEP Elena Yoncheva for taking the initiative to convene the conference EU Honey Market Integrity: Trade Importance and Fraud Risks at this critical moment. My name is Jürgen Binder; I worked as a professional beekeeper in Germany and Italy for 25 years and have been President of the New Beekeepers' Association (www.neuer-imkerbund.de) for several years.

Honey adulteration is the biggest problem facing beekeepers worldwide. Rice syrup, which is processed in such a way that it cannot be identified using current methods, is destroying honey prices and the integrity of the product. This has now reached the point where beekeepers can no longer sell their honey harvests, not only in Europe but also in South America and Asia. For a long time, we have watched as honey in supermarkets has become cheaper and cheaper. However, since honey packers in Germany now only pay prices that are far below production costs, even the most good-natured beekeepers have woken up to draw attention to this problem.

I was in China three weeks ago, and there too, syrups are sometimes sold as honey – much to the grief of Chinese beekeepers. The China

Bee Products Association (CBPA) is fighting against this market distortion in its own country and has brought down some of the criminal counterfeiters. Chinese beekeepers, too, are no longer achieving the prices necessary to sustain their operations. For almost all beekeepers there earn their living from their bees, they have increased their number of bee colonies and boosted their production, in the desperate belief that selling larger quantities would solve the problem. As we know, this is a vicious circle that does not lead to the desired result.

The syrup manufacturers are large food companies, but they are not members of the Chinese Beekeepers' Association, and the Association naturally has no executive power to take action against the companies producing this syrup. Every beekeeper in the Association must sign a declaration guaranteeing that they do not mix syrup into their honey. Anyone who violates this rule is expelled from the Association for lifetime.

We have invited the board of the Chinese Beekeepers' Association to visit Germany.

They have accepted this invitation and will be guests of the German Professional Beekeepers' Association (DBIB). We expect our guests in November this year. I am convinced that this contact will increase mutual understanding and strengthen trust. Together, we are looking for ways to finally put a stop to this fraud.

The companies that produce sugar syrup are, of course, well known to them, as they

openly advertise that they can supply this syrup for diluting and adulterating honey.

But is it a criminal offence to sell syrup that possesses certain characteristics? The Chinese authorities say: No. The criminal activity takes place in Germany, France, Belgium – in short, wherever honey bottlers have so far been operating with impunity, because adulterating valuable honey with cheap syrup undetected is extremely lucrative.

Why, of all places, have the three European countries mentioned – where the largest volumes of honey are traded – failed to sign the FEEDM position paper of 17 November 2025, entitled ‘Official Control Methods for the Detection of Foreign Sugar Addition in Honey’? The FEEDM is the European Federation of Honey Packers and Distributors, which, incidentally, is based in Germany. This is the organisation whose members purchase, repackage, relabel, resell and market the sweet substances arriving in Europe.

This whole affair looks very much as though those in charge in these countries are denying the fraud in order to continue it for as long as possible, or to cover it up. Of course, this is merely a conjecture; I am, after all, not an authority with the right to conduct investigations. But who else would put the fake honey on the market other than the honey packers and long-standing market partners of the supermarkets?

As president of a German beekeepers’ association, I demand an explanation from the German Honey Association, which is a member of FEEDM, as to why it is resisting the introduction of new methods to assess the authenticity of honey. Given that the APIMONDIA World Congress is to take place in Germany in 2029, we expect all German stakeholders to actively contribute to putting an end to the fraud involving fake honey. As the German Honey Association is an associate member of APIMONDIA, we will submit a motion to expel this association from APIMONDIA should it fail from now on to actively participate in uncovering fraudulent activities and to expel those of its members who are involved in this fraud from its association.

This announcement concerns all members of APIMONDIA who do not actively participate in the fight against honey fraud. For the Chinese Beekeepers’ Association (CBPA), the fight against

honey adulteration with sugar syrups is a priority. It has no doubt whatsoever that this is taking place.

This is confirmed by a letter from its president, Yang Rong, dated 20 April this year.

Even though the declaration requirements for exports are clear – honey must be declared separately from sugar syrup – it is an open secret in China that a certain proportion of the volume appearing in the statistics as honey exports is actually sugar syrup. One can well imagine how this misdeclaration is possible.

But what is the real problem with prices that do not cover costs? The customer has become accustomed to a price that bears no relation to the price of genuine honey.

Since prices have not risen, as all other prices in our economy have, but have instead fallen continuously, the general public is completely unaware of the value of this product from the bee colony.

If beekeepers cannot achieve a sufficient price, they will downsize, cease and shut down their businesses. No one can produce below production costs in the long run.

As this situation has persisted for several years, we find ourselves in an extremely precarious position. I spoke about this problem here two years ago to officials from the Commission. Nothing has been done that is reflected in the market. Nothing has been done.

What else can we beekeepers’ associations do but draw your attention, ladies and gentlemen from the political and administrative spheres, to this problem and ask you to put a stop to this criminal and harmful behaviour?

The pollination of many crops also depends on honeybees. Alongside wild bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects, honeybees make a particularly effective contribution to pollination due to their large numbers, especially when the windows of good weather are short. Are we not dependent on stable, good harvests? In view of the many threats such as erosion, climate change, the uncertain availability of fertiliser and fuel, unstable supply chains and world market prices that fluctuate sharply due to acts of war, we must not also jeopardise food security through increasingly unstable pollination services. Ladies and gentlemen, these are not just

empty words. Would you do your job, or be able to do it, if you were unable to consistently earn the income you need for your work? You would look for another job. And this process has already begun in Europe's beekeeping sector.

Did we not hear during the Covid crisis that we needed to restore our independence because global supply chains are highly volatile? Have the lessons from this crisis been forgotten so quickly?

In not a single discussion on Mercosur have I received an answer to my question as to how European beekeeping will be supported if, in stages, up to 45,000 tonnes of additional duty-free honey is now to be imported from South America into Europe. I have only heard that we need this agreement to strengthen our automotive industry.

Who is thinking about the threatened ecosystem services when thousands of beekeeping businesses in Europe are set to close? The decline in biodiversity will be lamented, as will the lack of pollination security. All of this is self-inflicted, with trade agreements that serve only the economy and leave agriculture to its fate. And yet we would not need honey imports at all. If training for beekeepers were improved, self-sufficiency in honey in Germany and Europe would be possible without major investment. The fact that the sector is so poorly organised, has such low margins and, due to the unprofitability of the profession, is dominated by many hobby beekeepers is solely to blame for our pitiful level of self-sufficiency. The lack of minimum standards, including regarding animal welfare, and the absence of a mandatory certificate of competence for keeping bees also contribute to the decline of the sector.

Furthermore, these 45,000 tonnes open the floodgates to further fraud as long as we allow this product to go unchecked for authenticity.

Ladies and gentlemen, we must not allow agriculture to become a pawn of international markets. Agriculture in Europe means local jobs here, regional cultural and flavour diversity for our consumers, a diverse cultural landscape that also serves tourism interests, a stable food supply, and greater confidence in product quality due to shorter supply chains, which in turn lead to lower energy consumption. This can also be quantified in monetary terms. Why are these values not being taken into account?

If the price of honey does not normalise within the next few months, we will need support measures for our farms in Europe. The longer this situation persists, the more dramatic the consequences will be.

It will soon be virtually impossible to run a beekeeping business without a pollination premium per colony equivalent to the subsidy paid per hectare of land. This is the costly consequence of thoughtlessly signing trade agreements and tolerating unfair practices on the international honey market. It is also regrettable that regulations, for example in the field of organic beekeeping, are interpreted and applied differently across various countries. This also distorts the market and is detrimental to the growth of the organic sector.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is not the task of beekeepers and beekeeping associations to put a stop to this honey fraud. We have drawn your attention to the consequences of this ongoing fraud. The authenticity of honey, a valuable product, is relevant not only to producers and the environment, but also to consumers. Act now; tomorrow it will already be too late.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Jürgen Binder

You can watch the recording of the conference
**“EU Honey Market Integrity: The Importance
of Trade importance and Fraud Risks”** here:

<https://ebaeurope.eu/recording-of-the-conference-eu-honey-market-integrity-the-importance-of-trade-importance-and-fraud-risks/>



F.E.E.D.M.

THE FIRST REACTION HAVE ARRIVED AFTER THE CONFERENCE ON HONEY MARKET INTEGRITY HELD IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The first reactions have arrived after the conference on honey market integrity held in the European Parliament. The first reaction was sent by the European Federation of Honey Packers and Distributors (FEEDM), which sent a letter to the host of the conference, MEP Elena Yoncheva.

Dear Ms Yoncheva

Following the conference EU Honey Market Integrity: Trade Importance and Fraud Risks on 22 April 2026 in Brussels,

we would like to share with you the attached letter on behalf of F.E.E.D.M., the European Honey Association.

Our intention is to support the common goal of combating food fraud while ensuring that public debate and regulatory developments are grounded in sound scientific, analytical, and legal

principles.

We believe that an open and fact-based exchange among all relevant actors is essential to achieving this.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the proposed next steps outlined in the letter and are available for a meeting at any time.

Kind Regards

Jeanette Gonnermann

General Secretary

feedm@waren-verein.de

www.feedm.com

F.E.E.D.M.

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EU Transparency Register Identification Number: 582140813388-26

F.E.E.D.M. Office
Fédération Européenne des Emballeurs et
Distributeurs de Miel

Ms. Elena Yoncheva
Member of the European Parliament
SPINELLI 02G340
B-1047 Brussels

Brussels, 24 April 2026

Subject:

Request for an evidence-based, legally sound and scientifically rigorous debate on honey market integrity

Dear Ms Yoncheva,

On behalf of F.E.E.D.M., the European Federation of Honey Packers and Distributors, we would like to express our concern regarding certain statements made during the conference EU Honey Market Integrity: Trade Importance and Fraud Risks, held at the European Parliament on 22 April 2026 under your initiative.

F.E.E.D.M. fully shares the need to combat food fraud, strengthen honey authenticity, and protect both consumers and honest operators across the supply chain. For years, our members have worked precisely in that direction, participating in European technical and regulatory fora, supporting the development of more robust analytical methods, and applying, in their day-to-day operations, traceability systems, supplier control programmes, documentary checks, laboratory testing and internal compliance procedures. Fraud must be pursued firmly. On that, there is no disagreement.

What we do consider unacceptable, however, is that generalised accusations or insinuations of concealment, tolerance or involvement in fraudulent activity should be directed, in a European institutional forum, against packers, importers, national associations or F.E.E.D.M. as a whole, without the presentation of verifiable evidence, specific cases, sound methodologies or

identifiable sources. Statements of that kind, when unsupported by proper evidence, seriously damage the reputation of legitimate operators, undermine confidence in the public debate and make an effective response to real fraud more difficult.

The fight against fraud cannot be built on pre-suppositions, conjecture or collective imputations.

It must be based on facts, case files, controls, validated methods and due process. Precisely because honey fraud is a serious matter, public decisions and institutional messaging must be grounded in the highest legal and scientific standards, with proportionality, traceability of evidence and respect for the basic principles of legal certainty. Introducing controls or promoting accusations without the slightest legal and scientific rigour does not strengthen the system: it weakens it, creates exposure to error, generates legal uncertainty and fuels polarisation within the sector.

We are particularly concerned by the suggestion that the non-signature of a specific document by certain countries or associations could somehow amount to resistance to fighting fraud.

All information is supplied without guarantee and excluding all liability.

That conclusion does not follow. In a rule-of-law system, disagreement over methods, thresholds, validation or regulatory applicability cannot be equated with tolerance of fraud. On the contrary, insisting on robust, harmonised, proportionate and legally defensible methods is a necessary condition for official controls to be effective, legitimate and sustainable.

For this reason, we respectfully request three concrete steps.

First, that those who have made such serious allegations be invited to share, in writing, the specific evidence on which they rely: concrete cases, batches, operators, methods used, authorities involved and verifiable results.

Second, that a technical meeting be organised with your office, the relevant services and F.E.E.D.M., so that we may contribute constructively with practical, regulatory and analytical expertise.

Third, that future initiatives on this matter ensure balanced participation from all parts of the supply chain, so that the institutional debate re-

flects both the legitimate concern over fraud and the need to preserve rigour, proportionality and due process.

Should you consider it appropriate, considering the absence of specific evidence, to issue a public clarification regarding the scope of certain statements made during the event, we believe this would contribute positively to bringing the debate back onto a more useful, fair and institutionally appropriate footing.

F.E.E.D.M. reiterates its full willingness to work with the European institutions, with producers and with the other actors of the sector to combat real fraud, improve controls and strengthen trust in honey marketed in the European Union. But that common effort will only be effective if it is based on evidence, science, legality and institutional responsibility.

We remain at your disposal for a technical and constructive exchange at any time convenient to you.

Best regards,

David Senchermés
F.E.E.D.M. President

Jeanette Gonnermann
General Secretary

BEEES
LIFE



Investing in our region is investing in our future.

This is yours and our home. And that is why our dedication to Southeastern Europe goes beyond providing financial services. We are committed to fostering a thriving community, where every individual and business finds new opportunities.

A SECOND REACTION HAS ARRIVED AFTER THE CONFERENCE ON HONEY MARKET INTEGRITY HELD AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

A second reaction has arrived after the conference on honey market integrity held at the European Parliament. The second reaction was sent by the German Honey Association (Honig-Verband e.V.), which sent a letter to the host of the conference, MEP Elena Joncheva.

Dear Ms Yoncheva,

On behalf of the German Honey Association (Honig-Verband e.V.), we would like to share with you the attached letter addressing several points raised during the conference EU Honey Market Integrity: Trade Importance and Fraud Risks, held at the European Parliament on 22 April 2026.

As a national association representing German, Austrian and Swiss beekeepers and honey producers, we consider it essential that the public discussion surrounding honey market integrity reflects the full complexity of the sector.

The attached document outlines several aspects that, from our perspective, require a more

differentiated and evidence-based assessment – ranging from food fraud and analytical methods to trade policy, market dynamics and the role of policymakers.

Our intention is not to revisit the debate in a confrontational manner, but to contribute factual context and sector-specific expertise.

We believe that a balanced approach, grounded in validated data and legal certainty, is indispensable for effective policymaking and for maintaining trust among producers, consumers, and institutions.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these points in greater detail and remain available for a technical exchange at any time convenient to you.

Best regards

Jeanette Gonnermann

Managing Director

info@waren-verein.de

www.honig-verband.de

Honig-Verband e.V.

Große Bäckerstr. 4 • D – 20095 Hamburg

Ms. Elena Yoncheva
Member of the European Parliament
SPINELLI 02G340
B-1047 Brussels

Brussels, 24 April 2026

Subject:

Request for a comprehensive, evidence driven examination of integrity within the honey market

Dear Ms Yoncheva,

On behalf of the German Honey Association (Honig-Verband e.V.), we would like to refer to the statements made at the conference EU Honey Market Integrity: Trade Importance and Fraud Risks, held at the European Parliament on 22 April 2026 under your initiative, some of which are incorrect.

The concerns expressed in the referenced speech regarding the state of beekeeping and the integrity of the honey market merit your attention.

At the same time, sound political decision-making requires a nuanced assessment in order to avoid misaligned policies, legal uncertainties, and unintended market distortions. Against this backdrop, the German Honey Association wishes to present the following points for objective consideration:

1. Food Fraud: Shared Responsibility instead of one-sided Accusations

Food fraud is a genuine risk in global markets. However, it would be politically and legally problematic to attribute responsibility to individual market participants or Member States without substantiated evidence or completed official investigations.

Sweeping allegations against entire sectors or associations undermine confidence in established control systems and hinder constructive cooperation between industry and science.

2. The Role of Legislators regarding Control and Verification Methods

Political decision-makers are bound by the principles of the rule of law. This means:

- New analytical methods for honey authenticity must be scientifically validated, standardized, and legally robust before they can be made mandatory.

- Divergent assessments of individual methods by Member States or associations do not indicate inaction but reflect lawful caution.

- Prematurely enshrining unverified procedures in legislation entails significant risks for legal challenges, the internal market, and enforcement practice.

Political responsibility hereby means prioritizing reliability over symbolism.

3. Trade Policy and Supply Security

International trade agreements serve multiple public interests simultaneously: supply security, price stability, foreign economic relations and crisis preparedness.

The following aspects should be taken into account:

- European honey production structurally does not fully meet demand.

- Import restrictions without realistic alternatives would quickly increase consumer prices and limit availability.

- Trade policy decisions cannot be made in isolation for individual sectors but must be assessed in a broader economic context.

The task of policymakers is therefore to safeguard fair trading conditions, not to isolate specific markets, and to and to also provide stability for consumers.

4. Price Developments: A Differentiated View of Market Mechanisms

Falling agricultural prices are driven by multiple factors, such as

- international supply volumes,
- the market power of retailers,
- consumer habits and
- internal structural factors within beekeeping itself.

It would be politically reductive to attribute low prices solely to illegal practices. Support instruments must therefore be targeted, verifiable, and compliant with EU law.

5. Pollination Services and Support Policies

The importance of pollination for food security and biodiversity is undisputed. However, political measures should:

- distinguish between honey production and pollination services,
- remunerate ecosystem services transparently and measurably and
- avoid double or misdirected subsidies.

A blanket linkage between beekeeping support and pollination is technically insufficient and may undermine ecological objectives.

6. Responsibility of Policymakers

Combating food fraud is a core responsibility of the state. This includes:

- strengthening official food control authorities,
- ensuring international cooperation with countries of origin,
- harmonizing validated testing methods at EU level and
- creating clear and enforceable legal requirements rather than public accusations.

Political credibility arises from consistent regulation and oversight, not from escalating public allegations.

7. Concluding Remarks

The challenges of the honey market require political responses that are legally sound, evidence-based, and balanced.

A confrontational narrative between beekeepers, trade, and policymakers does not lead to sustainable solutions. What is needed is a cooperative approach that involves science, market actors, and authorities alike, and strengthens the internal market rather than fragmenting it.

We remain at your disposal for a technical and constructive exchange at any time convenient to you.

Best regards,
Honig-Verband e.V.

Frank Filodda
Chairman

Jeanette Gonnermann
General Secretary



BOŠTJAN NOČ WILL NOT REMAIN SILENT, NOR IS HE FOR SALE!

In the days following the conference in the EU Parliament on the topic of honey trade, “warnings” are once again coming to the surface, telling us to stay silent. I want to make it clear to everyone: Boštjan Noč, as President of the Euro-

pean Beekeeping Association and President of the Beekeeping Association of Slovenia, will NOT remain silent, nor is he for sale! We will defend beekeepers, bees, and consumers even more firmly and even more actively!

VSEM SPOROČAM:

**Boštjan Noč, kot predsednik
Evropske čebelarske zveze in kot
predsednik Čebelarske zveze
Slovenije, ne bo TIHO,
NI NITI NAPRODAJ!**



I WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR TO EVERYONE:

**Boštjan Noč, as President of the European Beekeeping Association
and President of the Beekeeping Association of Slovenia,**

**WILL NOT REMAIN SILENT,
NOR IS HE FOR SALE!**



EBA SENT A LETTER TO COPA COGECA

Subject:
Requesting a partnership to
strengthen the European
Honey Market

Dear Copa-Cogeca,

On behalf of the European Beekeeping Association (EBA) and its Scientific Committees, we are writing to formally invite Copa-Cogeca to support our current initiatives aimed at safeguarding the future of European apiculture.

The EBA is currently spearheading critical efforts to ensure a fair and transparent honey market. Our primary focus is combating the influx of adulterated imports that undermine the livelihoods of European producers and threaten regional biodiversity. As the leading voice for EU farmers and cooperatives, your partnership is essential in advocating for:

- Robust Traceability: Implementation of stricter "country of origin" labeling.
- Scientific Integrity: Standardizing advanced laboratory testing to detect sophisticated honey fraud.
- Policy Alignment: Ensuring CAP

measures provide genuine support for professional and hobbyist beekeepers alike.

We believe a unified front between EBA and Copa-Cogeca will provide the political and technical leverage necessary to protect the integrity of what is the backbone of modern agriculture.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how our organizations can synchronize our scientific and advocacy efforts.

Please also see attached for a recent speech which was given by Dr Nik Lupše (Head of the EBA Scientific Committees) at the EU Parliament conference: »The Integrity of the EU Honey Market: The Importance of Trade and the Threat of Fraud«, hosted by MEP Elena Yoncheva on 22nd April 2026. It provides an overview of the issues beekeeping is facing and presents a clear picture on what has to be done to ensure beekeepers, other farming sectors and consumers are safeguarded.

Thank you for your commitment to European agriculture and we look forward to hearing from you!

Respectfully,
President Boštjan Noc – President of the European Beekeeping Association
Dr. Nik Lupše – Head of the EBA Scientific Committees

copa  **cogeca**

european farmers

european agri-cooperatives

NEW INNOVATIVE METHOD FOR DETECTING HONEY COUNTERFEITS IS ACCREDITED

After the world's first innovative method for detecting honey counterfeits was accredited in Serbia (the EIM-IRMS of the Analab laboratory, which was later robbed, causing the mafia to shut down its operations), we are pleased to announce that the method of the Estonian laboratory Celvia CC has now been accredited and has now received ISO 17025 accreditation for its DNA analysis of honey, which is the second accredited innovative method in the world for detecting counterfeits.

Suspicious batches of honey entering the EU are being mixed with honey originating from the EU, making it extremely difficult to detect fraud without advanced methods.

This accreditation reflects years of persistent, methodical work — and finally gives us a scientifically validated tool for identifying and removing counterfeit or adulterated honey from retail shelves. It is a significant step forward for consumer trust and for honest producers who deserve a fair market.

Discussions with the authorities have already begun and we are confident that this method will help implement real changes in the way honey quality is monitored and enforced.

Of course, a lot of water will still flow down the Danube until Europe implements this and

other innovative methods for detecting honey counterfeits, but now the ball is in the EU's court, now they also have an accredited method, and our European Beekeepers' Association (EBA) has the difficult task of speeding up the slow EU procedures and implementing the new method as soon as possible at the EU level, after which it will have to be implemented in Serbia as well, and finally putting the mafia where it belongs.



A TURNING POINT FOR SWEDISH HONEY CONTROL

This development is a decisive moment for honey control in Sweden.

Just ten days after Celvia achieved accreditation, a major public article was released highlighting the issue of fraudulent honey on the market. This was quickly followed by national television coverage, where Fabian Lindhe spoke about the growing problem of adulterated and mislabeled honey.

What makes this moment particularly important is that Sweden now has external validation that DNA-based analysis can be used effectively to detect and combat honey fraud. This is not just a theoretical or experimental approach—it is now a validated tool within an accredited framework.

The results presented were striking. Out of 11 imported honey products tested, 7 were immediately identified as fraudulent. One additional product contained foreign sugars, although it was not classified as fraudulent in the published assessment. Two products labeled as acacia honey contained only 2% and 3% acacia content respectively. In practice, this means that 10 out of 11 imported honey products tested did not meet reasonable expectations of authenticity or labeling accuracy.

The only Swedish honey included in the test was, as expected, approved.

Within weeks, this will begin to have real market consequences. Fraudulent honey prod-

ucts are expected to be identified and removed from store shelves, marking a significant shift in how honey authenticity is enforced.

For beekeepers, consumers, and regulators, this represents a long-awaited breakthrough. For the first time, there is a scalable and credible method to verify origin and authenticity in a way that can meaningfully impact the market.

This also sends a strong signal to the broader European honey sector: effective enforcement is possible when robust analytical methods are combined with accredited laboratory systems and public transparency.

Read more:

<https://www.testfakta.com/en/food-drink/article/honey-fraud-swedish-stores>



Fabian Lindhe

HONEY FRAUD IN SWEDISH STORES

AT THE REQUEST OF: HONUNGSRINGEN WITH FUNDING FROM THE SWEDISH BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

EDITOR: MALIN HEFVELIN

PUBLISHED: 23 APR, 2026

<https://www.testfakta.com/en/food-drink/article/honey-fraud-swedish-stores>

Many consumers assume that when a jar is labeled as honey, it is a pure and natural product. However, Testfakta's DNA analyses show that a large share of the honey sold in Swedish stores is diluted, manipulated, or so heavily processed that it can no longer be considered genuine.

Honey is one of the world's most adulterated food products. According to the EU and international control authorities, large volumes of honey are diluted each year with cheap sugar or syrup solutions, often in ways that cannot be detected using traditional analytical methods currently approved by the EU.

For consumers, the product is just as difficult to assess—it looks like honey and tastes fairly similar.

– One might think it doesn't matter much whether it's syrup or honey you pour over your yogurt, says Fabian Lindhe, Chairman of Honungsringen, a non-profit association working to increase knowledge and promote greater transparency regarding honey. Its activities are carried out with support from the Swedish Board of Agriculture.

– But you have to consider that honey production is part of a much larger system. Bees and beekeeping are essential for pollination, for example in seed production. When genuine honey is pushed out by cheap syrup, it ultimately risks affecting the entire ecosystem - not just beekeepers, but biodiversity, agriculture, and our food supply.

TABLE OF TEST RESULTS



INDEPENDENT LABORATORY TEST													
Liquid honey													
	Svensk Landskaps-honung	Svensk honung flytande	Änglamark	Gårdshonung	Lidl/ Maribel	Coop	Garant	Lune de Miel	Eldorado	ICA I love ECO	ICA Honung	Svensk Honungsförädling	ICA Basic
	Landskapshonung	Svensk honung flytande	Ekologisk akaciahonung	Akaciahonung	Blossom honey	Honung	Ekologisk honung	Blomsterhonung	Flytande honung	Ekologisk Honung	Honung	Blomsterhonung	Flytande honung
Content	250	350	350	350	500	350	350	500	350	350	350	1 000	500
Approximative price per packg	4,90	5,00	5,40	5,40	3,80	4,20	5,00	5,60	3,10	5,00	4,10	8,90	3,80
Approximate price per kg	19,60	14,30	15,40	15,40	7,60	11,20	14,30	11,20	8,90	14,30	11,60	8,90	7,60
Declared origin	Sweden	Mix of EU-honey	Mix of EU-honey	Mix of EU-honey	Mix of EU and non-EU honey	Mexico, Ukraine and Argentina	Brazil, Mexico and Romania	Mix of non-EU honey	China, Argentina and Mexico	Mix of non-EU honey	Non-EU honey	Cuba	Spain, Cuba, Ukraine, Turkey, India, Mexico and Argentina
Environmental labelling													
RESULTS FROM THE DNA ANALYSIS													
Number of identified plant species	377	232	225	225	367	316	354	232	456	283	365	148	180
Proportion of identified DNA traces from plants	28%	33%	15%	15%	15%	27%	2%	10%	18%	3%	2%	2%	9%
from fungi (yeast)	4%	1%	0%	0%	9%	9%	15%	21%	58%	45%	28%	17%	27%
from other (animal, bacteria and virus)	68%	66%	85%	85%	76%	64%	83%	69%	25%	52%	70%	82%	64%
Largest group of plant species	64% Brassica	50% Brassica	34% Brassica	34% Brassica	31% Lotus,	35% Astrales	23% Astrales	34% Astrales	59% Brassica	22% Fabales	46% Brassica	41% Ribes	46% Brassica
Second largest	8% Fabales	21% Salix	27% Salix	27% Salix	7% Trifolium	27% Brassica	17% Brassica	11% Ribes	4% Astrales	7% Ribes spicatum	7% Astrales	10% Fabales	6% Astrales
Third largest	4% Rosales	6% Rosales	6% Ribes	6% Ribes	2% Glycyne max	10% Fabales	9% Papaver	7% Fabales	3% Rosales	3% Coffea	6% Rosales	5% Brassica	4% Ribes spicatum
OVERALL RATING (10 = MOST LIKELY GENUINE / MOST GENTLY PROCESSED)	8,9	8,7	8,5	8,4	7,6	5,9	5,8	5,6	5,6	5,6	4,1	4,1	3,5
Comment	The DNA traces from plants, bacteria, pathogens and animals, as well as their relative balance, are consistent with what is expected in genuine, gently processed honey.	The DNA traces from plants, bacteria, pathogens and animals, as well as their relative balance, are consistent with what is expected in genuine, gently processed honey.	The DNA profile is consistent with what is expected in genuine, gently processed honey.	The DNA profile is consistent with what is expected in genuine, gently processed honey.	The DNA profile is largely consistent with what is expected of genuine honey, but one laboratory has identified traces of plant DNA typical of syrup.	The DNA profile shows a low proportion of plant DNA relative to fungi, animals and bacteria, which is less consistent with genuine, gently processed honey.	The DNA profile shows a relatively low proportion of plant DNA. Animal and yeast DNA dominate, while the level of lactic acid bacteria is unusually low, making it less consistent with genuine, gently processed honey.	The DNA profile shows high plant diversity, but the proportion of plant DNA is very low. It consists almost exclusively of bee DNA from the animal kingdom—a pattern that is unlikely for genuine, gently processed honey.	The DNA profile shows high plant diversity, but the proportion of plant DNA is very low. It consists almost exclusively of bee DNA from the animal kingdom—a pattern that is unlikely for genuine, gently processed honey.	The DNA profile shows high plant diversity, but the proportion of plant DNA is very low. It consists almost exclusively of bee DNA from the animal kingdom—a pattern that is unlikely for genuine, gently processed honey.	The DNA profile is dominated by yeast DNA and a low diversity—a pattern that is unlikely for genuine, gently processed honey.	The DNA profile shows low plant diversity, and the proportion of plant DNA is very low, which is unlikely for genuine, gently processed honey.	The DNA profile shows a low proportion of plant DNA and limited animal species diversity—a pattern that is unlikely for genuine, gently processed honey.

Facts and photos: Testfakta in February 2026





He points out that problems arise when beekeepers are forced to compete at the same price level with products that have significantly lower production costs, leading to professional beekeepers shutting down across Europe.

– Another important aspect is that fake or heavily processed honey lacks the beneficial properties of real honey. Consumers are essentially deprived of the compounds that make honey unique, says Fabian Lindhe.

– That also raises the question: What is actually in the jar if it's not honey? It's not stated on the packaging, and it could be something that is not even beneficial for us to consume. As a consumer, you should have the right to know that.

The large price difference between genuine honey and sugar-based syrup is a key reason why honey fraud is so profitable. The fact that dilution with syrup is difficult to detect using traditional test methods makes the honey sector particularly attractive to criminal actors.

To investigate how widespread this issue is in Sweden, Testfakta commissioned two independent laboratories—Celvia in Estonia and Sinsoma in Austria—to analyze twelve liquid honeys using new, advanced DNA technology.

The method is based on the fact that genuine honey has a characteristic biological profile, containing DNA traces from plants, animals, insects,

and microorganisms that naturally follow from the environment through the honey production process. When honey is diluted with syrup or sugar, or heavily processed—for example through heating—the DNA profile changes in a way that can be detected in the laboratory using this new method.

Anita Lipu is one of the test managers at the Estonian research institute Celvia, which is partly owned by the University of Tartu. They have developed the DNA analysis method for honey with support from the EU's European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

– DNA analysis examines the complete biological fingerprint of honey - what plants the bees have visited, which microorganisms are present, traces of bees and other fauna, and in what proportions. Any deviations, such as adulteration or improper handling, alter this fingerprint in a detectable way. The strength of the method lies in the fact that it is practically impossible to manipulate honey without simultaneously altering its DNA profile. While fraudsters have found ways to circumvent traditional methods such as NMR testing, it is nearly impossible to do the same with DNA analysis, says Anita Lipu.

Celvia's analysis includes between 10 and 20 million DNA sequences in each honey sample, using machine learning to identify deviations from

profiles of verified genuine reference honeys. Celvia's honey database is primarily based on European honey but also includes a significant number of samples from other parts of the world such as South America and Asia. In total, the model is based on more than 1,100 carefully selected samples.

Only five samples were assessed as likely to be genuine

Testfakta analyzed twelve types of liquid honey from Swedish stores. Eleven of the brands were imported honey and one was Swedish. The honeys were rated on a ten-point scale, where 10 indicates most likely genuine and 1 indicates likely not genuine. The tests showed that only five samples passed. The remaining ones showed clear signs of dilution or improper processing.

In seven out of twelve products, the DNA analyses indicate significant deviations inconsistent with genuine honey. ICA's three honey products all show a low proportion of plant DNA, between 2 and 9%, combined with a high proportion of yeast. Eldorado's honey shows high plant variation, but the majority of the DNA consists of yeast. Svensk Honungsförädling, Lune de Miel, and Garant also show low levels of plant DNA and profiles inconsistent with genuine honey.

– It is not possible to determine exactly what has been done in these cases, but it is clear that there are strong indications that the honey is not genuine and unadulterated, says Anita Lipu.

– When honey is diluted with syrup, for example, it becomes less stable, allowing yeast and bacteria to grow. That is why we often see significantly higher levels of yeast in honey that we assess as adulterated compared to genuine honey.

The Only Swedish Honey Is Genuine

The only Swedish honey in the test comes from Svensk Landskapshonung, and it is highly likely to be fully genuine.

– It has a high proportion of plant DNA, a

wide variety of plant species, and a low level of yeast, and the overall DNA profile matches well with that of genuine honey, says Anita Lipu.

The DNA profiles of Änglamark, Gårdshonung, and Maribel are also consistent with what is expected of genuine honey and therefore pass according to both laboratories.

Coop's honey scores slightly lower than the top four but is still considered likely to be genuine. It has a high proportion of plant DNA and a clear honey profile, but the Austrian laboratory Sinsoma detected a very small amount of DNA from sugarcane aphids in Coop's honey, which is typical of syrup. If the bees had been fed syrup during the harvest season - which is not permitted for genuine honey - the DNA profile would show a more pronounced effect. The deviations in Coop's honey may instead be due to residues from winter feeding with sugar solution, which is allowed.

Genuine Can Become Non-Genuine

Anita Lipu explains that even if honey is initially genuine, heavy processing can alter its DNA profile.

– Ultrafiltration removes pollen grains that contain plant DNA, and excessive heating damages the DNA molecules themselves. Processes that change the water content also affect the microbial balance. Such methods may result in honey no longer being classified as genuine under EU legislation, as they fundamentally alter its composition.

– DNA analysis is a new and effective tool for distinguishing between products that meet the requirements and those that do not, says Anita Lipu. The hope is that better control methods and increased transparency can contribute to a fairer market, where both consumers and serious beekeepers get what they are entitled to.

She advises that the safest choice is to buy honey directly from a local beekeeper.

– If you are unsure, a regional beekeeping association can often provide guidance. When buying in stores, it is important to read the fine print and not rely solely on the front label. Origin is crucial - avoid products labeled as "a blend of

EU and non-EU honeys.” The more specific and local the origin, the better. Price is also an important indicator. An extremely low price is often too good to be true. Beekeeping is costly, and reasonable prices are essential for both quality and sustainable production.

All honey samples were purchased during autumn 2025. Unfortunately, Svensk Landskaps-honung will not sell any liquid honey in 2026, says Håkan Lantz, Chairman of the board.

– Last year only yielded small harvests in late summer, and that is the harvest used to produce liquid honey for winter sales. Hopefully, the coming summer will offer more suitable weather for late-season honey so we can bring the product back!

FACTS ABOUT THE TEST

Testfakta commissioned two independent European laboratories, Celvia and Sinsoma, to analyze 12 brands of liquid honey sold in Swedish grocery stores. The purpose was to examine how the biological composition of the products corresponds to what can normally be expected from genuine honey, and to highlight any differences in quality between products. The test was conducted in collaboration with Honungsringen and funded by the Swedish Board of Agriculture.

The background is recurring international reports of honey fraud and heavy industrial processing, where consumers in practice have very limited ability to assess product quality themselves.

Both laboratories used DNA-based analysis methods, and Celvia obtained laboratory accreditation for its method according to ISO 17025 in April 2026. The methods map the biological traces present in honey, distributed across DNA from three main groups:

- plants
- animals (including insects)
- microorganisms, such as viruses, bacteria, and fungi

The results are compared with databases based on analyses of both genuine and non-genuine honey. The assessment is based on

overall patterns and the balance between different types of DNA, rather than individual findings.

What DNA Analysis Can – and Cannot – Show

DNA analysis cannot determine exactly how a honey has been produced or processed. For example, it cannot establish the degree of dilution or whether the honey is legally “genuine”. However, it can reveal whether the honey’s biological profile deviates from what is normally observed in genuine, carefully handled honey. Such deviations may result from heating, filtration, prolonged storage, or dilution - all of which affect the biological composition and thus the quality of the honey.

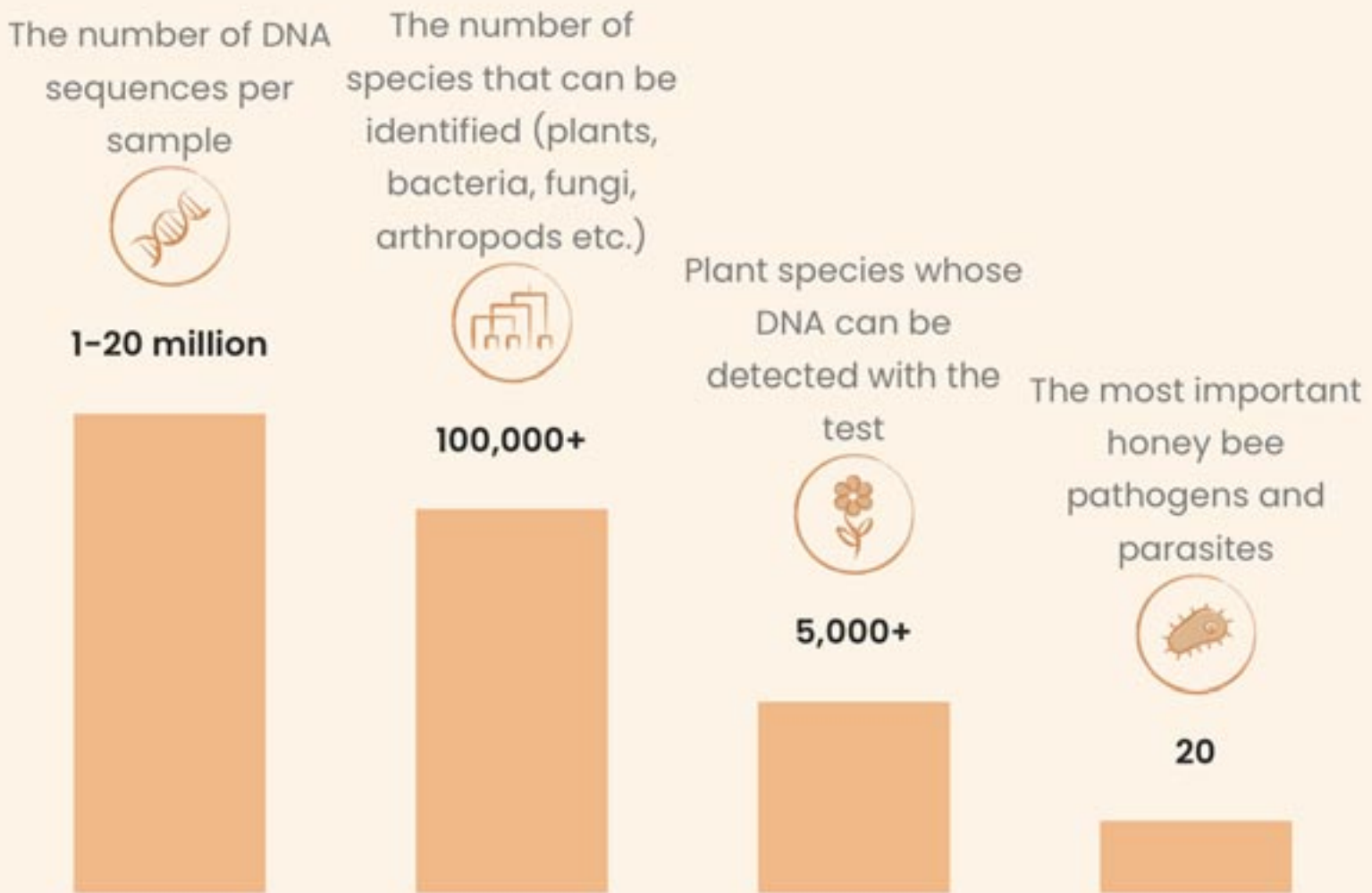


Key Interpretation Principles

The number of detected plant species can vary significantly even in completely genuine honey. A bee colony located near a large rape-seed field or apple orchard may produce honey with low plant diversity, without that implying the honey is not genuine. Therefore, it is not the number of plant species that is decisive, but how plant DNA relates to other biological traces.

Genuine honey also has inherent antiseptic properties. Its high sugar content, low pH, and

The power of honey DNA test in numbers



enzymes from bees normally inhibit the growth of bacteria and yeast. Small amounts of micro-organisms may be present in a dormant state, but they do not typically grow.

If the natural balance of honey is disturbed - for example through dilution or heavy processing - this protective effect may be reduced, which can be reflected in the DNA profile, for example as a higher proportion of yeast and bacteria.

The Most Important Results

The laboratories' assessments are largely consistent. Five of the products show DNA profiles that, according to machine learning analysis, match what is normally seen in genuine, gently handled honey. The majority show varying degrees of deviating biological patterns, such as a



Kaarel Krjutškov
PhD

Head of Laboratory, CEO



Diana Lanevska

Quality Manager



Anita Lipu MSc

Researcher of Food
Genomics



Kristel Paabo

Specialist



Priit Paluoja PhD

Head of Data
Management



Sigrid Yildiz

Laboratory Specialist

low proportion of plant DNA relative to other traces or a high presence of yeast DNA. In cases where the laboratories' conclusions differ slightly, Testfakta has adopted a cautious interpretation and has erred on the side of acquittal rather than conviction.

honey have been graded on a scale from one to ten, reflecting the overall assessment from laboratory analyses of how likely the honey is to be genuine or not.

How the Results Should Be Understood

Testfakta does not conclude that individual honey products are adulterated. Instead, the

Test  fakta



**BUY LOCAL
HONEY**

European
Beekeeping
Association



ONLINE MEETING OF THE EBA EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board of the European Beekeeping Association (EBA) held an online meeting today, attended by members of the Supervisory Board and the president of the EBA Scientific Committee.

The meeting took place in a constructive atmosphere, with the active and proactive participation of members of the Supervisory Board, who made a significant contribution to the discussion and consideration of key topics.

At the meeting, the Report on the EBA's activities for 2025 was adopted and the proposed Work Plan for 2026 was discussed, which envisages further strengthening of organizational capacities and cooperation at the European level.

The Financial Report for 2026 was also presented, with an overview of planned activities and budget priorities.

As part of the work of the scientific committees, the Work Report for 2025 and the Activity Plan for 2026 were discussed. The need for additional focus on issues related to wild pollinators was particularly highlighted, as pointed out by Ellmann Torsten, member of the EBA Supervisory Board.

In the discussion, Rodoljub Živadinović, a member of the EBA Executive Board from Serbia, emphasized the seriousness of the situation

in the field of pollinators, pointing out that according to his statements, there has been a drastic reduction in the population, and that honeybees are increasingly forced to assume a dominant role in pollination.

The President of the EBA emphasized the need to restore balance in the ecosystem, stressing the importance of protecting both honey and wild bees through the principle of symbiosis, as well as continuing to focus on the problem of adulterated honey on the European market.

Noc Bostjan pointed out that it is necessary to approach the topic based on expert opinions and scientific evidence, as well as to work additionally on creating a sustainable symbiosis between different groups of pollinators.

Tetyana Vasilkyvska, a member of the EBA Executive Board from Ukraine, proposed that within the Council of the European Union, through the existing committees dealing with agriculture and biodiversity, the EBA should be actively involved in their work and processes, for a stronger institutional presence and influence on the creation of European policies.

The meeting ended with the announcement of the chairmanship of the EBA Assembly scheduled for April 8, 2026.

REGULAR ANNUAL EBA ASSEMBLY

On April 8, 2026, the regular annual Assembly of the European Beekeeping Association (EBA) was held via the online platform. The assembly was attended by representatives of member states, as well as members of scientific committees, while interested organizations had the opportunity to participate as observers without the right to vote.

During the Assembly, a constructive dialogue was conducted among the participants, with the active participation of representatives from different countries.

The main topic of the session was the EBA Work Program for 2026, within which key priorities and directions of action were defined. Special emphasis was placed on activities related to the improvement of the honey market and the fight against counterfeit honey.

On that occasion, the President of the EBA presented the activities and importance of the scientific committee's work, especially within the Honey Platform, emphasizing its role in strengthening professional capacities and participating in the creation of European policies in the field of beekeeping.

Within the Work Program, it was pointed out that a series of activities related to the improvement of quality control and traceability of honey is underway. The President particularly emphasized the importance of applying the new rules from June 14, 2026, when the obligation to clearly label honey with the exact countries of origin comes into force, which represents an important step towards greater market transparency.

It was also emphasized that it is necessary to intensify communication and public information on these topics, as well as that it is necessary to continuously work on consumer education in order to increase awareness of the importance of honey quality and the recognition of counterfeit products. The position is that all EBA members must be actively involved in these activities, through joint action, education and public communication, as well as that it is necessary to work on continuous promotion of beekeeping and raising consumer awareness.

The president also pointed out that, if the EBA wants to remain a strong and influential alliance in the long term, more active participation in international and European projects is necessary, including preparation and applying for relevant funds and support programs. In this way, more stable resources for work, capacity building and long-term sustainability of the Association's activities are ensured.

Additionally, it was proposed that all EBA members organize and participate in a joint professional congress once every two years, as an important mechanism for knowledge exchange, improvement of professional cooperation and strengthening of unity within the Alliance.

It was also pointed out that the Committee for Honey Quality and the Committee for Bee Health work intensively and with a high level of activity, as well as that the Committee for Apitherapy is particularly active. Young beekeepers are also very involved in the work of the Association, which further strengthens the future development

of the organization. As part of the further development of the EBA structure, new working groups are also being established, with the aim of more efficient implementation of program activities and the inclusion of a greater number of experts.

Special attention was paid to the topics of incentives per hive in European countries, as well as to the improvement of cooperation with other beekeeping associations.

During the discussion, experiences and examples of good practice were exchanged, with the aim of strengthening joint action and improv-

ing the position of beekeepers at the European level. It was also pointed out that the European Beekeeping Association sent a letter to the competent institutions regarding the control of the Mercosur agreement, emphasizing the need for additional measures and activities to prevent counterfeit honey from being placed on the market.

During the session, other key activities, priorities and further directions of action of the EBA were discussed.

EBA WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2026

EBA has 3 main objectives. We have achieved objective 2, as it is now possible to pay support per hive in the EU. Until now, support was only possible for organic beekeepers.

So our two main objectives are now:

- Fight against counterfeit honey and
- Fight against pesticides harmful to bees.

Main activities of the EBA

- Actively informing European "policymakers (commissioners, EU Parliament, AGRIFISH, DG AGRI, COPA COGECA, ...) about the issue of beekeeping and proposed solutions
- Presentation of beekeeping issues at the AGRI Committee in the EU Parliament
- Active work in the Honey Platform
- Participation in the conference: Integrity of

the EU Honey Market: Importance of Trade and Risk of Fraud", which will take place on 22 April 2026 in the European Parliament.

- Participation in the IHC symposium in Poreč
- Co-organization of the Bthenet conference in August in Slovenia
- Preparations for the promotional campaign - t 14.6. 2026 end of honey labeling, mixture of honey from the EU and outside (legislation changed 3 years ago at the initiative of the president of the Slovenian Beekeepers Association and EBA with the help of the state of Slovenia)
- Organization of Webinars
- Publication of EBA MAGAZINE
- Activities on social media, establishment of EBA tik tok
- Application for calls for tenders for obtaining EU funds, content-related to the main goals of EBA

- We have established two new working groups for monitoring legislation in Europe and for collecting data on beekeeping in the EU
- We will propose the establishment of a working group for the legal protection of beekeeping interests in beekeeping in Europe
- Preparation for the 1st international EBA professional congress in 2027
- Establishment of a single database of all e-mail addresses of beekeeping magazines published by EBA members
- Establishment of a single database of e-mail addresses of editors of EBA member websites
- 2x annual preparation of a single article on the work of EBA, which is published in their beekeeping magazines by all EBA members
- Video meeting with all beekeeping organizations that are not yet members of the EBA
- Encouraging professional and scientifically based opinion as a basis for creating policies and measures, encouraging research on interactions between honey bees and wild pollinators

Main activities of the EBA Scientific Committees in 2026

- Criticism of the EU pesticide reform – against unlimited approvals of active substances, insistence on regular scientific reviews and time-limited permits.
- Responding to emerging trade agreements and criticizing current ones (EU-Mercosur, Mexico, Vietnam) that are harmful to beekeeping and proposing solutions
- Working in the Honey Platform and actively participating in the fight against counterfeit honey (EURL, border controls), actively responding and proposing solutions through the EU Commissioner, DG Agri, Agrifish, EU Parliament
- Discussion on the treatment of bee colonies in the context of apitherapy and the quality and purity of bee products due to varroa destructor infection
- Strengthening support for young beekeepers across Europe and involving all countries in IMYB 2026 (Belfast), developing education and international cooperation.
- Promotion of beekeeping and youth work

through social media and the Beefluencer campaign

- Mapping of honey flows in the EU – import/export, origin control, analysis of weak controls and establishment of an EU database on honey movements.
- Organization of webinars (EU-Mercosur trade agreements, Mexico, Vietnam/Propolis/Tropilaelaps/beekeeping in extreme conditions etc.)
- Organizing a series of online webinars for young beekeepers, focused on the promotion and exchange of good beekeeping practices. The aim is to encourage the wider adoption of these approaches in as many member countries and partner organizations as possible. The webinars are led by Jiri Piza and Nik Lupše, who will contribute to strengthening the capacity of young beekeepers in Europe through expert guidance and practical examples.- Development of a tool for determining the fair price of bee products
- Greater transparency of the work of the EBA and publication of minutes
- Regular publication of committee members in the EBA magazine
- Work towards the annual report on bee health in Europe
- Review of varroa drugs
- Scientific and professional articles (bee immunity, review of clinical studies and honey in medicine/research, etc.)
- Support to beekeeping organizations in difficulty through expert assessments and opinions (Greece, Serbia etc.)
- Presentation of the Honey Platform and the current state of the problem of honey adulteration at the FAO in Slovenia (21 May)
- 22 April EU Parliament
- Monitoring developments regarding EFSA health claims and response
- Providing expert opinion and raising awareness about invasive hornets and the possibilities of solving this issues
- Providing expert opinion and raising awareness about the invasion of Tropilaelaps
- Analysis of national and European legislation harmful to beekeepers
- "Revision of procedures for the registration of veterinary medicines and harmonisation of instructions for use across Europe"

A GREAT DAY IS COMING FOR ALL BEEKEEPERS AND FOR ALL HONEY CONSUMERS

JUNE 14, 2026

**A GREAT DAY
IS COMING**
for all beekeepers and
for all honey consumers.

**UNIFORM HONEY LABELING
BEGINS,**
with a clear and precise
indication of the country of origin.

European
Beekeeping
Association **eba**

**BUY LOCAL
HONEY**

Uniform honey labeling begins, with a clear and precise indication of the country of origin.

This is not just a change on the label. It is a step toward fairness, transparency, and respect for the work of beekeepers.

EBA wants to establish an anonymous online form where violations of this legislation can be reported. It will be possible to attach photos and the location of the point of sale so that irregularities can be forwarded to the competent authorities.

For too long, some have profited through misleading consumers and devaluing honest honey. The time has come to stand together.

Who will fight for beekeepers and consumers, if not us – beekeepers ourselves?

WE WILL SUBMIT A RESOLUTION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ON THE ISSUE OF FAKE HONEY

Slovenian MEP, Mr. PREBILIC, proposed to submit a resolution to the EU Parliament on the issue of adulterated honey with our expert assistance, in order to put pressure on the MEPs and the Commission ... and to do something concrete. I think this is an excellent thing and I thank

Mr. Prebelic for his willingness to help European beekeepers!

Nik will prepare a draft resolution together with him, which we will pre-approve at the EBA Scientific Committees and the EBA Executive Board.



★ **WE WILL SUBMIT** ★
A RESOLUTION
TO THE
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
ON THE ISSUE OF
FAKE HONEY!

 **FAKE HONEY IS NOT A VICTIMLESS CRIME – IT HURTS BEEKEEPERS AND CONSUMERS.**

 **FOR HONEST HONEY. FOR FAIR TRADE.
FOR BEEKEEPERS. FOR CONSUMERS.**

 **TOGETHER FOR TRUTH.
TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE.**

 **European
Beekeeping
Association**

CALL FOR LEGAL EXPERTS – EBA WORKING GROUP FOR INTERPRETATION OF EU AGRICULTURAL AND BEEKEEPING LEGISLATION

Dear EBA Members,

We are pleased to announce the establishment of a new EBA Working Group focused on the interpretation and analysis of European Union legislation related to agriculture and beekeeping.

The purpose of this Working Group is to gather legal experts and professionals with strong knowledge of EU regulations who can support EBA through legal interpretation, regulatory analysis, and professional legal opinions relevant to the beekeeping sector.

Please find attached the official Call for Experts with detailed information regarding the objectives of the Working Group and the application process.

We kindly ask you to share this call within your organizations and networks with professionals who may be interested in contributing to this important initiative.

Thank you for your support and cooperation.
Best regards,
European Beekeeping Association

CALL FOR LEGAL EXPERTS – EBA WORKING GROUP FOR INTERPRETATION OF EU AGRICULTURAL AND BEEKEEPING LEGISLATION

The European Beekeeping Association (EBA) is establishing a specialized Working Group composed of legal experts whose primary role will be the interpretation and analysis of European Union legislation related to agriculture and beekeeping.

We are looking for experts with strong knowledge of EU legal frameworks who can assist EBA in understanding, interpreting, and assessing

regulations, directives, and legal developments affecting the beekeeping sector.

The tasks of the Working Group will include:
Interpretation of EU legislation related to agriculture, beekeeping, food safety, veterinary policy, rural development, and environmental protection

1. Providing legal opinions and explanations regarding existing and proposed EU regulations;

2. Assisting EBA bodies and members in understanding legal obligations and policy implications;

3. Identifying legal risks and opportunities relevant to the European beekeeping sector;

4. Supporting the preparation of legal analyses and professional opinions for EBA activities;

5. Legal fight for the adoption of more precise and concrete regulations related to beekeeping;

6. Legal fight for the explicit application of current regulations, in order to force all authorities to apply them consistently and unambiguously.

Requirements:

– Expertise in EU agricultural and/or beekeeping legislation

– Experience in legal interpretation and regulatory analysis

– Ability to work and communicate in English

Interested experts are invited to send:

– A short biography/CV;

– A summary of relevant experience;

– Contact information.

Applications should be sent to: eba@ebaeurope.eu

Deadline for applications: May 10.2026.

We encourage professionals from across Europe to join this initiative and contribute their expertise to strengthening legal understanding within the European beekeeping sector.

Sincerely,

European Beekeeping Association (EBA)



HONEY FRAUD AND ADULTERATION FAVORS EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

The Harsh Truth

Honey adulteration and fraud have been observed for many years and are expected to persist for several decades, as they are facilitated by legislative loopholes and serve significant financial interests. Adulteration typically involves the importation of cheap, low-quality honey from third countries through border stations without substantial inspections. Even if this product is analyzed and found not to meet the quality criteria of the European Directive, it is not halted at the borders; instead, it is labeled as "suspicious" of fraud and is imported normally. Once imported, the accompanying certificates (TRACES & CHED) remain in the system and are no longer utilized for tracking. This "suspicious" honey is then filtered, blended, and "cooked" to meet current legislative standards, eventually circulating as authentic and, at times, as domestic products.

Solutions exist but collide with the major interests of several European countries that import cheap honey from third countries and export it as expensive "European honey". These solutions also face opposition from im-



EU Countries	Production	Imports	Consumption	Exports	Available Balance
<u>Germany</u>	31,800	46,120	54,000	20,929	+2,991
<u>Spain</u>	33,100	17,115	31,500	26,742	-8,027
<u>Romania</u>	31,300	4,095	24,000	12,163	-768
<u>Italy</u>	21,600	6,230	30,000	4,681	-6,851
<u>France</u>	21,900	8,420	49,000	3,993	-22,673
<u>Bulgaria</u>	11,200	28,918	10,000	11,051	+19,067
<u>Denmark</u>	2,200	4,329	3,500	-	+4,329
<u>Belgium</u>	400	28,918	7,800	11,338	+10,180
<u>Greece</u>	15,000	4,918	16,640	1,486	+1,792

Table 1. Honey Mass Balance of European Countries (2024). Consumption is calculated based on annual per capita consumption and population (data in tons).

Data from the EU Honey Market Presentation (2026)

porting industries, honey brokers, middlemen, large analysis laboratories that support the circulation of adulterated honey (EU, 2023), and even the European Union itself due to its trade commitments and preferential agreements.

2024. These massive profits stem from the gap between import prices (€1.94 to €2.65/kg) and export prices (€5.21 to €6.07/kg) (fig. 1).

The Honey Mass Balance

Table 1 presents the honey mass balance of European countries for the year 2024, calculated using the equation: [Production + Imports] – [Consumption + Exports].

Of the countries listed, only Spain, Romania, and Bulgaria appear self-sufficient in meeting domestic consumption through their own production. Greece is on the edge, with annual production ranging from 14,000 to 17,000 tons. All Some European countries import honey regardless of their self-sufficiency and export quantities that clearly do not correspond solely to domestic production. It is evident that domestic honey (production minus consumption) is insufficient to support the export volumes of each country. Consequently, European exports are largely supported by imported honey rather than domestic production.

European profits from honey imports and exports were estimated at €2,450,000,000 for

Analysis and Discrepancies

Reading the table should be done with caution, as the entries may not fully reflect reality. The positive balance may be interpreted as surpluses resulting from stock carried over from previous years. Large standardization industries maintain strategic reserves that appear in the following year. There may also be statistical errors and undeclared production, especially from self-consumption or direct sales. Illegal trafficking of honey from third countries through European countries without controls (shadow economy) may also contribute to the positive balance.

It is entirely normal that in an annual recording of the honey balance sheet, the account does not reach zero, since beekeeping follows biological cycles rather than calendar years. However, this applies to small differences such as those observed in Romania. Large discrepancies in surpluses (+) or deficits (–), which far exceed even the annual domestic production—as is the case with France, Bulgaria, Denmark, and Belgium—raise concerns.

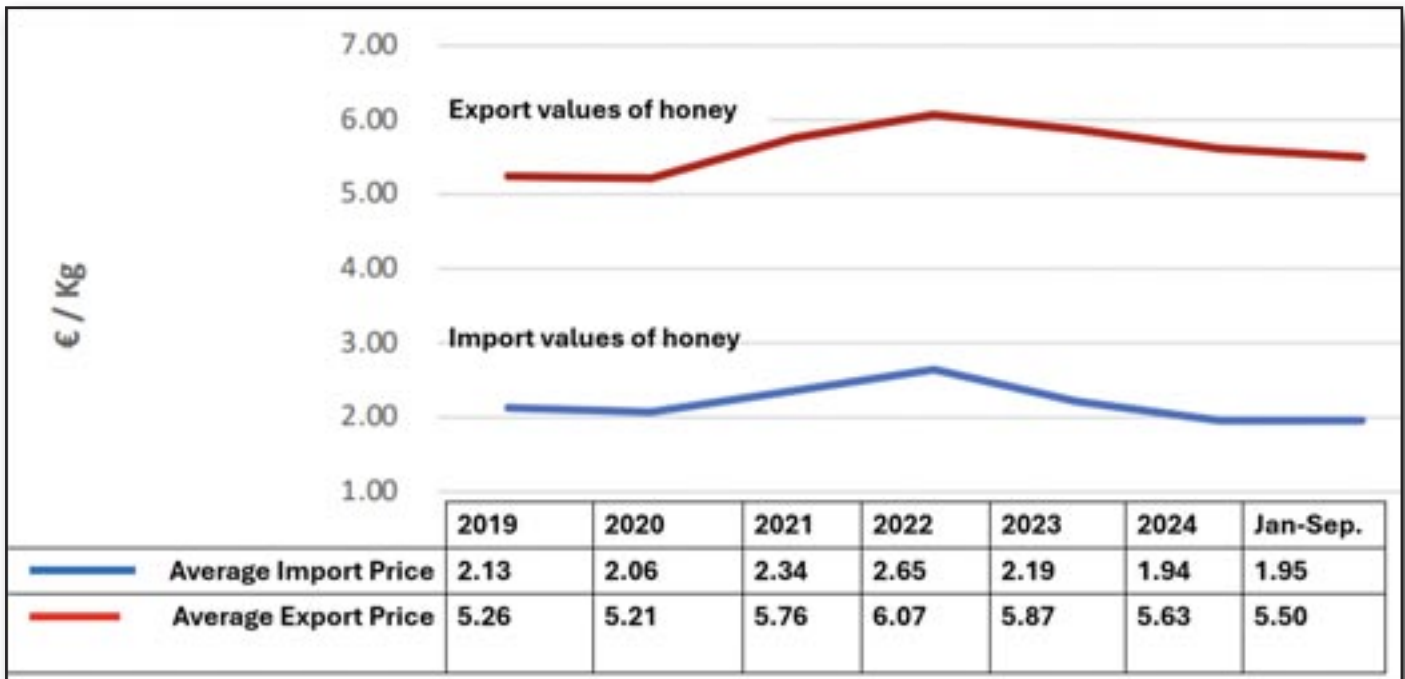


Figure 1. Difference in honey prices from the import of cheap honey from third countries and export as "European"

Data from the EU Honey Market Presentation (2026)

France has high consumption and strict controls. The negative balance of 22,673 tons means that the market "used" more honey than it appeared to have available that year. However, for France, this deficit was likely covered by stocks from the previous year (2023), when production reached 30,000 tons. It may also stem from significant domestic production that was not fully declared to authorities.

Bulgaria's honey surplus and exports, which equal its annual production, are not justified. Bulgaria recorded lower production in 2023 (10,100 tons), meaning that the 19,067 tons of honey in storage in 2024 do not originate from domestic production but from imports. This country is clearly export-oriented; the surplus does not arise from its own production and remains in traders' warehouses to be distributed to other European countries such as Greece in the following years.

The same can be said for Belgium, which shows production of 400 tons of honey, exports of 11,338 tons, and a surplus in storage of 10,180 tons in 2024. It should be noted that 100% of the honey imported by Belgium in 2021–2022 was

found to be adulterated in an EU investigation (EU, 2023).

In Greece, honey production was 15,000 tons in 2024. That year, Greece imported 4,918 tons of honey and exported 1,486 tons. Traditionally, Greece exports high-quality honey, usually pure varieties such as thyme, pine, fir, chestnut, and others that are preferred and stand out. However, it cannot be ruled out that Greek honey mixed with imported honey is exported as a blend, or even that imported honey is exported labeled as "Greek honey."

No one can confirm or deny this information. However, export prices and destination countries of Greek honey are indicative of its origin. Premium pure Greek honey varieties are directed to major markets such as Germany, France, the UK, etc., with prices ranging from €5.50 to €9.00/kg. Greek honey mixed with imported honey is sold as flower honey, directed to markets such as Bulgaria, Romania, and other less demanding markets, with prices ranging from €3–5/kg for the blend. Imported honey sold as Greek has prices around €2.8/kg.



Conclusions

Adulteration and fraud in honey have existed for many years and will likely persist for several more decades. EU borders are open to any quantity and quality of honey, despite strict control legislation. However, this legislation is not applied to honey, which is classified among products that do not require mandatory laboratory quality control at the borders. Only accompanying documents are checked, though their authenticity is questioned. The EU has not established a unified traceability system as announced in 2024, and it is not expected to do so in the coming decades, at least for imported honey.

A unified traceability system cannot be implemented because the product entering through borders cannot be effectively controlled due to the absence of a harmonized, legally enforceable method for detecting adulteration. Such a method can only be developed by the European Reference Laboratory (EURL), which alone has the legal mandate. However, the EURL does not exist, even though its legal basis was established by Regulation 2017/625 nine years ago. Its establishment, operation, and development of a method capable of stopping adulterated honey at the borders would require between 9 and 15 years.

European countries such as France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, and Croatia have developed traceability systems by monitoring the movement of domestic honey. Alongside mandatory electronic beekeeper registries, they have also established honey balance systems to track production, consumption, imports, and exports. In these countries, selling imported honey as domestic is impossible. Greece, along with Bulgaria, Poland, and Romania, is among the few European countries that have not established a domestic honey traceability system, resulting in uncontrolled adulteration even in domestic products.

The absence of a functioning honey balance system serves the interests of large honey importers. Without a digital accounting system for the quantity of honey produced or imported versus what is marketed, it becomes easier to mix Greek honey with cheap industrial syrup or imported multi-floral honey, and the system cannot detect discrepancies. These stakeholders may exert significant influence on political will, arguing that a strict honey balance system would impose “bureaucracy” that harms competitiveness.

Advanced methods for detecting adulteration exist and can identify it, but they cannot be used because they are not legally established. Chinese scientists continue to develop honey-adul-

teration syrups in ways that bypass regulatory controls.

This flawed system of distributing adulterated honey is sustained by enormous economic interests of EU member states that import and re-export honey at higher prices. These member states shape legislation, influence political will, and entrench adulteration and fraud in honey.

Beekeepers are the only ones who can provide a solution to this issue—provided they eventually understand it and take action.

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**NO BEES
LIFE**



APIMONDIA
JUBILEE CONGRESS

DUBAI
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

2027

from 15 to 19 november



Wisdom

WHEN MEDICINE MEETS THE WISDOM OF BEES

For Dr. Jana Irsakova, medicine has never been only about treating disease, it has always been about understanding life itself. A physician with nearly three decades of clinical experience, she moves with rare ease between different healing traditions, conventional Western medicine, traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture, herbal therapies, and apitherapy. As a researcher in integrative medicine and President of the Scientific Committee on Apitherapy of the European Beekeeping Association (EBA), she works not only with patients but also at the scientific and professional frontier of bringing bee-based ther-

apies closer to modern healthcare. Her journey, from hospital emergency rooms to the fascinating therapeutic world of bees, reveals a doctor driven by curiosity, experience, and a deep belief that medicine should unite knowledge from nature and science. In this conversation, Dr. Irsakova shares the personal story behind her path and her vision of a future where different medical traditions cooperate for one simple but profound goal, health and life.

1. When did you first feel that you were interested not only in treating diseases, but in

understanding the human being as a whole – body, energy, environment, and spirit?

It actually came very early. I belong to a generation that experienced the peak of socialism in the former Czechoslovakia. There were no resources, nowhere to search, and yet already at about the age of 10 I was meditating and dissecting earthworms. In adolescence completely different things took priority, but during my studies at the Faculty of Medicine in Bratislava a very well-known healer and herbalist entered my life. I began meeting with her regularly, and somewhere there the conscious work began. So if I take only this second period as active work, it has been about the last 30 years that I have been walking a path where different approaches to human life and existence are connected.

2. What led you to study medicine, and what expectations did you have when you entered the world of conventional medicine?

That so-called Western or modern medicine actually knows very little. And that my goal is to help people be healthy in any way possible. The goal is Life with big L. So I started looking for other ways and approaches.

3. When did you first experience in clinical practice that conventional medicine does not provide all the answers a patient is seeking – and that a broader perspective is needed?

So yes, already during my medical studies it resonated within me. Even then I was solving my own health problems not only through modern medicine, but as I said, I was visiting a herbalist who, by the way, built at that time the largest warehouse of medicinal herbs in Central Europe. I practiced Tai-chi, meditated...

4. What led you to traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture, and what did this perspective reveal to you that you had not seen before?

After finishing university and several years in the hospital, family came. My long-desired

daughter was born. Suddenly it was no longer possible to be at work all night. At that time, I was working in the emergency medical response service, and before that several years in the emergency department of a hospital. Suddenly there was a small human being who was more important. But I am a very active person, I needed to move forward somehow, so during my maternity leave I decided to study. Chinese medicine had always attracted me. A 5–6 thousand year old tradition whose functionality has been proven by all those years of use. And as it usually happens



– when the student is ready, the teacher appears. At that time a new school opened – the Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Prague. I did not manage to join the first group of students at this school, but as soon as they opened a new year the following year, I applied. It was a beautiful five-year period, although quite demanding. We studied comprehensive TCM – treatment with herbs, acupuncture, massage, qi-gong – but acupuncture was closest to me from the very beginning. TCM has a completely different view of the human being. Modern medicine has “cut” the

human body into organ systems, while TCM perceives every living being as a whole, where individual systems should cooperate for the benefit of the whole. It does not perceive only the person but also the environment in which they live and which naturally influences them. It was a completely different approach and it makes sense.

5. Do you see parallels between the Chinese understanding of energy, balance, and health and traditional European (folk) medicine?

Traditional medicine in Europe is influenced by the diversity of national customs. It is not as comprehensive and unified as Chinese medicine. Of course there are many areas that overlap across Europe, but it is still more local. Local customs, procedures, local herbs. And I think that in Europe the system is not built so strongly on the concept of energy.

6. When and how did you first seriously enter the field of apitherapy – was it driven more by professional curiosity or by personal experience?

I always say – behind everything there is a story. And behind my apitherapeutic journey there is my own story. Very limiting postoperative and post-traumatic knee problems, and at the same time observing what a bee sting did to me when I was taking care of bees, led me to decide to apply bee stings into acupuncture points on my knee. And it worked! Within a week I was without

medication, without pain, without swelling! And I had already been walking with crutches for two years and taking several pain medications daily, while the orthopedist could not find the cause of my problems. But acupuncture did not help either, herbs did not help... nothing. This amazing effect sat me down at the internet. I knew I had not invented the wheel. I said to myself, someone must have already discovered this. And so, I discovered the word Apitherapy, and the whole system completely absorbed me.

7. Bee products have a long tradition in folk medicine. How did you begin translating this traditional knowledge into clinical and scientific practice?

After I found out that the field of Apitherapy exists, I began studying everything and everywhere that was available to me. As I say – coincidence does not exist, everything is synchronicity – at that time a course on Apitherapy by a Russian apitherapist living in the Czech Republic was taking place, and shortly afterwards there was a course by Dr. Stangaciu in another part of the Czech Republic. Then Covid came and we stayed locked at home. Apart from work in the clinic I could do nothing else. I managed to get through that whole period thanks to apitherapy.

8. What convinced you most about apitherapy – its effectiveness, the logic of nature, patient experiences, or scientific evidence?

I think effectiveness. And complexity. Bees in general are fascinating creatures, and combining apitherapy with all my other medicines is a fantastic experience.

9. Where did you acquire your knowledge and training in apitherapy?

As I said, I traveled to courses, but a huge amount of information I gained from literature, in which my knowledge of languages helped me. In Russia, apitherapy was scientifically supported already in the 1970s by order of the government at that time. Because of that, Russian literature is an enormous source of information. So, I read





all the Russian apitherapy classics that I could obtain in Russian. And then of course everything I could find in English.

10. How do apitherapy, conventional medicine, traditional Chinese medicine, and folk healing practices intertwine and complement each other in your work today? How do you decide which approach to use and when?

The goal is health. It does not matter which medicine we use to reach it. And I have never practiced only one medicine exclusively. I have always mixed them. I have patients who come to me only for Western medicine, and I have those who come precisely because I will not give them

antibiotics for tonsillitis, but instead a propolis spray and I will needle one acupuncture point. I have been practicing as a doctor for almost 30 years. I already have some experience in being able to estimate which approach is the right one for a person.

11. Do you feel that patients are increasingly seeking holistic approaches, and what does the conventional healthcare system often fail to provide?

Yes, fortunately today people are much more informed and open. In Western medicine I miss the comprehensive approach. And the willingness to be complementary medicine.

12. You are also the President of the Scientific Committee on Apitherapy at the EBA. What are the main tasks of the Committee, and what goals are you working towards?

There are long-term goals and short-term goals. First of all, we want to improve public awareness of what apitherapy actually is. To bring it more among people. But part of this is also educating beekeepers. For example, that we do not only have honey, but also other products. And that honey is not only a sweetener, but also a medicine. Among the long-term goals is, for example, helping to establish an official position for apitherapy in our countries.

13. What are currently the greatest challenges in the standardisation, research, and acceptance of apitherapy within the medical community?

We do not have any common concept, any common literature. We do not have standards for products or quality control. There are no centers where apitherapy is officially practiced. Apitherapy is like a beautiful enormous train that keeps growing and growing, but for a long time it seems to stand in one place. If you want to move such a giant, it takes time. It creaks. And it moves with difficulty. It is work for many years.

14. How do you see the future of apitherapy in Europe and globally?

Anyone who follows apitherapy can see that, for example in the field of scientific research, it is a rapidly developing area. There are more and more practicing apitherapists. There are more and more sick people seeking it. Countries that do not notice this trend will miss the train. It is good that people are creating demand for apitherapy. That creates a field of activity where it is possible to strive for the official recognition of apitherapy.

15. How do you envision the future of healthcare – will it become more integrative, collaborative, and nature-based, or more technologically driven?

I think the field of medicine and healthcare in general will be a combination of everything. Honestly, I very much hope so and I cannot wait for it. Everything that improves our quality of life, in all areas of life, should be complementary and cooperative, not alternative. No either-or. Everything should cooperate for the sake of the goal. And I am convinced that it is right to include both the natural basis and technologies. As I say – the goal is Life.

Žiga Jenko



PYRROLIZIDINE ALKALOIDS (PA) AND NO END IN SIGHT

In 2020, the EU set maximum levels for pyrrolizidine alkaloids (Regulation (EU) 2020/2040). Teas, dried herbs and pollen-based products have been explicitly assigned limit values. Previous studies have shown that PAs can be found in honey, but the risk is pretty unrealistic, so no limit value has been explicitly set for honey.

Pyrrolizidine alkaloids (PAs) constitute a vast group of natural substances comprising over 660 chemical compounds found in well over 6,000 plant species. Their biological function is broadly and generally described as a plant defence mechanism against herbivores. And this is despite the fact that research has only just begun on very few of these substances.

Currently, the risk assessment regarding carcinogenicity is based on data for just one substance (Riddelliin) or the EU directive, it is assumed that all PAs, regardless of their chemical structure, exhibit the same extremely high toxicity. However, results from various studies show that the effect of individual alkaloids is, in some cases, only one per cent of the toxicity of Riddelliin.

Extensive recent studies show that no harm whatsoever can be detected in cattle and sheep, even when they graze almost exclusively on PA plants. More detailed research also shows that

historical reports of horses dying belong in the realm of myth. Interestingly, there are also reports from Australia dating back to the 1960s, where single-flower honey from *Echium* or *Heliotropium* was harvested. Consumption at that time did not result in any reported adverse effects.

Now, there are repeated reports that authorities are objecting to honey, even though there is no explicit limit value for it. In Bavaria, for example, the honey limit value is calculated at 83 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ using a workaround, whilst for pollen products it is set at 500 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ by the EU regulation. When the limit values were first introduced, it was expressly pointed out that exposure through the consumption of honey is relatively low and therefore does not need to be regulated. However, the Bavarian authorities are not the only ones, in their zeal, to be pursuing beekeepers with such dedication.

The consequences for beekeepers, bottlers and distributors are, of course, severe, as the relevant analyses are extremely costly. However, their informative value is limited, as 17 of the 35 substances listed are so-called PANOs. PANOs are a subgroup of PAs, namely pyrrolizidine alkaloid N-oxides, which are slowly but surely broken down by the hydrogen peroxide that is constantly formed in honey. Imported honeys, which have

been shipped across the ocean for months, have already undergone this degradation process, whilst freshly harvested samples from local beekeepers naturally still have this degradation ahead of them. In the samples taken in northern Germany, this reaction reduces the PA content by roughly half.

To summarise:

We have a hodgepodge of natural substances that are grouped together on the basis of a shared structure. The analysis – that is, determining the nature and quantity of these substances – is largely experimental in nature. Laboratories face great difficulties in precisely identifying these substances and even greater difficulties in quantifying them accurately. Statements that substance X has been found in quantity Y give the false impression of accuracy. In fact, a tolerance range should be specified. If this tolerance range were specified, it would immediately become clear to everyone that the data is on very shaky ground. Toxicological studies are available for only a very few compounds. As it is now extremely difficult to carry out animal testing in the EU, it is also unlikely that any significant new knowledge will be gained in this area in the near future. Actual harm to humans is known only in the context of famines, where people, against their better judgement and in dire straits, have consumed seeds that they knew to be poisonous. In grazing animals, it can be demonstrated that no poisoning or long-term damage occurs. On the basis of these shaky findings, the same yardstick is applied to all compounds. Research into, for example, their pharmacological benefits is completely impossible, as this group of natural substances has been tarred with the same brush.

It is therefore clear that historical contexts are being misrepresented. Individual cases are being used. With the help of research funding, which is

deliberately channelled to compliant professors and institutes, desired results are selectively fabricated. And in the end, orchestrated press campaigns are used to stir up fear and panic amongst the unsuspecting public. What a perfect script!

Bureaucrats in government departments and profiteers in analytical laboratories shake hands behind closed doors: under the pretext of misguided precaution, the bureaucrats can claim to have saved the world. The laboratories receive subsidies for new equipment and new profit centres are created.

Consumer protection is evident in only a few areas. Where fraud occurs – namely when herbs or rocket salad are mixed with other plants – one could, of course, pursue the matter in this way. But that would probably be too simple.

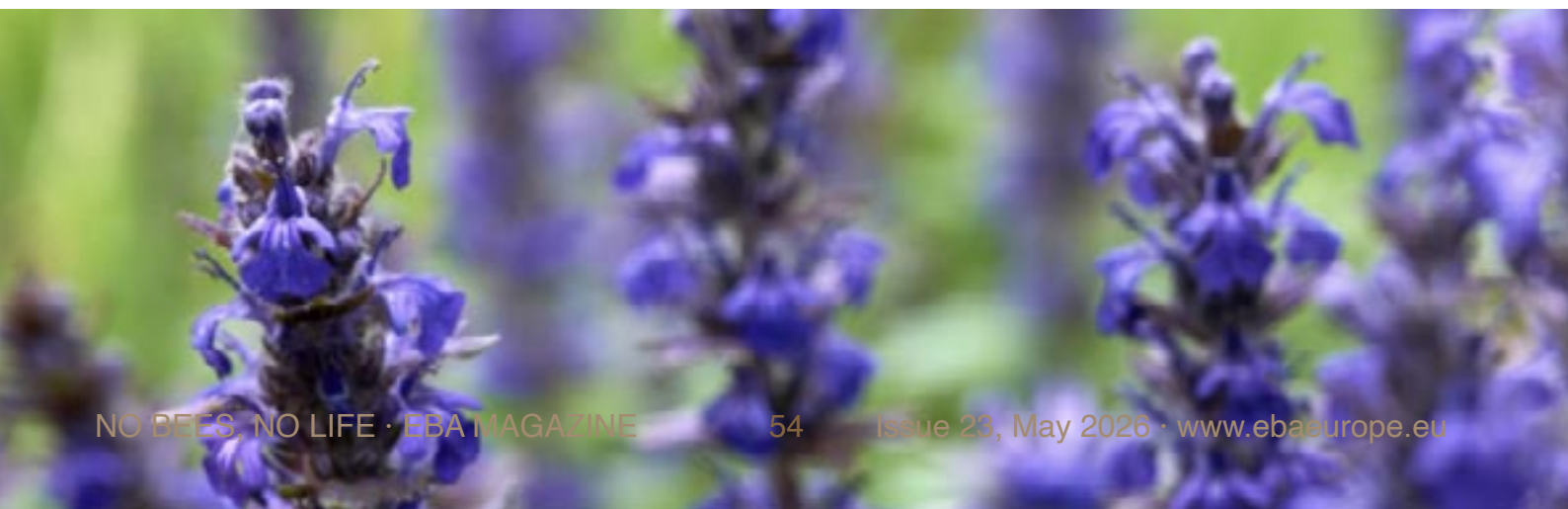
For beekeepers, particularly those who produce in small batches, the costs of analysis are skyrocketing. They are left defenceless against a bureaucratic machine. The underlying assumption is that agriculture, beekeeping and nature in general can be managed as if they were industrial processes. This is just as absurd as suggesting that honey can be produced within tight tolerance limits, like screws or yoghurt pots.

Honey is a product of great variability and yet offers significant health benefits. This must be safeguarded by legislation and the actions of the authorities. And yet, beekeeping must be protected from the insane quantities of counterfeit honey. If the EU bureaucracy fails to incorporate this into its thinking, its acceptance will continue to crumble – not only among beekeepers, but also among consumers, who are being systematically deceived with the full knowledge of the authorities and politicians.

Dr. Thomas Gloger

Api-Zentrum Ruhr

thomas.gloger@api-zentrum-ruhr.de



WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME A BEEFLUENCER?

The European Beekeeping Association (EBA) is launching content on TikTok and inviting young creators to join us!

Together, we will introduce the wider audience to the wonderful and amazing world of bees and beekeeping, raise awareness about their importance, and share inspiring content.

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We have also prepared exclusive and unique caps and T-shirts waiting just for you.

For more information, contact:
nik.lupse@czs.si



1

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eba
BEEFLUENCER

2

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ON **TIKTOK!**

3

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- INSPIRE OTHERS**
- MAKE AN IMPACT**

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WE CAN'T WAIT TO HEAR YOUR IDEAS!

THREE QUESTIONS FOR EBA MEMBERS

We asked EBA members the following three questions and these are their answers:

1. How satisfied are you with the work of the EBA?

2. In your opinion, what is the greatest achievement of the EBA so far?

3. What else would your beekeepers like the EBA to do in the future?

1.

Prof. Dr. Meral Kekeçoğlu
manager of DAGEM
Düzce university

-I am honored to be a member of the EBA family.

2-The greatest achievement of the EBA is bringing together beekeepers, academics, and all bee-friendly people like a bee colony.

3-In the future, I would like to see more people from different countries join the group and many awareness activities organized with participants from all over the world.

2.

Damir Salopek
Pčelarsko društvo Zagreb

- At the Zagreb Bee Society, we are very satisfied with the work of the EBA and with the energy invested by everyone, especially Mr. Night

- The fight against adulterated honey is certainly the greatest scope of the work so far.

- In the future, we should certainly devote ourselves to the adulteration of beeswax. Prof. Ph.D.Sc. Lidija Svečnjak works a lot on wax testing and the data are devastating throughout Europe, not only in our region. So we think that some steps should be taken in that direction.

3.

MALTESE HONEY BEE FOUNDATION
(VO/2403)

1. It seems to be too focused on honey. We were excluded from the honey bee conservation committee, which we had suggested should be established. It feels like our inclusion was not preferred, and that our input was not valued. A good

team player would see how to include people and not exclude.

2. Lobbying at European level

3. Address and engage with a wider range of relevant topics, with greater inclusion and collaboration with beekeepers.

4.

Jiri Piza

ICYB – International centre for young beekeepers

1. Yes, I am satisfied with the work of EBA.

2. I see the greatest success in the fact that in a short period of time a functional structure of the organization was created, a magazine is published, and thanks to the work of the organization's management, the first steps were taken in ensuring the quality of honey in the sales network and the use of chemicals in agriculture.

3. I believe that as one of the next steps, support for young beekeepers will begin in all EBA member countries and that all these countries will have their representatives in the International Meetings of Young Beekeepers (IMYB), which is a global platform for young beekeepers and their mentors.

5.

Romanian Beekeepers Association

Marius MARINESCU | Responsabil Tehnic

On behalf of the Romanian Beekeepers Association, we would like to express that we are satisfied with the work carried out by the European Beekeeping Association so far. While we acknowledge that some of the initial objectives have not YET been fully achieved, we consider that raising awareness at European level regarding the issue of adulterated honey and imports from third countries represents a significant and necessary step forward for the sector.

From our point of view, this remains one of the most important achievements of the EBA to

date, as it has helped bring increased visibility to a problem that continues to affect both producers and consumers across Europe.

Looking ahead, we believe that the EBA should place particular emphasis on the future framework of the Common Agricultural Policy post-2027. It is essential to ensure that beekeepers are adequately supported through fair and accessible funding mechanisms, adapted to the current challenges of the sector.

We appreciate your efforts and remain open to continued collaboration.

6.

Fabian Lindhe - Sweden: Honungsringen

1, 10 out of 10, very satisfied

2. I believe that the magazine No bees No life is the biggest achievement. To give the beekeepers of Europe an opportunity to learn from each other and to connect with each other is the foundation for long term cooperation.

3. I believe that a worthwhile goal for EBA would be to internally establish a working group within the organization that works toward getting the EU and WHO to stop classifying honey as free sugar. Instead, honey should be placed within the fruit category in food classification. I understand that this is, in principle, an almost impossible task, but the value lies in ensuring that EBA and its members adopt this position, and that we gradually begin to teach beekeepers that treating honey as sugar is as misleading as calling fruit candy. I can be part and work within such a group.

7.

British Beekeepers Association

Alan Rowse (BBKA Trustee)

1) Very satisfied with the work of the EBA. It appears that the association is becoming a powerful lobbying group in its own right.

2) The focus on reducing the occurrence of

adulterated honey has been very impressive.

3) The UK beekeepers are concerned about invasive species eg at this moment, specifically *Tropilaelaps*. A focus on containment/eradication of this invasive species would be highly valued.

8.

Slobodan Dolašević - Scientific Committee for Young Beekeepers

Generally, I am satisfied with the EBA's work. Its greatest achievement is a magazine and work behind the scenes for all beekeepers.

It should continue to supporting the beekeeping industry.

9.

ČESKÁ APITERAPEUTICKÁ SPOLEČNOST – ČAPIS (CZECH APITHERAPY ASSOCIATION) ***Kamila Rubešová***

We are satisfied with the work of EBA.

We are happy to connect beekeepers from all over Europe.

The greatest success is the Buy Local Honey campaign and the obligation to label the country of origin on every jar of honey.

We look forward to joint education, especially in the field of apitherapy, and especially to sharing experiences.

10.

Radule Miljanic ***President*** ***Union of beekeeping organizations of Montenegro***

In accordance with your request for answers to questions related to the functioning of the EBA, our positions are as follows:

1. We are satisfied with the leadership of EBE and the topics you raise.

2. In our opinion, you have done a lot to strengthen and scale the EBA, and in the fight to protect the EU market from fraud and forgery.

Also, you tried to influence the adoption of a law in the EU on the use of pesticides and preventing the import of honey from South America, which opened the possibility for very unfair competition.

3. What is unclear to us is one of the basic agendas of the EBA, which is the incentive per hive for conventional beekeeping, based on the contribution of bees to the sustainability of biodiversity.

We received a letter sent to President Noč by Mr. Gijs Schilthuijs, in which the incentive per beehive is mentioned.

It follows from the content of the letter that conventional beekeepers are not covered by this right.

We also received a letter from a member of the Executive Board, Mr. Živadinović, in which he requested that we use our information channels to inform the public that beekeepers will receive an incentive per hive, for which there is no binding decision.

In this regard, we also noted our Ministry of Agriculture and received the opinion that we previously stated.

I would like to mention that our organic beekeepers have been exercising the right to incentives per hive for 10 years, which is tolerated by the European Legislature.

Since our country's negotiations regarding EU membership have advanced considerably, we are obliged to respect all EU norms. and an incentive in agriculture.

Question: Do beekeepers of any EU member state receive a subsidy per hive for conventional beekeeping?

11.

Zorica Plavšić, MD PhD MPH apitherapists ***President of the association ApiMed Srbija***

1.

•It is impressive that since its establishment in 2022, EBA has gathered 32 countries and more than 420,000 beekeepers. "It is a large European family of people who share a love for bees, a concern for nature conservation and a commitment to the production of quality bee products" We will add "medicinal quality off bee products".

•The establishment of the EBA stimulated the activity of local beekeeping and apitherapeutic organizations throughout Europe.

•EBA supports the work of the national Associations for Beekeeping and Apitherapy. Through the reports presented by the EBA, increases the visibility of the work of these associations.

•Enthusiasm is visible in the work of those who lead the Association and the desire to make it better for all beekeepers, and on the other hand, the desire to protect consumers of bee products.

•Also, the members of the scientific committees, as the closest part of the EBA family, invest their knowledge and enthusiasm in order to maintain the quality of the work of the EBA Association.

•EBA has become an important interlocutor at the international level, in the European Parliament, the European Commission and beyond.

•EBA Magazine reports and educates. European beekeepers and apitherapists have access to the latest data in the field of beekeeping and the application of bee products.

•The fact that EBA's mission is a strong commitment to the integrity of the honey market is encouraging.

•EBA has no membership fee

2.

★Gathering of National Associations of beekeepers and apitherapists at the European level, which gives a greater sense of security in working within a large family.

★Cooperation with the European Parliament, the European Commission

3.

✓In the field, control the use of pesticides (both types and time of use) and implement adequate sanctions for non-compliance with the regulations.

✓Establish cooperation between beekeepers and farmers through support programs in the protection of bees during pollination (mandatory notification of beekeepers before spraying)

✓Education of farmers (many are not aware of the consequences, especially small farmers and households)

✓Choose to help small beekeepers and reduce bureaucracy in placing bee products on the market

✓Solving the problem of bee diseases (e.g. varroa)

ocoordinated treatments,

oproduct quality control,

owider education on proper use

✓Support the raising of flower zones, especially the planting of honey plants, for afforestation, e.g. use tame chestnut and not just pine.

✓Encourage the cooperation of apitherapists beekeepers and health workers

✓Work on the acceptance of apitherapy as a branch of traditional medicine by the Ministries of Health.

✓Officialize the work of health workers, apitherapists.

12.

Lithuanian Beekeepers Association

1) The Lithuanian Beekeepers Association values the work and efforts of the EBA in the field of protecting the rights of the EU beekeepers, protecting the honey market, fighting with honey fraud, and urging Europeans to consume honey directly from local beekeepers. We need to continue to work actively on these issues in order to achieve a significant breakthrough in protecting the EU beekeeping sector.

2) In our opinion, the main achievements of the EBA are:

Commitment to the integrity of the honey market.

Fighting for strict standards and traceability systems of honey imports.

Fighting with the import of non-authentic and low-quality honey into the EU.

Advocating for beekeepers and consumers

under the slogan "Europeans Choose European Honey", publishing a magazine "No Bees, No life".

In 2026 a breakthrough was achieved in ensuring a system of direct subsidies for the hive, compensating EU beekeepers for pollination services.

Great attention is paid to the regulation of pesticides and the reduction of the occurrence of harmful substances such as acetamiprid in bee products.

3) It is also important to raise the issue of anti-dumping of honey imports from China, Vietnam, India and Ukraine with the responsible EU institutions.

13.

Answers of PSNV.CZ

1. We are very satisfied. We particularly welcome the promotion of quality standards for bee products on the market, the informative complementary webinars, and the support for the IHC Congress. The opportunity to get directly involved in the EBA's work is also a great benefit to us.

2. The greatest success is that the EBA was established on the beekeepers' own initiative and has managed to build a strong position within the EU. In particular, we consider the legislative progress in combating honey adulteration to be a significant achievement.

3. We would like to raise the issue of bee health. Our vision is:

To shift from a reliance on treatments toward the natural resilience of bee colonies.

To establish a coordinated, Europe-wide program for varroa tolerance.

14.

Belgrade Association of Beekeepers

1. We rate the work of EBA and its management as very successful.

2. The greatest achievement of the EBA is

the unification of a large number of beekeeping organizations for the promotion of domestic bee products and the importance of the bee as a pollinator.

3. I am of the opinion that we should think about the organization of the European Beekeeping Congress, which would make an additional contribution to the promotion of greater consumption of domestic bee products in each organizing country. The congress should be a scientific meeting aimed not only at beekeepers but also at consumers. I am of the opinion that in this way each organizing country would give its own personal touch to this joint struggle of ours for the preservation of beekeeping.

15.

Beekeeping Federation of North Macedonia

1. The work of the EBA so far is satisfactory. Although I would say that more work needs to be done on communication between members. And if there is a need to introduce telephone calls. That is our opinion.

2. The EBA's greatest achievement so far is that it has managed to unite most of the beekeeping associations in Europe.

3. In the future, we would like the EBA to be more aggressive with honey adulterators, to require EU member states and applicant member states to introduce equal criteria for importing and exporting honey. And also to equip more laboratories for honey analysis.

16.

The Croatian Beekeepers Federation Dražen Kocet, engineer

1. The EBA was necessary to defend the interests of European beekeepers and their survival.

We are proud that we all managed to start the project that we hope for that he will live as

long as possible. EBA does a great job.

2. The biggest achievement of EBA is that Boštjan Noč took over to lead this responsible business and which united European beekeepers in one organization and opened the doors of European institutions.

3. EBA's most important fight should still be focused on fraud and unfair competition which EU policy and we all together must throw out from the market of bee products.

17.

Serbian Federation of Beekeeping Organization's

MD Rodoljub Živadinović, president

1. We are very satisfied with the work of EBA, because we have achieved a lot with minimal resources. We could probably have done more if more beekeepers had joined in sharing our posts on social networks, because visibility is very important, I would even say crucial.

2. The greatest success of the EBA is the unprecedented contact between European beekeepers and the European Commission. Before the establishment of the EBA, such contact was only achieved by honey packers and distributors, influencing the developments and regulations regarding honey in the EU, which were often not in

line with the interests of beekeeping. This ultimately led to the fact that the number of beekeepers is decreasing, the percentage of counterfeit honey on the market is increasing, the pollination of agricultural crops is becoming worse and more inadequate, and the environmental threat due to the lack of pollination of wild crops is increasing, because bees are by force of circumstances their main pollinator, since intensive agriculture has dramatically reduced the number of wild pollinators by killing them.

3. EBA has a long way to go and a series of difficult tasks ahead. We must work on closer connections between European beekeeping associations in all countries, on bringing the importance of EBA activities closer to each individual beekeeper, and on an even stronger influence on national and European institutions. Due to the general geopolitical chaos, beekeeping is not in the focus of the authorities. We are the only ones who can change that. I would not talk about individual goals here because they are well covered in EBA plans, but the most important thing is for beekeepers to understand that only EBA can implement all this with its perseverance, and that no one from outside will come to help us. We have to do everything ourselves. Therefore, it is most important that every individual beekeeper who wants to help themselves contact EBA with that desire so that we can assign them a task. We all have to do a lot. Because if each of us does a little, we will achieve a little. :-)



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You're warmly invited to join us too – together, we can achieve even more. United for the bees!

We will soon present our activities, so stay connected: <https://cfnb.si/> <https://www.facebook.com/share/1HE8QgZ3Mo/>

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UNITED FOR BEES!





International Forum for Action on Sustainable Beekeeping and Pollination

Science, innovation and policy actions for a more sustainable future

20–21 May 2026 Maribor, Slovenia

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Republic of Slovenia are jointly organizing the Third International Forum for Action on Sustainable Beekeeping and Pollination with the theme “Science, innovation and policy actions for a more sustainable future”, to be held at the Habakuk hotel in Maribor, Slovenia, from 20 to 21 May 2026.

Bees and other pollinators are essential to food security, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem resilience and sustainable livelihoods. At a time when pollinators face increasing pressures from land use change, the indiscriminate use of agrochemicals, climate change and other environmental challenges, coordinated scientific, policy and practical responses are urgently needed.

Building on the outcomes of the previous forums, the Forum in 2026 will provide a platform for dialogue among policymakers, researchers, beekeepers, farmers’ organizations, civil society and private sector representatives. Discussions will focus on strengthening the science–policy interface, scaling up pollinator-friendly agricultural approaches, enhancing international cooperation and addressing emerging challenges in honey quality and trade.

The Forum will also mark the celebration of World Bee Day 2026 and include the Golden Bee Award Ceremony. The Forum will be held in English and will be webcast.

For further information regarding the Forum, please visit the [event’s webpage](#) or contact: beeforum.mkgp@gov.si.



QU Dongyu

Director-General

*Food and Agriculture Organization of
the United Nations*



Mateja Čalušič

Minister

*Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food
Republic of Slovenia*



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA



Third International Forum for Action on Sustainable Beekeeping and Pollination

Science, innovation and policy actions for a more sustainable future

Maribor, Slovenia | 20 - 21 May 2026

Practical information note

The Third International Forum for Action on Sustainable Beekeeping and Pollination will be jointly organised by the Republic of Slovenia and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and will take place from **20 to 21 May 2026** at the [Habakuk hotel](#) in Maribor, Slovenia.

Participants are expected to **arrive on 19 May 2026** and **depart on 22 May 2026**.

ACCREDITATION

Register by 30 April 2026 (for visa applicants: 13 April 2026)

Register at: <https://dogodki.vlada.si/3rd-international-forum-registration>

Kindly ensure that all required information is filled in accurately, in accordance with the instructions in the form.

Before starting the registration process, please have a recent photo of yourself ready for upload.

Badges can be collected at the registration/information desk at the Habakuk hotel on 19 May from 17:00 to 20:00 hours and on 21 May from 9:00 to 9:20 hours.

VISA APPLICATION PROCESS

Slovenia is part of Schengen Area. The participants need to check if they are required a visa to enter Schengen Area/Slovenia.

This information can be found at: <https://www.gov.si/en/topics/entry-and-residence/> or at https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/schengen/visa-policy_en#which-countries-nationals-need-a-visa-to-enter-the-schengen-area

In case a participant holds a valid Schengen visa (with multiple entries), (s)he will not need a visa to enter Slovenia. For all others, please check at which diplomatic mission you can apply in case there is no Slovenian Embassy in your country at:

https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fhome-affairs.ec.europa.eu%2Fdocument%2Fdownload%2F0a7b7e97-075c-4c1a-ba13-2be7532972c1_en&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK

You are advised to apply early as the visa issuing process may take time, depending on the workload of the concerned diplomatic mission. In addition to other required documents, the applicant also needs to have an invitation letter from FAO and/or Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of Slovenia to participate at the Forum.

In case further clarifications are needed, email your inquiries to: beeforum.mkgp@gov.si

MEALS

Participants are invited to attend a welcome cocktail on 19 May, starting at 19:00 hours. For logistical purposes, please confirm your participation through the registration form.

Lunch and coffee breaks will be provided for all participants on the meeting days. On 20 May, a reception will be held as part of the World Bee Day celebration and Golden Bee Award ceremony.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

All participants are encouraged to stay at <https://habakuk.si/en/>.

To facilitate this, the organisers have pre-booked a sufficient number of rooms at a preferential rate, which will be held until **30 April**. After this date, neither room availability nor the preferential rates can be guaranteed.

Participants are kindly requested to make their reservations directly by emailing booking@hotel-habakuk.si. To benefit from the negotiated rates, please indicate that you are attending the **Beekeeping Forum**.

Room prices	Included	Additional charges
Standard Double Room – Single Use: €120.00 per room/night	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bed and breakfast • Access to the wellness area • Access to the fitness center • Wi-Fi 	MANDATORY Tourist tax: €3.13 per person/night OPTIONAL: Parking: €5.00 per day
Standard Double Room: €140.00 per room/night		
Superior Double Room: €170.00 per room/night		
Superior Double Room – Single Use: €150.00 per room/night		

TRANSPORT

Participants are advised to travel to Slovenia via one of the nearby international airports (Vienna, Graz, Ljubljana or Zagreb), followed by onward transport to Maribor

Recommended flight routes

Participants may consider the following general travel options:

- Via Istanbul, with onward connections to Ljubljana or Zagreb
- Via major European hub airports, with onward connections to Vienna, Graz, Ljubljana, or Zagreb

Transfers to Maribor

- **Private or shared transfer:** A recommended provider is <https://www.goopti.com/en/>, a reliable transfer company offering door-to-door services. Prices may increase closer to the event date.
- **Train from Vienna, Graz, and Ljubljana:** To buy tickets from Austria, you can use <https://www.oebb.at/en/>. To buy tickets from Ljubljana, you can use

<https://potniski.sz.si/en/>. The journey from Graz takes about an hour, from Vienna three to four hours, and from Ljubljana two hours.

- **Bus lines from Zagreb, Vienna, Graz, and Ljubljana:** For international routes, you can use <https://www.flixbus.co.uk/> and book tickets on their website. For bus lines from Ljubljana, you can use <https://www.ap-ljubljana.si/en>.

Please keep in mind that the train and bus stations in Maribor are not in the immediate vicinity of the hotel. There is a public transport bus line G6 running from the train station to the hotel, you can also book a taxi.

DRAFT PROGRAMME OUTLINE

Date	Programme
19 May 2026	Arrival of participants Welcome cocktail
20 May 2026 DAY 1	Morning: Opening of the Forum and high-level panel discussion Afternoon: Technical discussions Evening: World Bee Day celebration and Golden Bee Award Ceremony
21 May 2026 DAY 2	Morning: Technical discussion and closing Afternoon: Field visit
22 May 2026	Departure of participants

CONTACT DETAILS

For any questions related to travel, accommodation, transfers, or on-site arrangements, you may contact the designated event focal point.

The focal point will be available to provide support before and during the Forum, including assistance with logistics, arrival coordination, and general organisational matters.

E: beeforum.mkgp@gov.si

T: +386 (01) 478 90 77

OTHER INFORMATION

- Working language: English
- Time: Central European Summer Time (CEST), which is UTC +2
- Currency: EUR
- Area code: +386
- Emergency number: 113 (Police) and 112 (Emergency Medical Services, Firefighters)
- Running water from the tap is drinkable in Slovenia

DAY 1		20 May 2026		
Time (CEST)	Topics			Speakers
09:20 – 10:00	Opening			
09:20 – 09:30	Introduction & videos			
09:30 – 09:40	Opening remarks			<i>High-level representative, Slovenia</i>
09:40 – 09:50	Opening remarks			<i>Senior Representative, FAO</i>
09:50 – 10:00	Opening remarks			<i>Senior Representative, European Commission (TBC)</i>
10:00 – 10:30 Coffee break and group photo				
10:30 – 12:30 High-level session: Linking science, agriculture and biodiversity				
10:30 – 10:45	Session keynote: The role of multidisciplinary research for sustainable beekeeping and the conservation of pollinators			
10:45 – 11:00	Case study			
11:00 – 12:00	High-level panel discussion			
12:00 – 13:00 Lunch				
13:00 – 15:00 Technical session I: Towards a global pollinator platform				
13:00 – 13:15	Session keynote: The global pollinator platform			
13:15 – 13:30	Case study			
13:30 – 14:45	Facilitated discussion with panellists and forum participants			
14:45 – 15:00 Coffee break				
15:00 – 17:00 Technical session II: Scaling crop production practices that protect pollinators				
15:00 – 15:15	Session keynote: Redesigning agriculture: How landscape-scale agroecology can reverse pollinator decline and strengthen food security			
15:15 – 15:30	Case study			
15:30 – 16:30	Facilitated discussion with panellists and forum participants			
18:00 – 20:00 World Bee Day celebration and Golden Bee Award Ceremony				
Gala reception hosted by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, in the presence of Her Excellency the President of the Republic of Slovenia.				

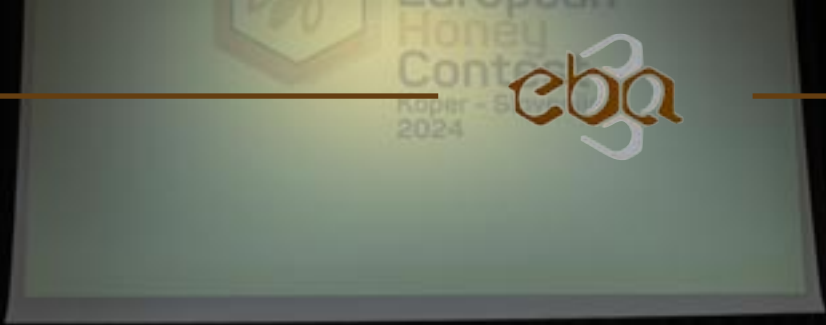
DAY 2	21 May 2026	
Time (CEST)	Topics	
09:00 – 11:15	Technical Session III: Honey quality and trade: Challenges on the rise	
09:00 – 09:15	Session keynote: Addressing global issues in honey quality and trade	
09:15 – 09:30	Case study	
09:30 – 10:00	Facilitated discussion with panellists and Forum participants	
10:00 – 10:15	Coffee	
10:15 – 11:15	Facilitated discussion with panellists and Forum participants (continued)	
11:15 – 12:00	Closing	
11:15 – 11:40	Forum conclusions: Key messages for action	
11:40 – 11:50	Closing remarks	<i>Representative, Slovenia</i>
11:50 – 12:00	Closing remarks	<i>Representative, FAO</i>
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch break	
13:00 – 19:00	Field trip <i>Guided visits to points of interest (Bee Centre, local beekeeper, apitourism site)</i>	

Third International Forum for Action on Sustainable Beekeeping and Pollination

Science, innovation and policy actions for a more sustainable future

Maribor, Slovenia | 20 – 21 May 2026

Provisional agenda



We are looking for new EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS in honey – a prestigious title for the next two years!



Sample submission

- **3 jars of honey (450 g each)**, properly labelled for sale.
- Register via the online form using the QR code.
- Attach the printed confirmation and proof of payment to the sample.
- Participation fee: **€70** per sample.
- Samples can be sent by post or delivered in person to:

Čebelarstva zveza Slovenije, Brdo pri Lukovici 8, 1225 Lukovica, Slovenija.

Evaluation process

The honey will be evaluated by a panel of international honey experts.

- Evaluation is carried out in liquid form (crystallized honey will be properly liquefied beforehand).

A minimum of 7 samples per category is required

- If fewer samples are submitted, the commission will classify them based on electrical conductivity into: honeydew or multifloral.

All samples will be tested for **basic quality parameters** ($\leq 18.6\%$ moisture content, HMF ≤ 15 mg/kg). The top three honeys in each category will undergo additional analysis for **authenticity** and **safety**.

Online submission form with instructions for sample submission



Submit your samples by: **14.9.2026**

AWARD CEREMONY IN KOPER, SLOVENIA
5 DECEMBER 2026



www.honey-contest.eu

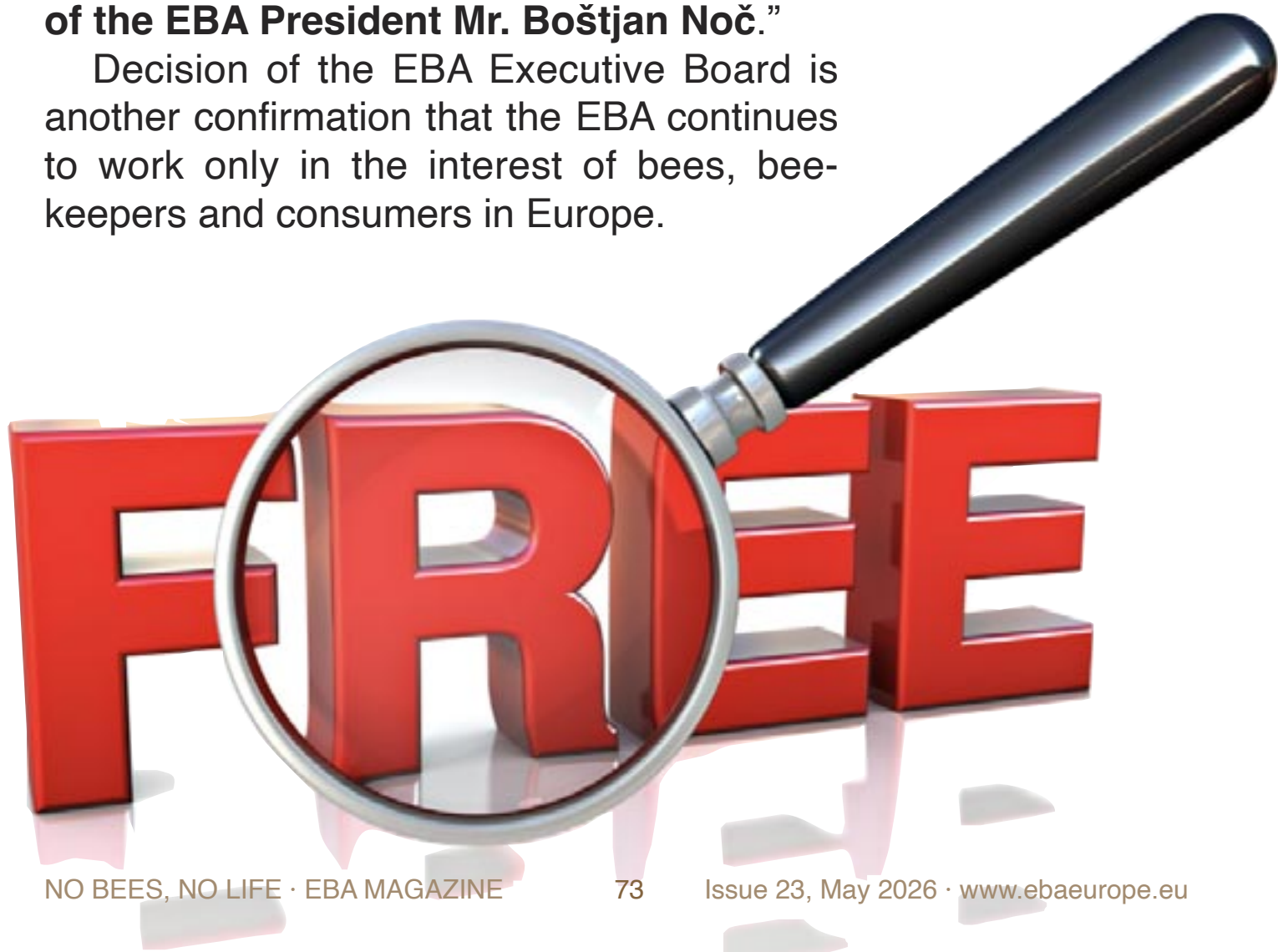
Only authentic honeys with exceptional sensory characteristics typical of their variety will be awarded the top three distinctions and earn the right to promote this prestigious title.



TO THE EBA WITHOUT MEMBERSHIP FEE

At the meeting of the EBA Executive Board, on the proposal of the EBA President Mr. Boštjan Noč, an important decision was made regarding membership in the EBA in the upcoming period: **“Membership in the EBA is free for the duration of the mandate of the EBA President Mr. Boštjan Noč.”**

Decision of the EBA Executive Board is another confirmation that the EBA continues to work only in the interest of bees, beekeepers and consumers in Europe.





SPONSORSHIP REQUEST AND METHOD OF ADVERTISING IN THE MAGAZINE

On behalf of the European Beekeeping Association (EBA), I am writing to seek your support in the form of sponsorship to help ensure the smooth and effective operation of our Association.

The EBA is dedicated to promoting and supporting beekeeping across Europe. The Association was founded out of necessity, as bees and beekeepers are essential for our ecosystem and society. Without beekeepers there are no bees, and without bees there is no pollination, leading to a lack of food on planet Earth.

EBA works for bees, beekeepers and consumers.

Our mission is to:

1. Fight against counterfeit honey that flooded the European market;
2. Introduction of incentives per beehive as agro-ecological programme;
3. Fight against the improper use of chemicals that are harmful to bees;

In return for your generous support, we offer various sponsorship benefits. We believe that this partnership would be mutually beneficial and would significantly contribute to the advancement of the European beekeeping sector.

ADVERTISING IN THE MAGAZINE:

1. Through sponsorship packages;
2. It is possible to pay for an ad only for 1/4 page (100 euros), for a larger area by agreement. The entire page cannot be obtained, it belongs only to the General Sponsor.

IT CONTINUES





EBA

sponsorship packages

GOLD sponsor - 5.000 euros:

Advertisement on the EBA website
Presentation at all EBA events, logo on all EBA correspondence
12 advertisements in the EBA monthly e-magazine in A4 page size

SILVER sponsor - 3.000 euros:

Advertisement on the EBA website
Presentation at all EBA events, logo on all EBA correspondence
12 advertisements in the EBA monthly e-magazine in half A4 page size

BRONZE sponsor - 2.000 euros:

Advertisement on the EBA website
12 advertisements in the EBA monthly e-magazine in the size of 1/4 A4 page

EBA SUPPORTER - 1.000 euros:

Advertisement on the EBA website
12 advertisements in the EBA monthly e-magazine in the size of 1/8 A4 page

These are basic packages, but we are open to different forms of cooperation, which we agree on individually. We would be delighted to discuss this opportunity further and explore how we can align our goals with your organization's values.

Thank you for considering our request. We look forward to the possibility of working together.

Yours sincerely,

Boštjan Noč
President of the European Beekeeping Association

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Downloading and printing texts from "NO BEES, NO LIFE" in other magazines and electronic media is allowed and free of charge, but it is mandatory to indicate the source of the text immediately below the title. Magazine sharing is preferred.

The contents of the texts and advertisements are the responsibility of the authors.

The responsibility for the correctness of the English language in the magazine lies with the authors of the texts.

The editor reserves the right to publish a larger advertisement than the size specified by the sponsorship package, if it improves the design of the magazine.

Advertising in the magazine: 1. Through sponsorship packages; 2. It is possible to pay for an ad only for 1/4 page (100 euros), for a larger area by agreement. The entire page cannot be obtained, it belongs only to the General Sponsor.

The total number of pages in the magazine is not fixed.

There are no fees for published texts and photos.

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