



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 21.11.1996
COM(96) 596 final

96/0282 (CNS)

Proposal for a

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC)

**laying down general rules for the application of measures to improve
the production and marketing of honey**

(presented by the Commission)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

This proposal for a Council Regulation is being submitted at the request of the Agriculture Council meeting of October 1994 following an exchange of views on the Commission's communication entitled "Discussion Paper on the Situation of European Apiculture".

The purpose of the proposal is to improve the conditions for the production and marketing of honey in the European Union by means of national programmes including technical assistance measures, controlling varroasis and associated disease, the rationalization of transhumance and the analysis of honey by regional beekeeping laboratories.

The measure for controlling varroasis is not an eradication programme but is intended to reduce the economic impact of that disease on the profitability of production.

It also provides for a study by the Member States of the structure of the sector in terms of production and marketing.

La

Proposal for a
COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No .../..
of 1996

laying down general rules for the application of measures to improve
the production and marketing of honey

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Articles 42 and 43 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission¹,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament²,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee³,

Whereas the Commission has sent to the Council and the European Parliament a discussion paper on European beekeeping⁴ in which the situation and the difficulties of this sector have been explained;

Whereas beekeeping is a sector of agriculture, the main functions of which are economic activity and rural development, the production of honey and other products of the hive and the maintenance of ecological balance;

Whereas the sector is marked by diversity of production conditions and yields and by the dispersion and variety of producers and traders; whereas there is an imbalance between supply and demand on the Community market for honey;

Whereas, in view of the spread of varroasis in several Member States in recent years and the resulting problems for honey production, action by the Community is necessary;

Whereas, given these circumstances and in order to improve the production and marketing of honey in the Community, national programmes should be established without delay for

1

2

3

4 COM (94) 256 final.

each year comprising technical assistance, measures to control varroasis and related diseases, a rationalization of transhumance, the management of regional beekeeping centres and cooperation on research programmes to improve the quality of honey;

Whereas, in order to supplement the statistical data available, Member States should carry out studies on the structure of the sector, covering production, marketing and price formation;

Whereas expenditure by the Member States in fulfilment of the obligations arising from this Regulation should be borne by the Community pursuant to Article 3 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 729/70 on the financing of the common agricultural policy⁵, as last amended by Regulation (EEC) No 2048/88⁶;

Whereas a financial reference amount, within the meaning of point 2 of the Declaration by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission of 6 March 1995, is included in this Regulation, without affecting the powers of the budgetary authority as defined in the Treaty,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

1. This Regulation lays down measures for improving general conditions for the production and marketing of natural honey. These measures shall be included in national programmes for each year.
2. The measures shall be:
 - (a) technical assistance to members of beekeepers' associations and honey houses with a view to improving the conditions for the production and extraction of honey;
 - (b) the control of varroasis and related diseases; improvement of the conditions for the treatment of hives and the harvesting, storage and packaging of honey;
 - (c) rationalization of transhumance;
 - (d) measures to support laboratories carrying out analyses on the physico-chemical properties of honey;
 - (e) cooperation with specialized bodies for the implementation of applied research programmes to improve the quality of honey.

⁵ OJ No L 94, 28.4.1970, p.13.

⁶ OJ No L 185, 15.7.1988, p. 1.

Article 2

In order to be eligible for the part-financing provided for in Article 3, Member States shall carry out a study of the production and marketing structures in the beekeeping sector in their territory by 1 July 1997.

Article 3

Expenditure made in accordance with this Regulation shall be considered as expenditure within the meaning of Article 3 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 729/70.

The Community shall provide part-financing for the national programmes equivalent to 50% of the expenditure borne by Member States,

The financial reference amount for implementing this Regulation shall be ECU 15 million per year.

The annual appropriations shall be authorized by the budgetary authority within the limit of the financial perspective.

In order to be eligible for part-financing, expenditure by the Member States on the programmes referred to in Article 1(1) must be made by 15 October each year.

Article 4

The programmes referred to in Article 1(1) shall be drawn up in close collaboration with the representative professional beekeepers' organizations. Programmes shall be forwarded to the Commission, which shall approve them in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 17 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 2771/75 of 29 October 1975 on the common organization of the market in eggs⁷.

Measures contained in operational programmes for Objective 1, 5(b) and 6 regions shall be excluded from these programmes.

Article 5

Detailed rules for the application of this Regulation, in particular those relating to monitoring, shall be adopted in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 17 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 2771/75.

⁷ OJ No L 282, 1.11.1975, p. 49, Regulation last amended by Regulation (EEC) No 1574/93 (OJ No L 152, 24.6.1993, p. 1).

Article 6

The Commission shall present to the Council every three years a report on the application of this Regulation, initially by (1 July 2000) at the latest.

Article 7

This Regulation shall enter into force on the third day following its publication in the Official Journal of the European Communities.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at

For the Council
The President

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1 TITLE OF OPERATION

Draft Regulation laying down general rules for the application of measures to improve the production and marketing of honey

2 BUDGET HEADING INVOLVED

B1-254

3 LEGAL BASIS

Article 43 of the Treaty

4 DESCRIPTION OF OPERATION

4.1 General objective

To improve the production and marketing of honey.

This objective can be attained by setting up national programmes comprising priority measures. The Council has accepted the conclusions of the discussion paper on European beekeeping [COM(94) 256 final, 24.6.1994] and asked the Commission to submit to it an appropriate proposal as soon as possible.

The European Parliament, while accepting the conclusions of the Commission's discussion paper, is calling for additional assistance to the sector by means of pollination aid, compensation for loss of income and specific marketing standards for honey.

The priority measures are:

- (a) technical assistance,
- (b) measures to control varroasis,
- (c) rationalization of transhumance,
- (d) measures to assist honey analysis
- (e) cooperation on research programmes to improve the quality of honey.

4.2 Period covered and arrangements for renewal or extension

The Regulation has an unspecified period of validity and provides for permanent measures which may be periodically adapted to changing circumstances. Long-term measures are necessary to enable beekeepers to survive the increase in production costs required by varroasis treatment. Varroasis cannot be fully eradicated because some resistant mites always remain in infested colonies which can re-infest the colony if the treatment is not repeated each year.

5 CLASSIFICATION OF EXPENDITURE OR REVENUE

5.1 Compulsory expenditure

5.2 Non-differentiated appropriations

6 TYPE OF EXPENDITURE

50% of the financing of the national programmes will be borne by the Member States and 50% by the Commission. The Commission will lay down detailed implementing rules to cover expenditure incurred by the national programmes, particularly payment applications, time limits for submission of applications and conditions to be met by applicants.

7 FINANCIAL IMPACT

7.1 Method of calculating total cost of operation (definition of unit costs)

1. Technical assistance
Estimated expenditure: Training courses: ECU 1.8 million x 50% = ECU 0.9 million
2. Control of varroasis
Cost of treatment: ECU 3/hive
Number of hives: 7.7 million
Estimated expenditure: ECU 3/hive x 7.7 million hives x 50% = ECU 11.6 million
3. Rationalization of transhumance
Estimated expenditure: ECU 1 million x 50% = ECU 0.5 million
4. Honey analysis
Average cost of analysis: ECU 60.3/sample
Number of samples (estimate) for the EU:
 - Greece, Spain, France, Italy: 10 000 samples/year x 4 : 40 000 samples/year
 - Other Member States: 2 000 samples/year x 11 = 22 000 samples/year
 - EU total: 62 000 samples/yearEstimated expenditure: ECU 60/sample x 62 000 samples/year x 50% = ECU 1.9 million.
5. Research on quality, estimate: ECU 200 000/year x 50% : 0.1 ECU million

7.2 Itemised breakdown of cost

	n=1997	n+1	n+2	n+3	n+4	n+5
Technical assistance	token entry	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
Control of varroasis	token entry	11.6	11.6	11.6	11.6	11.6
Rationalization of transhumance	token entry	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Honey analysis	token entry	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9
Cooperation on research to improve quality	token entry	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total	token entry	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0

8 FRAUD PREVENTION MEASURES

Specific control measures provided for:

The Commission will adopt measures for checks to be carried out by both the Community and national authorities when it adopts the implementing rules.

These measures will concern, in particular, checks on implementation of the different measures in the national programmes (verification of supporting documents, on-the-spot checks at beekeeping organizations, laboratories, etc.). Existing registers of beekeepers in the Member States should facilitate these checks.

9 ELEMENTS OF COST-EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS

9.1 Specific and quantified objectives; target population

Specific objectives:

The purpose of the technical assistance is to increase the efficiency of production and marketing by spreading the best practices. Courses and other training schemes for beekeepers and those responsible for groups/cooperatives include, in particular, topics such as breeding (particularly queens) and disease prevention, the collection, packaging, storage and transport of honey, and marketing. These courses are greatly

in demand and the beekeeping associations need assistance in order to meet the demand.

The purpose of the measures to control varroasis and related diseases is to offset the expenditure incurred by the treatment of hives. This parasitic disease is drastically reducing yields throughout the Union and colonies are being lost if no treatment is applied. One of the reasons for the spread of other related diseases is that colonies have been weakened by varroasis. Varroasis cannot be fully eradicated because some resistant mites always remain in infested colonies and may re-infest the colony if the treatment is not repeated each year. The treatment of hives using authorized products (which do not leave residues in the honey) is the only way of preventing catastrophic consequences. A financial contribution is also deemed necessary to prevent the use of ineffective treatments. The measures undertaken in 1986, 1987 and 1989 on the initiative of the European Parliament to inform beekeepers and diagnose the extent of the disease consumed less than ECU 2 million of budget funds in three years. There are currently no measures operational in this area.

The purpose of the aid for the rationalization of transhumance is to manage the movement of hives within the Community and to provide suitable sites in areas where there is a high concentration of beekeepers in the flowering season. A compulsory transhumance register to be drawn up jointly by beekeeping organizations and the competent authorities will facilitate the management and control of movement during transhumance, particularly where professional beekeepers are concerned. In view of the great variety of measures in force in the different regions of the Community there is a need for harmonization.

The purpose of assistance for honey analysis is to improve the marketing of honey. The financing of analysis of the physico-chemical properties of honey according to botanical origin will provide beekeepers with exact knowledge of the quality of their honey, thereby enabling them to obtain the best price for their product on the market. Beekeepers are currently faced with increased production costs when they try to improve their honey production because honey analysis is very expensive.

Research in the food sector generally contributes to increasing the efficiency of production. The possibility of including specific applied research projects (i.e. at regional level) relating to bee-rearing and improving the quality of honey in the national programmes and disseminating the results could help increase the income of producers in specific regions.

Target population:

According to the census of the sector there are 435 000 beekeepers in the Union. Estimates place the number of professional beekeepers at 13 000, with 3.5 million hives representing 42% of all the hives in the Union. The Regulation also targets consumers of honey, who will enjoy honey of

superior quality as a result of the improved treatment of hives (reduction of residues) and more widespread honey analysis.

9.2 Grounds for the operation

Need for a contribution from the Community budget

In order to control the Varroa mite present in almost all the Member States successfully, diagnosis and treatment is needed in all the Member States. Rationalization of transhumance and laboratory work on the analysis of honey also require a Community-level approach.

In October 1994, therefore, after studying the Commission's discussion paper on European beekeeping (COM(94) 256 final), the Council asked the Commission to present it with proposals for a framework Council Regulation including the objectives set out at 4.1 above.

Since the main objective of the proposed measures is to bring down production costs and improve the return on the marketed product and, consequently, enhance the income of producers, a contribution from the EAGGF Guarantee Section is warranted.

Choice of financing methods

Community part-financing of national programmes comprising priority measures has been opted for because of the diversity of situations in the sector in the different regions of the Community. It would not be appropriate to set up a market organization specifically for honey. In view of the experience gained from a number of aid schemes for beekeeping in the past, it would be impossible at this time to design a general aid scheme such as direct income support. Programmes can only be worked out and implemented through close cooperation between the competent authorities in the Member States and the beekeeping organizations, whose regional and local networks can complement the existing administrative structures.

Analysis of previous similar measures

Localized measures in some regions of the Union, such as technical assistance, varroasis control programmes, analysis of the physico-chemical properties of honey and structural measures have had positive results. At Community level, beekeepers can already benefit from general structural measures, but these are not suited to the specific requirements of the sector. They are also too few and far between and their implementation is left to the discretion of the regions in question.

9.3 Monitoring and evaluation of the operation

The Commission is to present a report on the application of the proposed Regulation every three years.

10 ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURE (PART OF SECTION III OF THE BUDGET)

10.1 Impact on staff posts

Staff allocated to management of measure			of which	Duration
Type of post	Permanent post		Temporary post	using existing resources
Officials or temporary officials	A	0.5	-	0.5
	B	0.3	-	0.3
	C	0.2	-	0.2
Other resources	-		-	-
TOTAL	1.0			1.0

These staff are for the most part available in DG VI/D/3, but support will be required from some other units (VI/B/2, VI/F/I and II, VI/G, III/E/I) for certain specific technical and administrative matters.

10.2 Overall financial implications of additional human resources

None.

10.3 Increase in other operational expenditure resulting from the measure

Budget heading (number and title)	Amounts	Calculation method
A2510 (Management Committee meetings)	ECU 44 400	2 meetings at ECU 22 200 for 15 Member States
Missions	ECU 5 000	5 missions (2 days each) x ECU 1 000
TOTAL	ECU 49 400	

ISSN 0254-1475

COM(96) 596 final

DOCUMENTS

EN

03 02 15 11

Catalogue number : CB-CO-96-592-EN-C

ISBN 92-78-11660-2

Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

L-2985 Luxembourg