Common organisation of agricultural markets (CMO): simplify the common agricultural policy (CAP), creation of one single Regulation ("single CMO Regulation")

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The Commission presents a report on the implementation of Articles 105 et seq of Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 on measures improving the general conditions for the production and marketing of apiculture products.

Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 states that a report is to be submitted to the European Parliament and the Council, once every three years, on the application of measures to improve the conditions for the production and marketing of apiculture products, as provided for in Articles 105 et seq of that Regulation. This report meets that obligation, covering the marketing years 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09. These three years correspond to the last year of the previous three-year period (2005-07) and the first two years of the current three-year period (2008-2010).

In keeping with the provisions of Community legislation, Member States have provided notification of their national programmes in respect of the period 2008-10. It is important to note that all Member States, without exception, have provided notification of an apiculture programme.

In March 2007, the Commission adopted the third report on the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 797/2004, evaluating the last three years of its implementation. Given that good use was made of these national programmes and in view of the general satisfaction of both Member States and operators, that report was not accompanied by any legislative amendments. However, since the last report, simplification measures have been introduced to Commission Regulation (EC) No 917/2004 on detailed rules.

Situation in the sector: the report notes that the **commercial context in which these programmes are applied has not changed significantly since 2007**. The European market is still very dependent on imports (imports account for over 40% of produce consumed), albeit to a lesser extent than in the past. The most noticeable change on the world market is the significant increase in prices. These higher price levels, especially in Argentina (where production has fallen), which used to be the European Union's main supply source, has resulted in an increase in imports from China.

In additional to commercial factors, the sector continues to suffer from the problem of fewer bee colonies.

According to figures provided by Member States in 2007, the total number of beekeepers in the EU was 595 775, 19 025 of whom were considered to be professional beekeepers (over 150 hives). Although the number of beekeepers has increased slightly since 2004, this is due to EU enlargement to include Bulgaria and Romania. Without beekeepers from these countries, the figure would have been considerably less.

The total number of hives is 13 602 719, of which 4 461 606 belong to professional beekeepers (3.2% of beekeepers have around 33% of hives). The number of hives in the EU has increased by 1 971 419 since the 2004 census. This is partly due to EU enlargement in 2007, as the number of hives recorded in the two new Member States was 1 646 736. The Member States with the largest number of hives are Spain (17.06%), Greece (10.8%), France (10%) and Italy (8.5%). Spain, with approximately 130 000 fewer

hives than in 2004, has seen its share of the Community total population fall significantly (17.1% as opposed to 21.9%).

Allocation of expenditure: since the last report, the aims of the eligible measures remain unchanged. With regard to the period 2007-09, the two most common measures continue to be **varroasis prevention and technical assistance**. Even though technical assistance expenditure continues to be relatively stable, accounting each year for approximately 26-27% of the budget used, a sharp reduction in the share of the budget used for varroasis prevention has been seen (this fell from 37% in 2007 to 27% in 2009).Measures designed to ensure rationalisation of transhumance continued to be the third most common measure, accounting for 18% of expenditure. Measures in favour of honey analysis and applied research are used less than in the past, and now only account for 6-7% in 2009.

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Since 2009, we have been pleased to notice a **significant increase in the use of the budget** (88%). Bulgaria and Romania have significantly improved usage rates, even if Romania's rate (54%) was well below the Community average. Of the major beneficiaries of the Community budget, France significantly improved its performance compared to 2008.

Suggestions by the Member States: overall, Member States are very satisfied with the way in which the programmes are run and there have been no persistent requests to amend Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007. Very often there are calls for measures to ensure that these programmes can continue. However, the Commission has received a number of requests from Member States in anticipation of the drafting of this report: (i) increase measures to support laboratories conducting analyses of the physico-chemical properties of honey to be extended to other apiculture products; (ii) improve the statistical instrument; (iii) make it possible to carry out projects of a European nature across several Member States; (iv) the ability to recover amounts which have not been used by certain Member States by others, or to extend payment deadlines; (v) inform beekeepers more effectively on the results of applied research; (vi) more specific description of aid for investments which can be accepted.

Suggestions made by those working in the sector: a number of improvements have been proposed, many of which have already been relayed by Member States: (i) improve collaboration between Member States and beekeeping organisations at the time of preparing programmes; (ii) technical assistance measures should not be used to promote research activity; (iii) the introduction of a technical assistance sub-measure to finance the implementation of a European platform for beekeeping, in order to encourage synergy; (iv) more effective distribution of the results of applied research; (v) introduction of a definition of other beekeeping products; (vi) the increase in the budget and the share of Community financing; (vii) Annex II to the relevant Regulation should be amended in order to include statistics on bee mortality.

The main conclusions of the report are as follows:

- as was also the case in 2007, the mechanism for setting up national programmes in order to improve production and marketing in the European Union has been very beneficial for the beekeeping sector, both from the point of view of the Member States and beekeepers themselves;
- the priority measures in Regulation (EC) No 797/2004, although being limited from a budget point of view, have been valuable in terms of quality for the beekeeping sector;
- the simplification measures introduced by the Commission in 2007 have enabled Member States to easily adapt currently existing programmes in order to respond appropriately to difficulties that were not envisaged or which were underestimated when the programmes were notified.

In order to avoid a further amendment to the Regulation, which would require a period of adaptation on the part of Member States, and would risk a less effective usage rate in the short term, the Commission

considers that **it is not appropriate to amend Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007**. However, it will assess in due course whether a positive answer to the requests by Member States and operators vis-à-vis the implementing rules is possible.