# Honey: application of measures to improve the production and marketing

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The beekeeping sector is at present in a difficult position. Due to the constant rise in production costs and variable yields per hive, many beekeepers no longer earn an adequate income. In addition, bee stocks are generally in decline as honey can be produced more cheaply in other countries due to a combination of climate and social factors. The Commission has put forward a proposal on the production and marketing of honey. This proposal consists of measures which include: technical assistance to beekeepers with a view to improving the quality of honey production; the control of diseases; the establishment of laboratories to analyse honey. Reporting for the Committee , Astrid Lulling (L, EPP) describes the measures as 'a step in the right direction', but considers that they are inadequate and 'completely ignore the calls made by the European Parliament for comprehensive support and encouragement for honey producers'. The 19 amendments that she puts forward reflect this opinion. Many relate to direct support measures such as a 'pollination premium' (of ECU 2.5 annually per bee colony in Portugal, Spain and Greece, and ECU 5 in the other Member States) and compensatory payments for loss of income, as well as the introduction of common marketing standards for EU and imported honey.