

**Question for written answer E-002415/2015
to the Commission**
Rule 130
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Subject: Possible threat to native bee species

EU Regulation No 1143/2014 states that invasive alien species represent one of the main threats to biodiversity and related ecosystem services, especially in geographically and evolutionarily isolated ecosystems, such as small islands.

Scientific studies published in peer-reviewed scientific journals have revealed that the endemic honey bees of Malta and Gozo are a distinct geographical race known as *Apis mellifera ruttneri*. Mitochondrial DNA and behavioural characteristics also support a closer relationship between *Apis mellifera ruttneri* and the *Apis mellifera intermissa* subspecies of North Africa than with European subspecies.

According to recent reports, another bee species from France has been introduced on the island of Gozo. Apiculturists indicate that this importation of a non-native honey bee (possibly of another subspecies) presents a possible threat to the conservation of the unique honey bee of limited distribution.

Can the Commission outline what action can be taken, if any, to safeguard the native subspecies from possible extinction and protect the interests of local apiculturists without causing any unnecessary disturbance to trade?