

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001969/24  
to the Commission  
Pascal Arimont (PPE)  
(7 October 2024)**

*Subject:* Combating the import of adulterated honey

According to the German Professional Beekeepers Association (*Deutscher Berufs- und Erwerbsimkerbunds e. V.*), adulterated honey in supermarkets remains a major problem. The association had samples of honey from German supermarkets tested in a laboratory, which showed that 25 out of 30 samples had been diluted with cheap sugar syrup. The association noted that the typical sugar profiling methods — NMR, IRMS and LC/MS testing — did not reveal any anomalies in the 30 samples. Only DNA sequencing was able to prove that 80% of the samples were inauthentic <sup>(1)</sup>. Beekeepers suspect that fructose syrup produced by genetically modified bacteria was added to the honeys.

The European Parliament and the Council have adopted a reform of the EU Honey Directive, whereby the countries of origin will have to appear on the label of honey blends in descending order by weight with the percentage share of each origin. Nonetheless, the Member States can decide that, for honey placed on the market in their territory, only the percentages of the four largest shares need to be indicated, provided that these countries represent more than 50% of the blend. What is more, the detection of this fraud highlights the need for comprehensive and better analyses to combat the import of cheap, counterfeit products.

What is the Commission's response to the findings of the above-mentioned investigation and what measures is it proposing to better and more efficiently detect such fraud in the future?

Submitted: 7.10.2024

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission  
(6 January 2025)**

The issue of fraud concerns both imported products and products placed onto the EU market. As expressed in its replies to written questions E-000209/2024 <sup>(1)</sup> and E-000343/2024 <sup>(2)</sup>, the Commission sets out a series of measures to address honey adulteration at EU level.

EU import certificates were reinforced with an authenticity requirement for exporting countries <sup>(3)</sup>. Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2652 of 15 September 2023 amending Article 13 of Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/2292 <sup>(4)</sup> also makes the import of honey possible only from listed establishments.

Directive (EU) 2024/1438 <sup>(5)</sup> introduced a mandatory indication of origin for honey blends and new provisions on traceability and authenticity.

The Commission has also been entrusted with the task of adopting, by 14 June 2028, implementing acts laying down the methods of analysis to detect adulterated honey. Technical work is in progress to that end.

Improved, harmonised and generally accepted analytical methods remain needed to increase the capability of official control laboratories to detect adulterated honey.

The Commission is working on further developing these methods and will engage with the laboratory responsible for deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) analyses to better understand the results obtained.

In addition, the Commission funds the Alliance project <sup>(6)</sup> to develop innovative solutions to ensure honey authenticity, and the WATSON project <sup>(7)</sup> will provide a set of tools and systems that can detect and prevent fraudulent practices across the entire food supply chain.

<sup>1</sup> <https://berufsimker.de/schock-nach-dna-test-80-prozent-beprobter-honige-gefaelscht/>

<sup>(1)</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2024-000209-ASW\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2024-000209-ASW_EN.html)

<sup>(2)</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2024-000343-ASW\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2024-000343-ASW_EN.html)

<sup>(3)</sup> Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/2292 of 6 September 2022 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to requirements for the entry into the Union of consignments of food-producing animals and certain goods intended for human consumption: [http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg\\_del/2022/2292/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2022/2292/oj)

<sup>(4)</sup> Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2652 of 15 September 2023 amending and correcting Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/2292 with regard to requirements for the entry into the Union of honey, meat, highly refined products, gelatine capsules, fishery products and requirements for private attestation and amending Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/630 as regards private attestation requirements for composite products exempted from official controls at border control posts [http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg\\_del/2023/2652/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2023/2652/oj)

<sup>(5)</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32024L1438>

<sup>(6)</sup> <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101084188>

<sup>(7)</sup> <https://watsonproject.eu/>

It will demonstrate the solutions in six different use cases across a number of key food supply chains, covering important commodity groups in the European food system, including honey.

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