



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: European Honey Breakfast initiative
- Request from the Slovenian delegation

Delegations will find in Annex a document submitted by the Slovenian delegation to be presented under "Any other business" at the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") at its session on 24 March 2014.

European Honey Breakfast initiative

The positive effects and influences of bees and their activities on the preservation of biodiversity and on our ecosystem itself are well known. One of the most important roles of honeybees is pollination, helping to maintain efficient agricultural production and consequently to ensure food security. Owing to their nutritional and medical properties honeybee products, such as honey, pollen, propolis, royal jelly and beeswax, are also of major importance to mankind.

In Slovenia, beekeeping is a long tradition still very much alive. In terms of number of bee colonies per hectare Slovenia is amongst the European countries with the highest density of honeybees in Europe. Our indigenous Carniolan bee (*A. mellifera carnica*), which is estimated to represent one third of all the bees in the European Union, is part of our natural and cultural heritage. It is also an important indicator of the state of the environment.

Given the importance of bees and beekeeping, Slovenia is striving to protect and preserve bees both in its territory and throughout the European Union. With the objective to preserve the Carniolan bee in Slovenia for future generations of beekeepers, in March 2014, Slovenia adopted a Resolution on the protection of the Carniolan bee that complements the existing bee-keeping measures.

As part of our efforts to protect the beekeeping sector raising public awareness about the importance of bees and apicultural products is of vital importance. By fact, the majority of a person's habits originate from childhood, it is therefore vital to impart positive values on environmental consciousness already from an early age.

In this light, the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association launched an educational-promotional campaign for kindergartner and primary school children entitled "Honey Breakfast" seven years ago. Every third Friday in November children have Slovenian honey for breakfast and an educational publication is distributed among them. In addition, various presentations and children's workshops on the importance of bees to our food supply, with emphasis on conserving the clean and health environment and preserving the rural areas, take place. Every year, the number of people involved in this event and accompanying activities increases, namely the attention of the general public is being significantly captured.

Consequently, the recognisability of beekeeping in Slovenia among youth and other segments of population is much higher; we register a positive attitude of children, teachers and general public towards bees and nature, an increase of the number of children who participate in beekeeping clubs at schools, an increase of the number of young beekeepers, an increase of the consumption and sales of honey and other apicultural products and a support of local communities and companies for beekeepers. Moreover, the so-called beekeeping tourism is also on the rise.

Based on Slovenia's good practices we would like to introduce an initiative to establish a European Honey Breakfast campaign. We propose that on every third Friday in November the European Honey Breakfast in schools and kindergartens throughout the European Union is carried out, thus attracting the largest possible number of children.

The European Honey Breakfast campaign implemented at the EU level would largely contribute to raising the awareness of young people and the public about the importance of bees and apicultural products, the importance of breakfast as an important part of a healthy lifestyle and the importance of locally produced food. As a result of activities aimed at the conservation of bees, we contribute to agriculture, the good state of the environment and biodiversity.

Slovenia is willing to share its experience therein. In November 2014, Honey Breakfast will be presented also at a 3rd International Beekeeping Conference held in Slovenia. The participants will have a chance to attend the breakfast in kindergartens and primary schools where they will get an insight into the project implementation.