



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 5 May 2015
(OR. en)

8378/15

AGRI 225
AGRIORG 24

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Initiative to declare 20th of May as the World Bee Day
- Information 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 11 May 2015.

Initiative to declare 20th of May as the World Bee Day

Beekeeping is of great importance for agriculture, and other sectors, such as environment, economy and others.

One third of food produced in the world depends on pollination and bees play the most important role among the pollinators. Crop pollination is estimated to be worth €153 billion globally and €22 billion in Europe every year.¹ Of the main crops grown for human consumption in Europe, 84% require pollination to enhance product quality and yields, e.g. many types of fruit, vegetables and nuts.

Bees are therefore of key importance for successful and sustainable agricultural production. Hence, bees contribute to global food security. They also assure the nutritional security of the population through their highly nutritious products (honey, royal jelly, pollen...).

With their activity, bees have positive effects on the whole ecosystem and its services, thus ensuring the conservation of biodiversity in nature. Bees are also an important bio indicator of environmental conditions. Protection and restoring biodiversity and associated ecosystem services contribute to halting biodiversity loss and the degradation of ecosystem services. Pollination is one of very important ecosystem services, and beekeeping could thus contribute positively to the EU targets of the Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 as well as to mitigate impact of the Invasive alien species in the EU.

¹ Gallai et al. 2008. Economic valuation of the vulnerability of world agriculture confronted with pollinator decline. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921800908002942>.

However, in the recent period, due to human activities and their impact on the environment, bees are increasingly endangered, especially in areas with intensive agriculture. According to the IUCN report², their habitat is shrinking and the conditions for their survival and development are steadily worsening. Climate change is another important driver of extinction risk for most species of bees. In addition, there are also new bee diseases and pests, resulting from the reduced resistance of bee colonies and from globalisation, which supports the transmission of pests over long distances.

Against this background, it is of paramount significance that we put efforts into strengthening our common care for bees throughout the EU and beyond and that we raise public awareness of the importance of bees and apicultural products. An example of good practice is the European Honey breakfast project (document 7855/14) which has received positive response from a wide public. To strengthen these efforts, on the initiative of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association, the **Republic of Slovenia will propose to the United Nations (UN) Membership to declare 20 May a World Bee Day.**

"Let's join forces and help preserve vital agriculture, beekeeping and clean environment!"

² IUCN report. European Red List of Bees.
http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/erl_of_bees_low_res_for_web.pdf.