

Brussels, 23 JUL 2008
D(2008) 1160

Dear Dr. Lucas,

Thank you for your letter of 20 May 2008 addressed to my predecessor Markos Kyprianou concerning the issue of bee health.

I recognise the importance that bees play in the EU's ecology and its ecosystem. I am also aware of the reports made in several Member States concerning recent significant losses in bee colonies.

For this reason, in February 2008 the Commission asked the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to study mortality in bees and its causes in the EU. In response, EFSA requested from Member States information on their surveillance programmes, estimates of their bee populations for 2006-2007, and literature relating to colony collapse, weakening or mortality in bees. The information received is being collated in the draft report "Bee Mortality and Bee Surveillance in Europe", which is expected to be completed soon.

As a follow up to this work, EFSA intends to carry out a project, in line with Article 36 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002¹, to analyse the information received from the Member States. This will provide the Commission with a clearer picture of the epidemiological situation of bee colony collapse and could provide the basis for further action in this area.

Finally, EU legislation does not include requirements with regards to regular beehive inspections, but Member States have national rules in place to ensure that they are in a position to notify certain bee diseases, as required by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

Yours sincerely,



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¹ OJ L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 1