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OBJECT: FIGHTING TROPILAEELAPS – EU REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND URGENT RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

To Whom it may concern,

The Apimondia Working Group 'Good Veterinary Practice and Apiculture' (GVPA - under the Apimondia Bee Health Scientific Commission) as representatives of Apimondia - International Federation of Beekeepers' Associations (<https://www.apimondia.org/>) consider that it is necessary and urgent to alert the EU Commission, the Member States and all competent authorities to the recent spread of *Tropilaelaps mercedesae* mite in Western Russia and Caucasian region ([Janashia et al. 2024](#)).

The latest data on geographical distribution of *Tropilaelaps* spp. is available at the following link: <https://sitesv2.anses.fr/en/minisite/abeilles/geographical-spread-exotic-mite-tropilaelaps-spp-presence-suspected-belarus-and-0>

The mite of the genus *Tropilaelaps* is native to Asia, where they parasitise the honey bee *Apis dorsata breviligula*. Of significant concern are the species *T. clareae* and *T. mercedesae* both capable of infesting *Apis mellifera* colonies. These mites primarily target brood, causing severe damage to colony health and productivity. Further information on their pathology can be found here: https://www.woah.org/fileadmin/Home/fr/Health_standards/tahm/3.02.06_TROPILAEELAPS.pdf.

We wish to emphasise the following points regarding the legislative status of *Tropilaelaps* spp.:

- Under Regulation (EU) 2016/429, Regulation (EU) 2018/1629, and Regulation (EU) 2018/1882, infestation with *Tropilaelaps* spp. is recognised as a listed disease, assigned to categories D and E:
 - Category D: Member States are required to implement measures to prevent the introduction and spread of the disease within and between EU countries.
 - Category E: Member States must carry out surveillance activities and ensure mandatory notification of any confirmed cases.
- At the international level, *Tropilaelaps* spp. infestation is addressed in the WOAH Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Chapter 9.5, <https://sont.woah.org/portal/tool?le=en>). It sets out the general requirements for the importation, transit, and veterinary certification of various bee products. Criteria are defined to determine the status of a country or zone regarding *Tropilaelaps* spp.:
 - Risk assessment procedures;
 - Mandatory surveillance and reporting obligations;
 - Requirements for awareness programmes and investigation of clinical suspicions;
 - Oversight responsibilities for Veterinary Authorities concerning managed apiaries.
- *Tropilaelaps* spp. is not currently present in the EU and is considered an exotic parasite.
- *Tropilaelaps* spp. is not an invasive alien species (according to the EU Regulation 2016/1141), but an exotic parasite.



We recognize *Tropilaelaps* spp. as a global threat. Other regulatory frameworks outside the EU may apply, particularly those aligned with WOAH standards and guidelines, and proactive engagement with all regions is essential to manage this risk comprehensively.

In our view, it would be advisable calling for awareness and cooperation to prevent the introduction of this parasitic mite and adopt specific measures to control it in case of outbreaks in *Tropilaelaps* spp.-free countries. The following actions should be recommended:

- Raise awareness among Competent Authorities (CAs) regarding the rapid expansion of this parasite and its potential impact on the sustainability of the beekeeping sector.
- Alert Border Control Posts (BCPs) to increase vigilance, particularly in relation to imports from affected or neighbouring regions. The illegal movement of honey bee queens, bee colonies, package bees and nucleus should receive greater attention and be thoroughly investigated.
- Encourage the WOAH to request regular and transparent updates from each country to maintain an up-to-date global database on the presence and spread of *Tropilaelaps* spp. (<https://www.woah.org/en/what-we-do/animal-health-and-welfare/disease-data-collection/world-animal-health-information-system/>).
- Prioritise surveillance in countries where the parasite has recently been detected or established.
- In countries currently free of *Tropilaelaps* spp., develop monitoring and early warning systems for prompt detection and response in case of introduction.
- Training veterinarians and beekeepers and ensuring preparedness of veterinarians, beekeepers and authorities through the development of national preparedness plans and emergency response protocols.
- In areas where *Tropilaelaps* spp. becomes established, implement regulated management plans to ensure long-term control and the continuation of sustainable beekeeping practices.

We believe these steps are necessary to strengthen preparedness and to harmonise communication channels on this emerging threat.

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