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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
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Subject:	Proposal for a DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL amending Council Directives 2001/110/EC relating to honey, 2001/112/EC relating to fruit juices and certain similar products intended for human consumption, 2001/113/EC relating to fruit jams, jellies and marmalades and sweetened chestnut purée intended for human consumption, and 2001/114/EC relating to certain partly or wholly dehydrated preserved milk for human consumption - Comments from the Lithuanian delegation

Delegations will find attached the Lithuanian delegation's comments and replies in response to the request from the Presidency sent on 20 December 2023, and that can be found in document 16745/23.

Replies from the Lithuanian delegation**1. HONEY****Questions:**

1.1 What is the opinion of the Member States on the introduction of a traceability system that requires Member States to trace back the entire supply chain of a given honey to beekeepers or harvesting operators in the case of imported honey (AM 21, 56)?

We support the strengthening of the honey traceability system as it contributes to better quality of honey and more transparency on the market.

1.2 What is the opinion of the Member States on the proposed change of the definition of honey, in particular to exclude ultrafiltration, artificial evaporation and vacuum evaporation as allowed techniques and to introduce a new type of honey, namely 'unheated honey' (AM 19, 20, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31,

We support the proposed changes to the definition of honey, which would exclude the use of ultrafiltration and vacuum evaporation and the introduction of a definition of 'unheated honey', which will be monitored by newly defined quality tests and indicators.

As beekeepers dry the premises when removing the honey from the hives in order to prevent the honey from obtaining additional moisture from the environment, in order to avoid any confusion of terms and to avoid that drying of the premises is not considered as artificial drying, we propose to add the word 'vacuum' to the term 'artificial evaporation' (by adding the word 'vacuum-artificial evaporation' throughout Amendment 8 in the same way as in Amendment 7).

2. FRUIT JUICE**Questions:**

2.1 What is the opinion of the Member States on the proposal to introduce origin labelling for fruit in fruit juices (main AM 33)?

Considering that fruit juices are often made from fruit juice concentrates, we consider that an additional requirement to indicate the specific country of origin of the fruit would lead to additional administrative costs for producers, because juice producers use fruit from different countries around the world, and the list of these countries can change depending on the season, prices, and the stability of supply chains. The introduction of a requirement to indicate specific countries would require producers to adjust the labelling of their packaging and to write off leftover packaging when the country of origin of the fruit changes.

Although comprehensive consumer information is a very important aspect, such detailed labelling may create more challenges for producers than real benefits for consumers.

2.2 What is the opinion of Member States on the proposal to restrict claims for reduced-sugar fruit juices and to prohibit any comparative claims for those products in comparison with the fruits they originate from or 'normal' fruit juices (AM 36)?

The main difference of reduced-sugar fruit juices is that they contain less sugar compared to regular fruit juices (without reduced sugar), and we therefore believe that the comparison of lower sugar content should be allowed. This is likely to help consumers to make an informed decision about their food choices.

2.3 What is the opinion, in principle, of the Member States on the proposal to subordinate the creation of the new categories of reduced-sugar fruit juices to the adoption of criteria better defining the essential physical, chemical, organoleptic and nutritional characteristics of an average type of juice (AM 37, 38)?

LT supports the proposal.

3. JAM

Question:

3.1. What is the opinion of the Member States on the proposal to introduce origin labelling for fruits and sugar in jams (AM 39)?

Considering that jams are processed products, and the origin of the fruits and sugar used in their production likely has little impact on the final product's quality, it is questionable whether detailed origin labelling would contribute to greater benefits for consumers.

If jam producers were required to specify the particular country of origin for the fruits, they would likely face additional challenges. The supply chains for fruits are global, influenced by seasonality. This means that fruits from several different countries could be used to make a single jam. Therefore, indicating precise country origins may lead to higher administrative expenses and burden for producers, potentially affecting the final product's cost.

4. OTHER

4.1 Are there any other issues Member States wish to express concerning the content of the mandate of the European Parliament?

No comments.