

EN

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Answer given by Mr Hansen
on behalf of the European Commission
(26.10.2026)

According to Annex II to Directive 2001/110/EC¹, honey may possess natural variations in colour, consistency, flavour and aroma derived from its floral or plant origin. EU legislation does not establish uniform sensory profiles or a legal standard of sensory ‘typicality’ for generic honey or multi-origin honey blends.

Any product that does not comply with the requirements laid down in Directive 2001/110/EC cannot be placed on the EU market as honey. The Commission may, taking into account international standards and technical progress, adopt implementing acts laying down methods of analysis to verify whether honey is compliant with the Directive. Until the adoption of the relevant implementing acts, Member States shall, whenever possible, use internationally recognised validated methods of analysis, such as those approved by the Codex Alimentarius, to verify compliance with the Directive and shall carry out official controls in full compliance with Regulation (EU) 2017/625².

Enforcement measures, including withdrawal from the market, should be based on an established non-compliance with an applicable requirement of Union law and should be appropriate and proportionate to that non-compliance, and based on verifiable, legally sound evidence. A withdrawal based solely on an undefined assessment of sensory ‘typicality’, without establishing a specific breach of the applicable Union requirements, would not be supported by the provisions of Directive 2001/110/EC.

¹ Council Directive 2001/110/EC of 20 December 2001 relating to honey OJ L 10, 12.1.2002, pp. 47–52
ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2001/110/oj>.

² The Official Controls Regulation: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2017/625/oj/eng>.