



## MALTA BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

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Contemporary art can be Maltese- reaction to MICAS recent work of art called the Exomind (Deep Water)

The Malta Beekeepers' Association [MBA] supports the promotion of beekeeping through contemporary works of art. Nonetheless, we feel that this particular activity is promoting the propagation of the Buckfast honey bee and neglecting the already endangered endemic honeybee subspecies of Malta *Apis mellifera ruttneri*. The Buckfast honeybee is a breed meaning that it is artificially developed by humans through breeding. Consequently, this honeybee breed is breeding with the endemic honeybee of Malta thus resulting into hybridization and increasing the risk of extinction through genetic introgression. The hybridization of the Maltese honeybee with other honey bees that are popular among beekeepers such as *ligustica*, *Carnica* and Buckfast is the major threat for its future.

The MBA is supporting Breeds of Origin Conservancy in their efforts and work towards the conservation and propagation of the endemic Maltese honeybee. Recently, the MBA together with Breeds of Origin conservancy launched a project of *Apis mellifera ruttneri* queens dissemination among the Maltese beekeeping community. Moreover, the MBA is working closely with Ghaqda produttori tal-Ghasel Malti and the Agricultural Directorate to promote and value honey and other bee products derived from this unique honeybee.

Being endemic to MALTA, it can only be found in the Maltese archipelago and no other place in the World. Thus we urge all stakeholders involved in such initiative to promote the Maltese endemic honeybee rather than non-native alien honeybees.

*Apis mellifera ruttneri* is not just a bee, it's our bee!