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ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC TOOLS OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAW WHICH MAY INFLUENCE THE CONSERVATION OF INSECTS

Abstract

Environmental law offers many tools to take care of the surrounding landscape and life in it. These include economic tools, from which the paper selects those that can have a positive impact on mitigating the current decline of the insect kingdom. Specific attention is then paid to financial means of supporting beekeepers and thus the conservation of bees, given that they are considered to be the most significant among pollinators.

Key words: economic tools, insect, bees, environmental law.

JEL Classification: K32

1. Introduction

At present, we can observe a decline of representatives of the insect kingdom, which are essential for the functioning of the ecosystem as a whole. Pollinators are the most important, as they provide food not only for other members of the animal kingdom but also for society as a whole. The legal system seeks to prevent this adverse situation by using sufficiently effective legal tools (with this article focusing specifically on economic tools), which can help prevent the insect representatives' decline. Thus, given European and

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national (Czech) level economic tools will be subjected to description, interpretation, and critical analysis to answer the following questions: Which economic tools can positively impact the conservation of insect representatives? Are they used in practice? Furthermore, are they sufficiently effective (and what *de lege ferenda* adjustments can be made in case of shortcomings)? Attention will also focus on those tools that aim to contribute to the conservation of bee populations as one of the most important pollinators on the planet.

2. Economic tools in environmental law

Economic tools play an indispensable role in environmental law. Their purpose is to motivate the subject of the law to behave in a certain legally permissible way through measures of an economic (financial) nature [Hanák 2016, 688]. It is important to note that *“although they are financial tools, the fact that the law gives them a form also gives them legal binding force and, last but not least, the enforceability of behaviour in conformity with them”* [Hanák 2016: 688]. According to the OECD classification, economic tools can be divided into several types so that they can take a variety of forms. With regard to the topic under study, the article will focus on economic tools in the form of aid or subsidies. The main purpose of this type of economic tool is to motivate, whether legal or natural persons, to a type of behaviour that protects the environment or to the use of natural resources with the principle of sustainable development [Hanák 2016: 688]. In such a case, Section 32 of the Act No. 17/1992 Coll., on Environment, anticipates various advantages for such persons in the form of tax adjustments, levies or the provision of loans and subsidies. Thus, subsidies and grants are primarily motivational and, given their nature, can be classified as positive economic tools. Finally, it should be added that financial support is characterised by the fact that there is no legal entitlement to it [Hanák 2016: 688].

3. European programmes

Most developing countries in the world have recently been trying to incorporate eco-friendly policies into their legal systems, and the European Union, as a *political and economic supranational grouping that aims to improve cooperation in Europe* [Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky, Mezinárodní organizace a VS: Evropská Unie], is even one of the communities with some of the most stringent environmental standards in the world. In this part of the article, two key cross-cutting and overarching European programmes with an environmental focus will be presented, namely the Operational Programme Environment

(OPE) and the LIFE Programme, which aim not only to protect biodiversity, including insect representatives, but to protect the environment as a whole [Ministerstvo životního prostředí, Dotace a půjčky]. In particular, it will be examined whether these programmes make it possible to spend funds on the protection of insect representatives from their current unfavourable state.

3.1. Operational Programme Environment (2014-2020)

This overarching programme focuses on several key environmental areas, namely *clean water, air quality, waste treatment, nature conservation and energy savings* [Operační program Životního prostředí, O programu]. The fourth area in particular is key to the conservation of insect representatives, and the sub-programme on enhancing biodiversity and strengthening the natural function of the landscape is important in relation to them. In the case of the first subprogramme, rare species and valuable habitats are protected and their restoration and creation is promoted, while in the case of the second subprogramme, the aim is to improve migration barriers for animals and measures to reduce animal mortality linked to the development of technical infrastructure [Pravidla pro žadatele a příjemce podpory: v Operačním programu Životní prostředí pro období 2014-2020]. An overview of the specific measures supported can be found in the document *Pravidla pro žadatele a příjemce podpory OPŽP 2014-2020* (Rules for applicants and beneficiaries of support under the 2014-2020 OPE). The protection of insect representatives in this programme is ensured primarily through the protection of habitats rather than the protection of species as such. Nevertheless, it is clearly positive that applications for subsidies under both sub-programmes are open to both public bodies and individuals [Operační program Životního prostředí, Prioritní osa 4: Ochrana a péče o přírodu a krajinu] In the Czech Republic, this has led, for example, to the creation of project *Planá nad Lužnicí: Aleje u polních cest* (The town Planá nad Lužnicí: Alleys along dirt roads), which supports honey bee insects. A total of EUR 2.75 billion can be drawn from this programme over a specified period, with funds being drawn from the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund for environmental projects. The next continuation of this programme is planned for the period 2021-2027, with the final closure of the programme in 2029. The final proposal for the 2021-2027 is expected to be approved by the European Commission in the coming year [Operační program životního prostředí, O programu].

3.2. The LIFE Programme (2014-2020)

The LIFE programme was established in the 1990s to “contribute to the transition to sustainable, circular, energy-efficient management based on renewable energy.” The programme is divided into two main parts, namely the Environment, whose sub-programmes are *Nature and Biodiversity and Circular Economy and Quality of Life*, and *Climate Action*, which also includes two other sub-programmes. It is therefore quite clear that climate protection is given considerable importance in this programme. A major difference with the previous overarching programme is that it does not set out the specific actions that can be supported by. It is therefore up to the applicant to decide which environmental measures to apply for [Ministerstvo životního prostředí, Unijní program LIFE: Finanční nástroj pro životní prostředí a klima]. Specifically, in the case of the Nature sub-programme, the applicant is limited only by the fact that the funds can only be used for projects that must relate to the protection of priority species and habitats within the NATURA 2000 network and bird areas, and for innovative measures in support of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020 [Program LIFE, Příroda]. Another difference is that the applicant can only be a legal entity established in the EU. In the Czech Republic, this programme has already resulted in several important projects for the protection of insect representatives, such as *LIFE Motýli - Integrovaná ochrana vzácných druhů motýlů nelesních stanovišť v České republice a na Slovensku* (LIFE Butterflies - Integrated conservation of rare butterfly species of non-forest habitats in the Czech Republic and Slovakia; beneficiary Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic - hereinafter as NCA CR), *Ze života hmyzu - Ochrana vybraných druhů hmyzu soustavy Natura 2000 v přeshraniční oblasti Západních Karpat (ČR-SR)* (The insects life - Protection of selected insect species of the Natura 2000 system in the transboundary area of the Western Carpathians (Czech Republic-Slovakia); beneficiary NCA CR) [LIFE pro život: české projekty LIFE pro životní prostředí a klima], *LIFE Osmoderma 2017 - Ochrana páchníka hnědého v EVL Poodří* (LIFE Osmoderma 2017 - Protection of the brown stork in the SAC Poodří; beneficiary Arnika - Centrum pro podporu občanů / Arnika - Centre for Citizen Support) [Program LIFE, Přehled českých projektů]. For the 2014-2020 period, a total of €3.46 billion has been provided. The LIFE Programme is also expected to be further extended for the period 2021-2027 [Ministerstvo životního prostředí, Unijní program LIFE: Finanční nástroj pro životní prostředí a klima].

4. National programmes

At the national level, we can find subsidy programmes announced by the Ministry of the Environment, whose subsidies are aimed at biodiversity conservation, and by the Ministry of Agriculture, whose subsidies are aimed at conservation farming. In the first case, the National Programme Environment plays a key role. Nevertheless, it is an overarching subsidy programme it has a clearly defined position in relation to the above-mentioned European programmes, namely that it is only a complementary programme. In relation to the decline in biodiversity, and insect representatives in particular, the focus should be on the protection of their habitats. Attention has therefore been given mainly to those programmes that provide funding specifically for the conservation of these vital conditions in the open countryside. In the second case, the focus was on the subsidies that are provided to farmers, namely those that support sustainable land management and therefore aim at the conservation of insect representatives in the open countryside.

4.1. The National Programme Environment (2021)

Like the above-mentioned European programmes, this programme is an overarching programme in the Czech Republic, as it aims at long-term effective environmental protection. *“The specific objective of the NPE is to support projects and activities for the benefit of the environment implemented in the Czech Republic, which are designed as complementary to other subsidy titles, e.g. the Operational Programme Environment, the New Green Savings Programme and programmes administered directly by the Ministry of the Environment [Ministerstvo životního prostředí, Národní program Životní prostředí: (účinný od 1. 9. 2021)].”* As an overarching document, the National Programme targets key environmental areas, namely *water; air; waste, legacy burdens, environmental risks; nature and landscape; environmental prevention; innovative and demonstration projects; and energy savings [Národní program Životní prostředí, O programu]*. Although one might expect that insect protection would be at least indirectly mentioned in the fourth sub-programme, the opposite is true. In this case, only specially protected areas, handicapped animals and project documentation are addressed [Ministerstvo životního prostředí, Národní program Životní prostředí: (účinný od 1. 9. 2021)]. However, the measures set out in the sub-programme on the environment in towns and villages can be used, namely the reconstruction or modification of public lighting in national parks and protected areas, the establishment and restoration of green areas, and the planting and regeneration of isolated green areas with an emphasis on dust suppression [Ibidem]. Nevertheless, the advantage

remains that this is only a list of supported activities in the given area, so it is possible to propose other activities that will contribute to the fulfilment of the objective and will be measurable by the mentioned indicators [Ibidem]. Among the existing projects, the following projects announced by the Ministry of the Environment could indirectly relate to the protection of insect representatives: *Veřejná osvětlení v CHKO* (Public Lighting in Protected Landscape Areas), *Výsadba stromů* (Tree Planting) či *Zeleň do měst a obcí* (Greening to Towns and Villages) [Národní program Životní prostředí, Nabídka dotací]. Depending on the type of call, the applicant can be either a natural or a legal person. This programme is financed by the State Environmental Fund, which is filled with legal fees, levies and fines [Ministerstvo životního prostředí, Národní dotace] however, information on how much funding is made available under this programme was not available.

4.2. Landscape Care Programme (2021-2025)

Program péče o krajinu (Landscape care programme) targets one specific area, in this case the care of the landscape. *“The subsidy programme announced by the Ministry of the Environment provides non-investment funds of up to 100 % of the costs incurred for the actual implementation of the measures, with the assumption that the measures will be implemented gradually and will lead to the conservation and systematic increase of biodiversity [eAGRI, Program péče o krajinu]”*. The programme is designed to support small-scale measures, and is managed by the Ministry’s General Nature and Landscape Protection Department and the NCA CR. It focuses on three main areas, namely *supporting the care of Specially Protected Areas and NATURA 2000 SPAs and SACs; improving the preserved natural and landscape environment and finally ensuring the care of endangered and handicapped animals [Směrnice MŽP č. 2/2021 pro poskytování finančních prostředků v rámci Programu péče o krajinu 2021-2025]*. Under the second subprogramme, subsidies can be applied for the following measures: care of natural and near-natural habitats and biotypes of species listed on the red lists or for the promotion of these species in the open countryside (e.g. conversion of species-poor grassland to species-rich grassland using genetically and habitat-matched seed), care of landscape features (e.g. extensive or restoration grazing), creation of landscape features (e.g. planting of non-forest greenery) [Ibidem]. It is the introduction of these small-scale measures that can be crucial for the conservation of insect populations; an example of a project funded by this programme is *Pastva smíšeným stádem v CHKO Český kras* (The grazing of a mixed herd in the PLA Český kras) in order to support the butterfly species *Chazara briseis* [Agentura ochrany přírody a krajiny, Program

péče o krajinu]. The applicant can be either a natural or legal person and must have a legal relationship to the land on which the specific support measure is to be implemented [Ibidem]. The programme is not financed from environmental fees, as was the case with the previous one, but from other taxes from the state budget [Ministerstvo životního prostředí, Národní dotace], where a total of CZK 100-150 million has been allocated for this purpose [Agentura ochrany přírody a krajiny, Program péče o krajinu].

4.3. Support for the restoration of natural landscape functions programme (2019-2023)

Subsidy programme Podpora obnovy přirozených funkcí krajiny (Support for the restoration of natural landscape functions) is aimed at implementing measures arising from planning and concept documents. At the same time, it aims to focus on measures to support the adaptation of the landscape to climate change [Ministerstvo životního prostředí, Podpora obnovy přirozených funkcí krajiny]. The programme can be divided into six sub-programmes, *namely ensuring the obligations of nature conservation authorities in specially protected areas and NATURA 2000 sites, care for specially protected species of plants and animals (115 173), adaptation of aquatic ecosystems to climate change (115 174), adaptation of non-forest ecosystems to climate change, adaptation of forest ecosystems to climate change (115 175), and finally expert studies and other background material*. The programme is in charge of the Ministry of the Environment in cooperation with the NCA CR. The sub-programmes offer many measures in relation to the conservation of insect representatives: *Sub-programme 115 173* focuses on funding the implementation of conservation programmes (*Euphydryas maturna*), care programmes and regional action programmes (*Erebia sudetica*, *Chazara briseis*) [Dokumentace programu - 115 170 na období 2019 - 2023: Podpora obnovy přirozených funkcí krajiny, č.j. MZP/2019/610/2057]. *Sub-programme 115 175* aims at the creation and restoration of eco-stabilisation elements in the landscape and measures to reduce landscape fragmentation [Ibidem]. Finally, *sub-programme 115 176* makes it possible to finance measures to improve the species, age or spatial composition of forest stands and measures to retain timber in forests [Ibidem]. Applicants may be different entities under the different programmes, in some cases only NCA CR, national park administrations, and in other cases other natural and legal persons [Ibidem]. Through this programme, 220 million is distributed [Ibidem].

5. Direct payments

Agricultural production is largely financially subsidised, and direct payments, which are governed by the EU's Common Agricultural Policy rules, are one of the main financial components for farmers. In recent years, direct payments have focused on promoting environmental friendliness [Státní zemědělský intervenční fond, Přímé platby]. *“The basic conditions for receiving the subsidy are that the applicant is an agricultural entrepreneur, an active farmer and manages agricultural land registered in the LPIS register of agricultural land according to the user relationship [Státní zemědělský intervenční fond, Přímé platby]”*

5.1. Single area payment scheme (SAPS)

For farmers, the single farmland area payment is one of the stable incomes they receive exclusively from the European Union. The legal regulation on it can be found in Government Regulation No. 50/2015 Coll., on establishing certain conditions for granting direct payments to farmers. In order to receive this payment, the farmer must meet certain criteria; in addition to the cultivated area, the payment is conditional on the proper management of the agricultural land and the environmental status (DZES) and the mandatory management requirements (PPH), which together form the cross-compliance conditions [eAGRI, Jednotná platba na plochu zemědělské půdy]. If the farmer does not comply with them at the beginning or during the farming operation, the subsidy will either not be granted at all or will be at a lower level. In relation to insect conservation, the following conditions are important: DZES 7a - good agricultural and environmental condition of the land - no damage to the landscape feature, DZES 7b - respect of the ban on cutting of trees in a certain period, DZES 7d - the farmer does not grow more than 30 ha of a continuous area of one crop [Ministerstvo zemědělství, Průvodce zemědělcem: Kontrola podmíněnosti platný pro rok 2021] and PPH 3 - protection of habitats, wildlife and wild plants with PPH 10 - bringing plant protection products to the market.

5.2. Payment for farmers observing the environmentally friendly agricultural procedures

The so-called Greening payment is additional to the direct SAPS payment. In the first place, the farmer must comply with the conditions for receiving the SAPS payment and, in addition, the farmer must choose only climate- and environmentally-friendly farming practices when cultivating agricultural land, in which case he or she will receive a Greening

payment on top of the basic payment. Crop diversification, the maintenance of existing permanent grassland and the reservation of areas used in the environmental interest are considered to be environmentally friendly farming practices. The specific conditions, or changes to them, are published in a call from the State Agricultural Intervention Fund [Státní zemědělský intervenční fond, Informace pro žadatele - SZP 2016: Platba na zemědělské postupy příznivé pro klima a životní prostředí (Greening)].

6. Beekeeping subsidies in Czech Republic

Beekeeping is often considered to be one of the most difficult agricultural activities, not only in terms of physical and professional demands, but also because, in view of various variable factors such as large temperature fluctuations, prolonged winter, excessive drought or rain, overpopulation of harmful parasites or the spread of dangerous diseases, it is impossible to predict whether the beekeepers' efforts will be recouped in the same or the following year. However, the State is aware of the importance of bee conservation and therefore tries to support beekeepers through various legal means. The most effective tools in agricultural management tend to be economic ones, and beekeeping is therefore no exception. The subsidies granted to beekeepers under certain conditions can be broken down into three areas, namely regional, national and EU subsidies, depending on where the funds are allocated.

6.1. Common organisation of the markets (small eurosubsidies)

The so-called small eurosubsidies are very popular in the beekeeping sector. The legislation regulating this issue is Government Regulation No. 148/2019 Coll., laying down the conditions for granting subsidies for the implementation of measures to improve the general conditions for the production and marketing of beekeeping products.¹ The basis for the provision of EU subsidies is the Czech Beekeeping Programme, which is currently approved for the years 2020-2022: *The amount of funding for beekeeping measures financed 50% by the EU and 50% by national funds is determined for each three-year period (broken down into individual years) by a specific Commission implementing decision approving the programmes for improving the production and marketing of beekeeping products submitted by*

¹ Aformentioned Government Regulation implements Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013, Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/1366, and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1368.

Member States under Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007, as amended [Situační a výhledová zpráva Včely 2017].

In the case of the use of these subsidies, the beekeeper is obliged to follow the rules laid down in the Regulation, as well as the Rules for the administration of subsidies under Government Regulation No.148/2019 Coll., laying down the conditions for the provision of subsidies for the implementation of measures to improve the general conditions for the production of beekeeping products and their marketing for the EU year 2021/2022, and further details can be found on the website of the State Agricultural Intervention Fund.

Subsidies are granted only for selected facilities and activities, which fall into a total of five categories: technical assistance (organising educational events for beekeepers and running beekeeping clubs for children and young people, purchasing new technical equipment for beekeepers, organising exhibitions, participation in exhibitions and other cultural events), combating varroasis, rationalisation of bee colony rearing, reimbursement of the costs of honey analyses and beehive restocking [Section 2 of Government Regulation No. 197/2005 Coll., laying down the conditions for the provision of subsidies for the implementation of measures to improve the general conditions for the production of beekeeping products].

Small Eurosubsidies are granted only to natural and legal persons who keep beehives on the territory of the Czech Republic and who are registered as bee breeders with the Českomoravská společnost chovatelů, a.s. (Czech-Moravian Society of Breeders), based in Hradištko. Although the funds are intended exclusively for these persons, they can apply for subsidies to the State Agricultural Intervention Fund only through a recognised applicant, where the primary applicant is Český svaz včelařů (the Czech Beekeepers' Union; from 2020 onwards, this will include selected secondary vocational apprenticeships for beekeeping or Pracovní společnost nástavkových včelařů – the Working Society of Hive Frame Beekeepers) [Státní zemědělský intervenční fond, Přehled žadatelů o včelařské dotace pro chovatele včel (včelařský rok 2020/2021)] These applicants mainly assist beekeepers with the necessary administration. The subsidy application must always be submitted within the so-called beekeeping year, which is currently defined as 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022. Applications must be received by 1 August of the beekeeping year (Section 3 of the Government Regulation). In view of the approaching deadline, the beekeeper must submit the necessary documents and supporting evidence to the applicant, after which the State Agricultural Intervention Fund assesses whether all the conditions for granting the subsidy are met and, if it concludes that it will not grant the subsidy, issues a negative decision, which it must duly justify [Section 16 of Government

Regulation No. 197/2005 Coll., laying down the conditions for the provision of subsidies for the implementation of measures to improve the general conditions for the production of beekeeping products]. The decision can be appealed, and the appeal can therefore be lodged only by the applicant and not by the beekeeper as such; however, the applicant does not lodge an appeal of his own accord but on the basis of an initiative. The Ministry of Agriculture then decides on the appeal [Včelařství, Příručka pro chovatele včel. Včelařské eurodotace krok za krokem pro období od 1. srpna do 31. července 2020]. In 2020, the State Agricultural Intervention Fund paid out over CZK 66 million to support beekeeping [Včelařství, Dotace na včelařská opatření v roce 2021]. As in the previous ten years, most of the subsidies are spent on technical assistance (training, equipment, new hives), varroasis control (medicines, aerosol, studies) and colony restocking (sale of queens, purchase of hives). The amount granted does not deviate significantly from the annual average of around CZK 60 million [Situační a výhledová zpráva včely 2017].

6.2. National subsidiaries (1.D.)

Beekeeping is also supported through national subsidies, the rules of which are regulated in the document entitled *Zásady, kterými se stanovují podmínky pro poskytování dotací pro rok 2021 na základě § 1, § 2, § 2d zákona č. 252/1997 Sb., o zemědělství, ve znění pozdějších předpisů* (Principles establishing the conditions for the provision of subsidies for 2021 on the basis of Sections 1, 2 and 2d of Act No. 252/1997 Coll., on Agriculture, as amended; reference number 34313/2020-MZE-18131). The beekeeping support programme is included in category 1.D and its purpose is to ensure the pollination of agricultural entomophilic crops. The subsidy is granted per bee colony that is overwintered in the year in question. The application for the subsidy is submitted by the beekeeper through the Czech Beekeepers' Association, whether or not they are members, provided that they have registered bee colonies in the Czech Republic under the Breeders' Act. Applications may be submitted on the date of the start of the application or on the date of the coming into effect of the policy. As regards Scheme 1. D., applications were accepted from the applicant until 31 October 2021. The subsidy is provided through the Czech Beekeepers Association. However, slightly different rules apply to professional beekeepers (beekeepers keeping 150 or more bee colonies), where the aid is granted in the de minimis mode, i.e. under Commission Regulation (EU) No 1408/2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid in the agriculture sector [Obsah Zásad, kterými se stanovují podmínky pro poskytování dotací

pro rok 2021 na základě § 1, § 2, § d zákona č. 252/1997 Sb., o zemědělství, ve znění pozdějších předpisů].

6.3. Regional subsidies

The regional subsidies are entirely under the responsibility of the individual regional authorities, but they are exclusively intended for those beekeepers who reside in the respective region. The conditions for granting the subsidy, its type and amount vary not only nationally, but also from one county to another, i.e. what was supported last year may not be supported in the following year. In general, however, it can be said that the most frequently supported are preventive bee plague screenings (for example, 2021 in Jihomoravský region: support for hobby organised beekeeping to eliminate serious diseases in bee colonies, improve grazing conditions, achieve independence in the supply of beekeepers with quality beeswax and support the education of the younger generation in beekeeping). The funds are drawn from the public budget of the Czech Republic.

7. Conclusion

The paper aimed to analyse existing economic tools that can positively impact mitigating the decline of insect representatives in the open landscape. The tools were examined at both the European and national levels, concluding with a particular focus on bees as one of the most crucial insect pollinators in general. The European Union boasts some of the most stringent environmental standards. This tendency and direction of the European Union are also evident in its subsidy programmes aimed at the environment, as evidenced by the Operational Programme Environment and the LIFE Programme. Both programmes can be considered overarching; their essence lies not only in the protection of biodiversity but also in other environmental areas. The fundamental difference between them lies in the way in which they are set up as such, where the former supports specifically designed measures and is open to a wide range of applicants, whereas the latter gives applicants considerable scope and does not limit them to specifically defined measures, with the range of applicants in this case being limited to legal persons only. Although the programmes do not specifically target insect representatives, they have supported important projects to conserve selected insect representatives in the Czech Republic. Furthermore, it is positive to note that these projects will continue, although the pandemic delayed their adoption.

At the national level, the National Environment Programme can be highlighted. Although it also has the function of an overarching subsidy programme, it should be remembered that it serves only as a complementary programme to the two programmes mentioned above. Therefore this programme can be forgiven for paying almost no attention to insect representatives in the field of nature conservation; on the other hand, it is at least possible to draw on funds to support more than insects in built-up areas of the country. The programme also does not preclude the proposal of measures of its own, which are not proposed in the programme. The other two programmes presented are then quite essential for the conservation of insect populations, even though at first sight, they may seem to offer the possibility of funding measures of only a minor nature consisting in refining the grain of the landscape. However, it is this lack of suitable habitat for insect populations that is causing their decline, and landscape change is one way of returning them to the wild. It is also optimistic that farmers are financially incentivised to adopt environmentally-friendly farming practices, with SAPS payments as a baseline supplemented by a greening bonus.

Bees were then given completely individual attention at the European, national and partly regional levels. Beekeepers are offered financial assistance for the beehives themselves, for the purchase of beekeeping equipment and for the purchase of medicines to combat dangerous diseases. A specific role is played by the Czech Beekeepers' Association, through which beekeepers apply for subsidies, whether or not they are members. On the positive side, most of the administrative work involved in the applications is delegated to the association.

Economic tools to support the conservation of insect representatives can thus be found at both the European and national levels. Although they may be considered effective in content, the underlying problem for under-utilising these funds may lie primarily in the lack of awareness of potential applicants for subsidies or the narrowing of eligible applicants in specific programmes. This is also linked to the fact that not all programmes target insect representatives directly, as is usually the case for some other animals, but that specific appeals should also be sought in general programmes. Another problem is the administrative complexity of preparing applications for a specific subsidy title, where at least in the case of subsidies for bees, the Czech Beekeepers' Association is trying to help with the process. The amount of financial contributions received is also debated. In conclusion, however, it is positive to note that there is a real effort on the part of the European Union to create such programmes and, where appropriate, to extend their effectiveness.

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Regulation No. 50/2015 Coll., on establishing certain conditions for granting direct payments to farmers

Government Regulation No.148/2019 Coll., laying down the conditions for the provision of subsidies for the implementation of measures to improve the general conditions for the production of beekeeping products and their marketing for the EU year 2021/2022

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