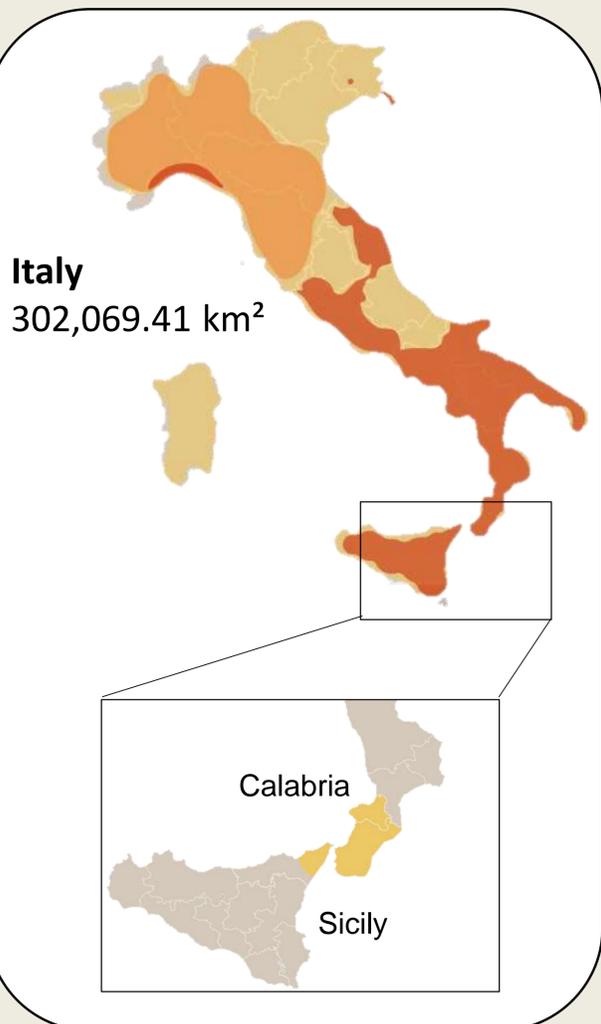


Italy as a Hotspot for Honey Bee Threats

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Italy ranks third in Europe for the number of beekeepers (76,961) and counts 1,812,246 honey bee colonies. In recent years, it has increasingly become a hotspot for honey bee diseases, pests and pathogens:



Scientific name	Status in Italy	Category	Regulatory framework
 <i>Vespa crabro</i>	Endemic	Native species	Italy: Not regulated
 <i>Vespa orientalis</i>	Endemic in the South with recent tendency to expand northward	Native species in the South; Neo-invasive species in the rest of the country since 2018	Italy: Not regulated
 <i>Vespa velutina nigritorax</i>	Well established in the North-West; Sporadic occurrence in the North-East	Invasive alien species (since 2012)	Italy: D.lgs n. 230 (15 Dec 2017) EU: • Reg. (EU) 1143/2014 • Reg. (EU) 2016/1141 • Reg. (EU) 2018/968
 <i>Varroa destructor</i>	Endemic (since 1981)	Listed disease (C+D+E)	Common regulation for all the listed bee diseases: Italy: Not regulated EU: • Reg. (EU) 2016/429 • Reg. (EU) 2018/1629 • Reg (EU) 2018/1882
 <i>Aethina tumida</i>	Well established in Calabria region since 2014. Sicily region: outbreaks in 2014, 2019 and 2024; Exotic for the rest of the country.	Listed disease (D+E)	Species-specific regulations: • CID (EU) 2023/110 (<i>A. tumida</i>) • CID (EU) 2024/3119 (<i>A. tumida</i>) • WOA 2005 (<i>A. tumida</i>) • WOA 2008 (<i>Tropilaelaps</i> spp.)
 <i>Paenibacillus larvae</i>	Endemic	Listed disease (D+E)	• WOAH 2005 (<i>A. tumida</i>) • WOAH terrestrial code 2024 (<i>P. larvae</i>) • WOA 2008 (<i>Tropilaelaps</i> spp.)
 <i>Tropilaelaps</i> spp.	Not present; Exotic to EU	Listed disease (D+E)	

Key points:

- The responsibility for maintaining colony health and biosecurity lies with beekeepers (Reg. (EU) 2016/429);
- National surveillance program for *V. destructor* and *A. tumida* are in place in Italy and yearly updated based on epidemiological surveillance;
- Reg. (EU) 1143/2014 («invasive alien species») does not apply to: pathogens that cause animal diseases;
- Reg. (EU) 2018/698: risk assessment provides a solid scientific basis for decision-making concerning invasive alien species.

Urgent challenges in European beekeeping:



Coordinated and effective surveillance and reporting system



Rapid alert system and early reaction measures



Veterinary medicinal products and biocides development



Refinement of integrated hive management techniques for containment and control