



## Beekeeper Interview

# Stathis Ntokos

---

*Messini / Greece*

**Programme:** Erasmus+ Bees and More

**Roles:**

- Georgia (Student – Researcher)
- Lentio (Student – Researcher)
- Stathis Ntokos (Beekeeper)

### Interview Transcript

Georgia: Good morning. Thank you very much for accepting our invitation to come to our school. We participate in an Erasmus programme about bees and we would like to ask you some questions. My name is Georgia.

Lentio: My name is Lentio.

Beekeeper: My name is Periklis Avgentopoulos. I am a farmer and a beekeeper, sixty years old. I have been involved in these activities all my life. At the moment I have about one hundred and fifty beehives, while in the past I had reached four hundred.

Georgia: How many years have you been involved in beekeeping?

Beekeeper: I have been involved for thirty-five years. The first five years were as an amateur and the remaining thirty professionally. I started with a few beehives and gradually reached four hundred. I practiced nomadic beekeeping throughout Greece. Now I mostly move within the Peloponnese and have about one hundred and fifty beehives. At the same time, I am also involved in farming. These professions are closely related.

Lentio: Is it your main profession?

Beekeeper: I am both a farmer and a beekeeper. Both are my main professions.

Georgia: In which areas do you operate with your beehives?

Beekeeper: I move within Messinia, Arcadia, Laconia and once a year to Evia.

Lentio: Are there beekeeping associations or organizations in your area?



Beekeeper: There is the Association of Professional Beekeepers of Messinia, Laconia and Arcadia. I served as secretary of this association for eight years. In the past there was also a cooperative in Messinia, but it stopped operating about ten years ago for financial reasons.

Georgia: What types of honey and other bee products do you produce?

Beekeeper: I produce flower honey and forest honey, mainly from fir and pine. In small quantities I also produce royal jelly and propolis.

Lentio: What impact do climate and the environment have on your bees?

Beekeeper: A very significant impact, mostly negative. High temperatures, lack of rainfall, as well as factors such as mobile phone antennas and wind turbines negatively affect bees. We avoid placing hives near large installations.

Georgia: During the years you have been involved in beekeeping, what changes have you observed?

Beekeeper: Spring is not what it used to be. Thirty years ago, colony development was better because spring was more stable and milder. Fir trees produced honey every year. Now this is no longer the case. High temperatures and lack of rainfall have reduced production. Bee colonies have a shorter lifespan and diseases have increased. Climate change plays a major role in production.

Lentio: What is the most important thing farmers and landowners can do to create a better environment for pollinators?

Beekeeper: Better management of agricultural chemicals. These products are necessary in some crops, but they can be used in a more careful and responsible way.

Georgia: What do you consider to be the greatest threats to bees today?

Beekeeper: First climate change, then agricultural chemicals, and then diseases. Diseases have always existed, but climate change and the use of chemicals have a greater impact.

Lentio: How do you ensure the health and well-being of your bees?

Beekeeper: Through proper care. We move the hives to better nectar flows and flowering areas, keep the hives clean and generally manage them carefully.

Georgia: What should consumers pay attention to when buying honey?

Beekeeper: It is difficult to distinguish adulterated honey. I suggest choosing branded products with proper labeling. Even we beekeepers cannot always detect carefully adulterated honey. Safety mainly comes from trusting the producer.

Lentio: What is the most satisfying part of beekeeping for you?



Beekeeper: There is also the financial aspect, but mainly the relationship with nature. Traveling to the mountains, seeing the colonies develop and observing their life. All of these are very important.

Georgia: What advice would you give to someone who wants to start beekeeping?

Beekeeper: They must truly love it. If someone starts only for financial reasons, they will probably become disappointed. But if they truly love it, they can succeed financially as well.

Georgia: Thank you very much.

Beekeeper: Thank you as well.