Geographical Spread of the Exotic Mite *Tropilaelaps* spp.: Suspected Presence in North-Eastern Turkey

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This note presents an update of the geographical distribution and spread of *Tropilaelaps* spp. mites, parasites of bees and exotic in the European Union (EU), as of 24 August 2026. Previous states of play of the geographical distribution are available here.

The presence of *Tropilaelaps* spp. is suspected in the Artvin region of Turkey, close to the border with Georgia (Figure 1).

Description

On 26 July 2026, a video showing mites identified as *Tropilaelaps* spp. in a honey bee colony in the Artvin region of north-eastern Turkey was recorded by Dr. Asli Özkirim, a Turkish researcher. The video was subsequently shared on social media by PHIRA-Science[1], a UK-based organisation actively involved in *Tropilaelaps* research.

The information was relayed by Apimondia[2] on 14 August 2026. According to the available information, the mites observed in the video were identified as *Tropilaelaps mercedesae*. The images appear consistent with the morphological and behavioural characteristics of *Tropilaelaps* spp. and the number of mites observed suggests a relatively high level of infestation.

However, this information has **not been officially confirmed** by the Turkish authorities. No official notification of the presence of *Tropilaelaps* spp. in Türkiye has been identified to date.

The suspected presence is located in the Artvin region, in north-eastern Turkey, close to the border with Georgia (Figures 1). The presence of *T. mercedesae* was confirmed in Georgia in 2024, in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region, and the presence of *Tropilaelaps* spp. has also been suspected in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region, in southern Georgia near the Turkish border.

[1] https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1UrkejkjLJ/ https://www.instagram.com/reel/DbyDsXgx1G_/?igsh=aGJwY2phMGl4ZHBi&igsi=aGJwY2phMGl4ZHBi

[2] High risk of spreading of *Tropilaelaps mercedesae* in Eastern Europe, after new detection in Turkey. - APIMONDIA (accessed on 20/08/2026)

Discussion

To date, this suspicion has neither been confirmed by official analyses, nor has it been notified to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH). No scientific publication confirming this occurrence is currently available. Therefore, this information should be considered with caution.

The available information does not allow an accurate assessment of the epidemiological situation in Turkey. In particular, it is not possible to determine the extent of the infestation or when the mite was introduced into the area. The relatively high number of mites observed in the video may suggest that the mite has been present for some time, but this cannot currently be confirmed.

However, the potential presence of *Tropilaelaps* spp. in north-eastern Turkey is of concern, given the westward spread of *T. mercedesae* and its increasing proximity to the European Union.

Turkey is a major beekeeping country, with a large number of honey bee colonies and extensive migratory beekeeping. Movements of colonies may contribute to the spread of *Tropilaelaps* spp.

The potential spread of *Tropilaelaps* spp. in regions neighbouring the EU constitutes an increasingly serious threat to the European beekeeping sector.

This calls for increased vigilance regarding movements of bees and beekeeping material, which are rapid spread routes for the parasite. Regulations on entry into the EU and movements between Member States help to reduce the risk of introduction.

Early detection is essential to allow rapid action and, if possible, eradicate the mite before it becomes established. Once *Tropilaelaps* spp. is well established, eradication is no longer possible.

In case of suspicion, competent authorities must be notified as soon as possible. Suspect mites should be immediately sent to the national reference laboratory and/or to the competent authority for confirmation and appropriate surveillance and control measures.

A leaflet on *Tropilaelaps* spp. for beekeepers is available on the EURL website.

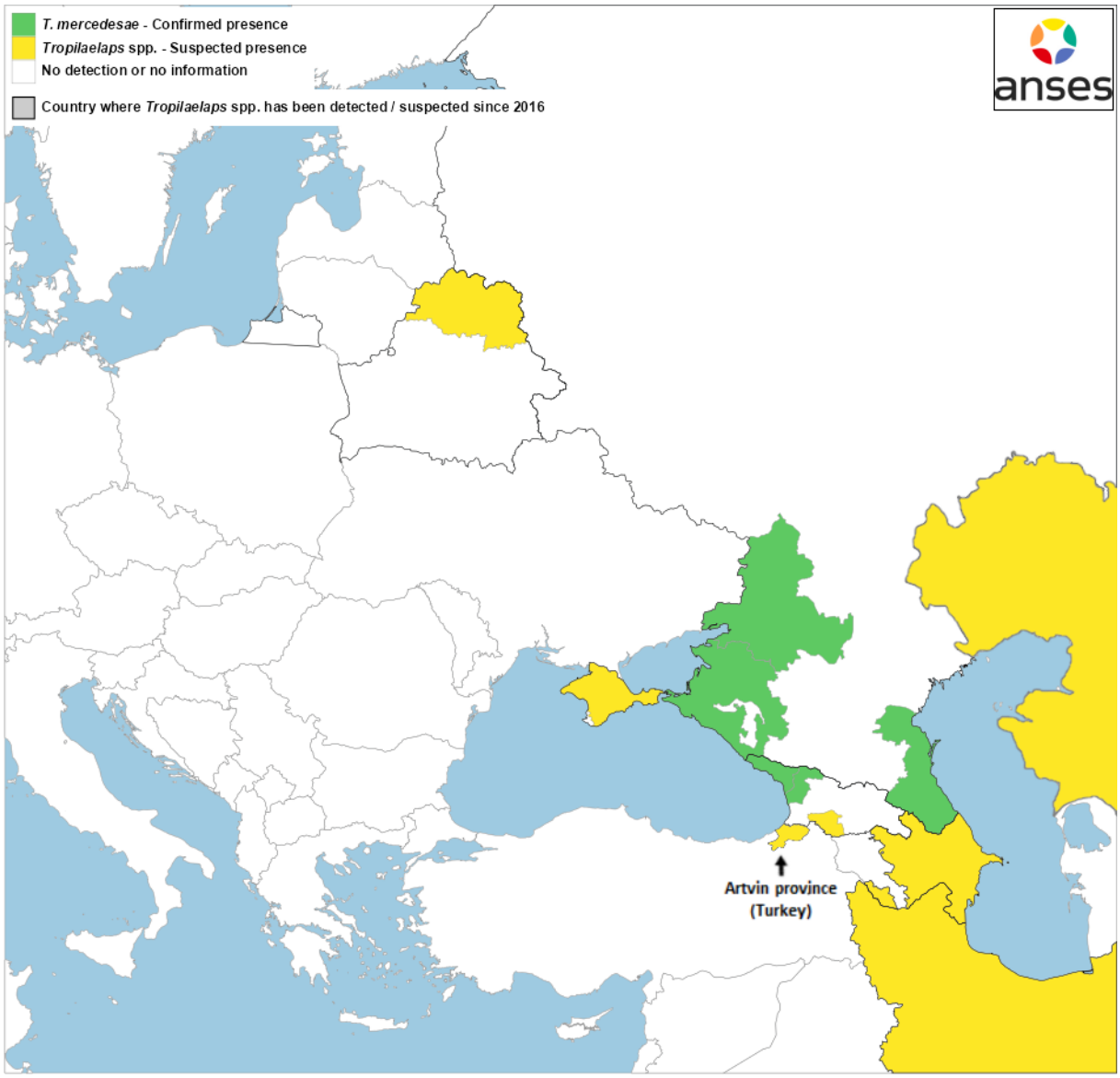

Figure 1 - Geographical distribution of *Tropilaelaps* spp. in territories close to the European continent as of 24 August 2026, with newly suspected occurrence in Artvin province, Turkey.

Explanation of the legend for Figures 1, 2 & 3: Confirmed presence: the presence of *Tropilaelaps* spp. has been officially reported to the WOAH and/or documented in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. **Suspected presence**: the presence of *Tropilaelaps* spp. has neither been officially reported to the WOAH nor published in a peer-reviewed journal. Instead, the information comes from informal sources such as beekeeping association websites, communications with scientists from affected countries, local media reports, or scientific publications in non–peer-reviewed journals.

Sources for Figures 1, 2 & 3: Anderson and Morgan 2007, Brandorf *et al*. 2024, Brandorf *et al*. 2025, Chantawannakul *et al*. 2016, de Guzman *et al*. 2017, Khokhlova 2023, Mohamadzade Namin *et al*. 2024, Joharchi and Stolbova 2024, Janashia *et al*. 2024, Goryachev and Kuzmich 2025, Sammataro *et al*. 2000, WOAH event notifications (WAHIS-WOAH consulted on 24 August 2026), information on the website of a local media outlet (regarding Azerbaijan), on the website of Apimondia and from social medias (Turkey) and personal communications with the Anses laboratory in Sophia Antipolis (regarding Georgia, Iran, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan).

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