

PRESS RELEASE

Organic sector concludes organic regulation proposal is inadequate

Brussels, 06/05/2014 – The organic sector discussed the legislative proposal for a [new organic EU regulation](#) during a [stakeholder conference](#) jointly organised by IFOAM EU and the Representation of the State of Baden-Württemberg to the EU on 29 April. An overwhelming majority of the 140 participants from the organic sector, NGOs and Member states agreed that the proposal, in its current form, is inadequate. It fails to deliver a positive vision for progressive, principle based, organic development. During the IFOAM EU Council meeting the day before, members came to a similar conclusion.

Participants shared and supported the Commission's aim for a sustainable growth of organic food and farming throughout Europe and acknowledge the need for further development of the regulation based on organic principles. Nevertheless, the sector is concerned that the proposal would lead to a decline of organic production in Europe, in particular at the expense of small organic farms and businesses, and less developed regions. It puts at risk a sector that presents one of the few positive and growing food markets in Europe, one that meets consumer and community expectations whilst protecting and enhancing the environment.

The sector concerns were based, in particular, on the following:

- a) technical and conceptual shortcomings in scope and legal text;
- b) inconsistent import regime that does not ensure coherent import rules and risk shortages the supply with organic produce from third countries;
- c) failure to address the diverse situation of the organic sector throughout Europe;
- d) making organic producers liable for pesticide contamination by conventional farmers by introducing a specific legal threshold;
- e) unrealistic time frame to meet far reaching production requirements;
- f) new administrative obstacles and burdens;
- g) incomplete Impact Assessment with questionable assumptions, partly ignoring conclusions of the [Scientific Evaluation](#) carried out on behalf of the Commission.

IFOAM EU recognises that the proposal delivers some valuable and innovative elements, and welcomes that it was accompanied with an EU organic action plan. However, it fails to deliver any real benefits over and above the present regulation and thus **IFOAM EU rejects the proposal in its current form, unless substantially changed**. IFOAM EU calls for further development of the organic legal framework based on organic principles and an organic regulation that supports the development of the sector, based on a progressive step-by-step process with clear vision, one that takes the diversity of member states, regions and organic operators into account.

IFOAM EU represents more than 160 member organizations in the EU-28, the EU accession countries and EFTA. Member organizations span the entire organic food chain and beyond: from farmers and processors organisations, retailers, certifiers, consultants, traders and researchers to environmental and consumer advocacy bodies.