

PRESS STATEMENT

IFOAM EU position on the organic regulation review

Brussels, 14/01/2014 – The European Directorate-General for Agriculture is currently drafting a legal proposal for a new organic regulation to replace the current legal organic framework (EC 834/07) to be published together with a new organic action plan in March. An inter-service consultation of the different Directorates of the EU Commission is now assessing this proposal. IFOAM EU believes that this opportunity must be used to bring the regulation and implementing rules up-to-date to match the dynamic developments of the sector and bridge the specific needs that have been identified. The current legislative framework provides a solid basis for organic production and consumer confidence. Moreover its implementation potential is not yet fully exploited. IFOAM EU therefore recommends a focused improvement of the existing framework. The complete legal overhaul favoured by the Commission would force organic operators to farm and produce under legal uncertainty for years while the implications of the new framework are being worked out.

Since the EU Commission began the process of reviewing the existing Organic Regulation, ((EC) No 834/2007) in 2012, IFOAM EU has actively participated in the EU Commission's organic regulation review process by providing concrete, detailed input and suggestions how to improve the current legal framework to make organic production fit for the near future.

Backed by the organic sector, the most important points of improvement to the current framework identified by IFOAM EU are:

- Increasing the effectiveness of controls of European and third country operatorsⁱ
- Moving to a '100% organic ingredients' approach (away from a '95% approach')ⁱⁱ, cutting the list of non-organic ingredients by half in organic processingⁱⁱⁱ and improving origin labelling^{iv}
- Reducing exceptional rules and increasing transparency in the regulation^v using a step-by-step approach
- Introducing requirements for measuring environmental performance by organic processors and traders^{vi}
- Enabling group certification for small farmers in Europe
- Developing a new ambitious European Organic Action Plan^{vii} that enables the organic sector to achieve envisaged improvements and continue to grow. IFOAM EU welcomes the Commission taking up this call from the sector and it should make sure any proposed action plan be resolutely implemented and provide political and financial measures for organic research and innovation, education and training, information and promotion

The organic sector in the EU provides employment and a pioneer model for sustainable agriculture. The market value is now at €20.8 billion. Despite the financial crisis the sector continues to grow, building on the engagement of farmers and producers as well as consumer trust and the continuous improvements of the rules and the control system. Organic operators have recently invested in adapting to a new regulation; it came into force in 2009-2010, whilst implementing rules for several sectors such as greenhouses and poultry still need to be completed. A radical change in the legislation would seriously disrupt the ability of operators to continue their activities altogether and would further slow down the important work on the detailed implementing rules. To encourage further sustainable growth of the organic sector, a stable legal situation is essential to maintaining and increasing the trust of both consumers and producers.

For more detailed recommendations and assessments, please refer to the IFOAM EU suggest policy option for the regulation^{viii} and the IFOAM EU dossier on the Review of the Legal and Political Framework for Organic Farming^{ix}

As the situation develops, our [website](#) will continually be updated and our Communications Manager is available to answer your requests

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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

ⁱ http://www.ifoam-eu.org/sites/default/files/page/files/ifoameu_reg_imports_position_201210.pdf & http://www.ifoam-eu.org/sites/default/files/page/files/ifoameu_reg_control_position_201210.pdf

ⁱⁱ http://www.ifoam-eu.org/sites/default/files/page/files/ifoameu_reg_letter_exceptionalrules_processing_20131230.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ (Annex IX of Regulation EC No 889/2008). See http://www.ifoam-eu.org/sites/default/files/page/files/ifoameu_reg_annexix_letter_201305.pdf

^{iv} http://www.ifoam-eu.org/sites/default/files/page/files/ifoameu_reg_origin_labelling_position_201212.pdf

^v http://www.ifoam-eu.org/sites/default/files/page/files/ifoameu_reg_letter_exceptionalrules_processing_20131230.pdf

^{vi} http://www.ifoam-eu.org/sites/default/files/page/files/ifoameu_reg_environmental_performance_letter_20120705.pdf

^{vii} http://www.ifoam-eu.org/sites/default/files/page/files/ifoameu_reg_organicactionplan_input_20131126.pdf

^{viii} http://www.ifoam-eu.org/sites/default/files/page/files/ifoameu_reg_review_policy_option_proposal_201307.pdf

^{ix} http://www.ifoam-eu.org/sites/default/files/page/files/ifoameu_reg_organic_reg_position_201305.pdf