

Organic production and labelling of organic products

In 2014, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products. Aimed at revising the existing legislation on organic production in order to remove obstacles to the sustainable development of this sector, the proposal is intended to strengthen the rules on the control system, the trade regime, various animal welfare practices and the use of non-authorised substances. The proposed regulation will introduce one set of EU-wide rules covering the entire organic sector. Parliament is due to vote on the proposal during its April plenary session.

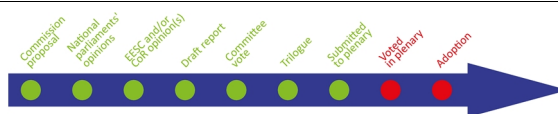
European Commission proposal

In March 2014, the Commission adopted a [proposal](#) for a regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products. Repealing the [existing EU regulation](#) on organic production dating from 2007, the proposal is intended to overcome both regulatory and non-regulatory obstacles to the development of the EU's organic sector, increase consumer confidence in organic products, and avoid unfair competition among producers. Compared to the existing regulation, the Commission's proposal seeks to harmonise production rules, remove or phase out some exceptions and derogations to the rules; enlarge the scope of organic rules to cover a wider list of products; reinforce the adoption of a risk-based approach to official controls; and simplify matters for small-scale farmers through a system of group certification. Specific provisions were also included to harmonise the action to be taken when non-authorised products or substances are detected.

European Parliament position

Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) adopted its [report](#) on the proposal in October 2015 and also voted on a mandate to launch negotiations with the Council. Trilogue meetings began under the Luxembourg Presidency in November 2015, culminating in June 2017, when the Maltese Presidency and Parliament reached a preliminary agreement. This was subsequently endorsed by Member states represented in the Council's Special Committee on Agriculture. On 22 November 2017, the AGRI committee approved the provisional [agreement](#), which now needs to be voted at first reading in plenary. The European Parliament's position is clear on a number of issues that are included in the agreement. For example, on the theme of increasing consumer trust in organic products, Parliament has ensured that the controls regime would include at least one annual physical on-site compliance check with EU standards for farmers, breeders, processors, traders and importers. To ensure that organic foodstuffs are not contaminated by pesticides, the legislative proposal will increase the accountability of organic operators throughout the supply chain for using only authorised techniques and adhering to organic production rules. The new legislation seeks to avoid contamination and potential fraud on mixed farms (i.e. those producing both conventional and organic food), where farmers and other operators should ensure separation of inputs needed for organic and conventional production and of final products. The agreed text requires approval by the Parliament in plenary and the Council before it can enter into force. Once adopted, the regulation will apply from 1 January 2021.

First-reading report: [2014/0100\(COD\)](#); Committee responsible: AGRI; Rapporteur: Martin Hausling (Greens/EFA). See also our 'EU Legislation in progress' [briefing](#) on the proposal.



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