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Answer given by Mr Hogan  
on behalf of the European Commission  
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EU organic legislation establishes the rules for the imports of organic products into the EU. Organic products imported from third countries are subject to multiple levels of controls throughout all stages of production, preparation and distribution, including the operators importing organic products to the EU. These controls are carried out by control bodies recognised by the Commission or under the control of a competent authority of a third country whose organic system is assessed equivalent to the EU.

The Commission ensures the supervision of the activities of the recognised control bodies through different means, including assessment of annual report of activities and audit visits in third countries. In case irregularities are detected, the recognition of a control body can be withdrawn or suspended. In addition, the Commission has put in place guidelines for Member States and Control Bodies on additional controls on certain products coming from certain third countries. The Commission has also a system to monitor and follow up irregularities detected by Member States when importing organic products and in order to further guarantee the traceability, all imported organic products are systematically accompanied by an electronic certificate of inspection since 2017.

The Commission is currently preparing a further strengthening of the control system especially in the context of the new organic Regulation.