

# Organic farming legislation

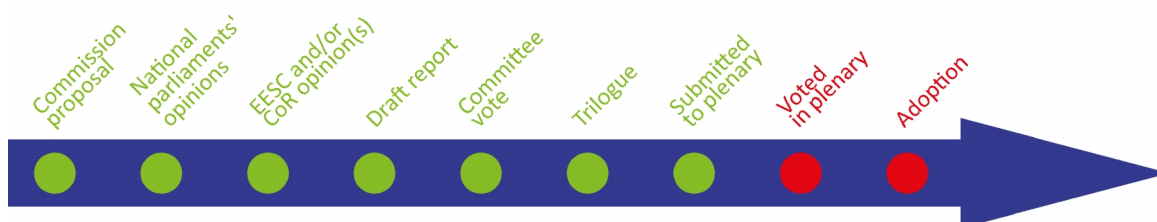
## Revision of EU Regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products

### SUMMARY

Developing organic production is an EU policy objective. While the EU organic market is constantly expanding, only 7 % of total EU agricultural area is used for organic cultivation, and the difference between EU demand and production is covered by growing imports. To overcome the regulatory obstacles to the development of the sector and increase consumer confidence in the EU organic logo, the Commission adopted a proposal in March 2014 for a regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products, repealing the current framework dating from 2007. Following a series of trilogue meetings, the Maltese Presidency and the European Parliament reached a preliminary agreement on 28 June 2017. The Council's Special Committee on Agriculture endorsed the agreement, which the Parliament's Agriculture Committee subsequently approved on 22 November 2017. The full Parliament and Council now need to approve the text before the new regulation can enter into force.

### Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on organic production and labelling of organic products repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007.

<i>Committee responsible:</i>	Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI)	COM(2014) 180 of 24.03.2014
<i>Rapporteur:</i>	Martin Häusling (Greens/EFA, Germany)	<i>procedure ref.:</i> 2014/0100(COD)
<i>Next steps expected:</i>	First-reading vote in plenary	Ordinary legislative procedure



This briefing updates earlier editions, of September ([PE 568.317](#)), and October 2015 ([PE 596.036](#)), drafted by Francesco Tropea.

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## Introduction

On 24 March 2014, the Commission adopted a [proposal](#) for a regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007). The intentions behind the proposal were:

- To remove the regulatory and non-regulatory obstacles to the development of organic production in the EU;
- To maintain or improve consumer confidence in organic products;
- To avoid unfair competition among producers and improve the functioning of the internal market.

At the same time, the Commission approved an [action plan](#) for the future of organic production in the European Union. Its implementation should help to: synergise with other EU policies, help address specific organic sector needs and improve access to third-country markets. Fair competition should be improved with simpler and clearer rules and a move from an equivalence regime to a compliance regime (see box below) for control bodies in third countries. Consumer confidence should be boosted by stricter production rules, taking into account evolving societal concerns on, for example animal welfare and environmental standards. Fraud prevention would be addressed with a more efficient control system, based on risk-assessment, and a more reliable import regime.

## Context

Organic production has been defined as 'an overall system of farm management and food production that combines best environment practices, a high level of biodiversity, the preservation of natural resources and the application of high animal welfare standards ...'.<sup>1</sup> It adheres to a set of principles that minimise human impact on the environment and that operate as naturally as possible. Unauthorised substances, synthetic fertilisers and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are banned. Antibiotics and other substances are severely restricted. Crops are rotated so that soil and on-site resources are used efficiently. On-site resources are put to good use, such as manure for fertiliser, or feed produced on the farm. Disease-resistant plant and animal species adapted to the local environment are used. Livestock are raised in a free-range, open-air environment fed with organic fodder. Animal husbandry practices are tailored to the various livestock species.

The organic farming sector in the EU encompasses around 306 500 organic operators (i.e. producers, processors and importers). It plays a double role for EU citizens: on the one hand, it provides food meeting a specific consumer demand for organic products and, on the other, it delivers public goods contributing to the protection of the environment and animal welfare, as well as to rural vitality and development. The organic production scheme is part of the [EU agricultural product quality schemes](#),

together with protected designation of origin, protected geographical indications and traditional specialities guarantees.

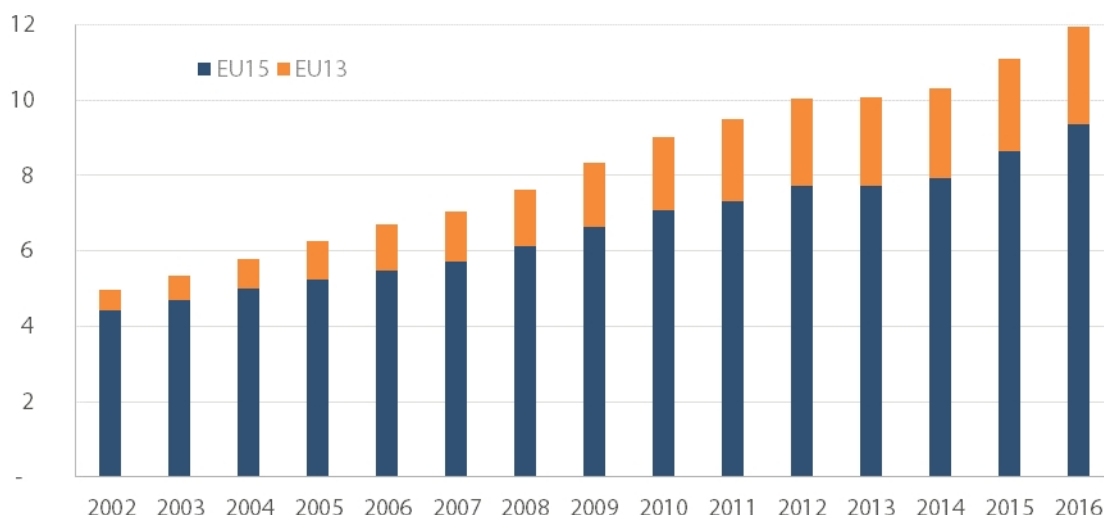
**Box 1: Compliance and equivalence regimes**

**Compliance regime:** agricultural products bearing a reference to organic production and placed on the EU market are produced in accordance with the production rules **set out** in the EU regulations and all operators are subject to control by a control authority or control body recognised in accordance with the EU regulations.

**Equivalence regime:** the agricultural products bearing a reference to organic production and placed on the EU market are produced in accordance with production rules **equivalent to** those referred to in the EU regulations and the operators are subject to control measures of equivalent effectiveness to those referred to in the EU regulations.

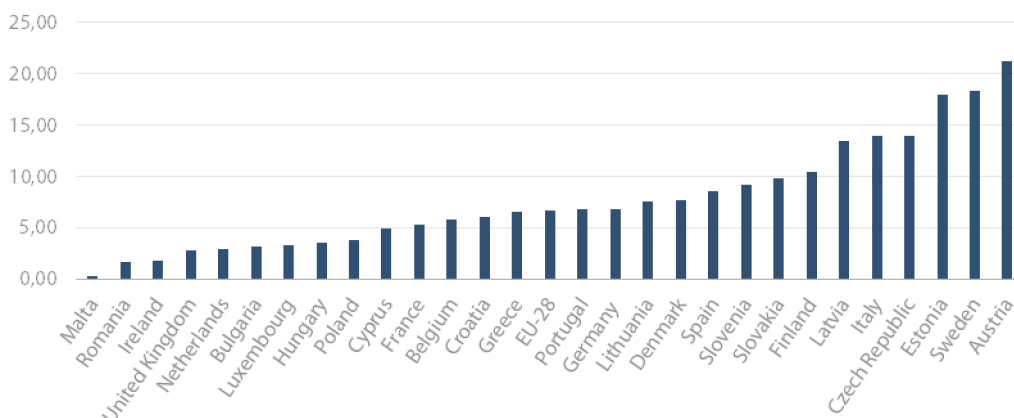
In recent years, the agricultural area under organic cultivation in the EU has increased (see Figure 1). Eurostat [data](#) indicate that, in 2015, the total EU-28 area cultivated as organic was 11.1 million hectares, up from 5.0 million in 2002. By 2016, this figure had increased to 11.9 million hectares. Despite this increase, the whole organic area represents only 6.2 % of the total EU agricultural area. There is a risk of limitation to the expansion of the organic market, as growing imports have to cover the difference between EU demand for organic products and EU production.

**Figure 1 – Evolution of the total area under organic cultivation in the EU-28 (million ha)**



Source: EPRS calculation of Eurostat data; area under organic cultivation is the crop area fully converted and crop area under conversion.

**Figure 2 – Share (%) of the organic area in Europe situated in the utilised agricultural area in the EU Member States, 2016**



Source: Eurostat [data](#), 2016.

The major part of the organic area in Europe is situated in those EU Member States which joined the EU before 2004 (known as the EU-15). Nevertheless, the growth rate for the area under organic agriculture has increased at a rate of approximately 12 % per annum.

In terms of the relative importance of the sector in each Member State, Figure 2 above shows that Austria is the Member State where the importance of the organic sector in terms of the total utilised agricultural area (UAA) is the highest, at around 21.25 %. Sweden follows, with 18.3 %, then Estonia with 18 %, and the Czech Republic, and Italy where 14 % of their UAA was dedicated to organic farming in each case. The total value of the EU organic retail market has doubled from €11.1 billion in 2005 to €24 billion in 2014 (IFOAM, EU Group, 2016).

### Existing situation

The current legal framework is [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 834/2007](#) on organic production and labelling of organic products. The regulation outlines the objectives and principles of organic agriculture, fixes general production rules, and describes the EU's organic production standards, control system and labelling requirements.

The Commission subsequently adopted two implementing regulations: [Commission Regulation \(EC\) No 889/2008](#), which included detailed production and labelling rules and control requirements, and [Commission Regulation \(EC\) No 1235/2008](#), which implemented the new import regime.

Since 2009, the legislative framework has been updated. This includes two major blocks on production standards for aquaculture (2010) and wine production (2012) and equivalency agreements reached with Canada (2011) and the United States of America (2012) (see Box 1 above for an explanation of equivalency agreements). In April 2016, Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 was amended by [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2016/673](#). The latter amends the list of substances that can be used in EU organic farming. They include 39 new products (substances and micro-organisms), which are authorised for use for different purposes, such as in plant production products. The new regulation also allows for further clarification and simplification of the legislation on organic aquaculture, on seaweed production and for organic wine.

In October 2016, [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2016/1842](#) was published, amending Regulation (EC) No 1235/2008 as regards the electronic certificate of inspection for imported organic products and certain other elements. It also amended Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 as regards the requirements for preserved or processed organic products and the transmission of information. The new rules aimed at improving the traceability of organic products and reducing potential fraud.

A new system of electronic certification to monitor imports of organic products became applicable from 19 April 2017. Both paper and e-certification were used during a six-month transition period. As of 19 October 2017, organic imports are covered by e-certification only.<sup>2</sup>

In April 2016, the scope of the products that can be traded under mutual recognition through the EU-Canada Organic Equivalence Arrangements (EUCOEA) was [extended](#). This allows organic wine certified to EU or Canadian organic standards to be sold and labelled as organic in both markets. (This decision followed a thorough assessment of the equivalence of EU and Canada wine production standards and import control systems).

In 2010, a new **EU organic logo**, replacing the previous version, was launched, symbolising the unique set of legal organic rules valid throughout the EU. The use of the 'organic leaf' is obligatory for pre-packed EU products and optional for imported products. In the framework of the 2014-2020 [rural development policy](#), Member States allocated more than €6.3 billion of the EAFRD budget to measure No 11 – supporting organic farming – implemented in line with the provisions of the current Regulation (EC) No 834/2007. Financial support under this measure is granted, per hectare of agricultural area, to farmers or groups of farmers who convert to or maintain organic farming practices and methods as defined in Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 and who are active farmers within the meaning of Article 9 of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013.



### The changes the Commission proposal would bring

Compared to the existing legislation, the Commission proposal sought to **strengthen and harmonise production rules**. It also sought to remove or phase out some exceptions to the rules (such as, for example, the use of non-organic seed when organic is not available, or the introduction of non-organic young poultry) except where temporary measures are necessary in order to allow organic production to continue or restart in the case of catastrophic circumstances. The proposal prohibited farming on **mixed organic and non-organic holdings**. The Commission identified that the risk of non-compliance was higher in mixed agricultural holdings than entirely organic holdings. Under the proposal, organic operators other than farmers or seaweed/aquaculture producers and micro-enterprises would be required to develop a system for improving their environmental performance. In terms of provisions relating to the control requirements for organic production, the Commission's proposals included their integration into a single legislative text as part of its proposal for a regulation on official controls.<sup>3</sup> A **risk-based approach** to official controls would be reinforced by removing the requirement for mandatory annual verification of compliance of all operators provided for in Regulation (EC) No 834/2007.

For **small-scale farmers**, a system of **group certification** is introduced in the proposals, with a view to reducing inspection and certification costs and the associated administrative burden. The proposal also includes specific provisions to harmonise action to be taken when **non-authorized products** or substances are detected. In this context, there may be instances where farmers are prevented from marketing their products as organic, due to the unintentional presence of non-authorized products or substances.

The **trade regime** is adapted to harmonise the rules to be applied in the EU and in third countries, and to better ensure consumer confidence. The possibility of equivalence agreements with third countries remains, while the system of unilateral equivalency is phased out. It is proposed to shift the recognition of control bodies to a **compliance regime** (see box above for definitions of compliance and equivalence regimes). This would require control bodies to certify that exporters fully comply with the EU regulations.

## Preparation of the proposal

In 2013, the Commission launched a wide [consultation](#), with almost 45 000 responses submitted to an online questionnaire, and almost 1 400 other contributions received. The Commission's review of the existing organic farming legislation was part of the Commission Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT). As part of its [impact assessment](#), three alternative policy scenarios were compared, namely:

- The **improved status quo**, based on improvements and better enforcement of current legislation;
- The **market-driven option**, which aims at providing the conditions needed to respond dynamically to further market developments with more flexible rules;
- The **principle-driven option** aimed at refocusing organic production on its principles, which would be better reflected in the production rules. Exceptional rules would be ended.

The preferred option, which was followed in the proposal, was the principle-driven option, as it performed better according to all criteria evaluated. In particular, it was expected to: improve consumer confidence thanks to stricter rules; boost organic inputs through the ending of exceptions; make the sector more attractive and competitive through clearer and simpler production rules, including the move from equivalence to compliance for imports from third countries. A risk-based approach was expected to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of controls and contribute to fraud prevention and a more reliable import regime.

As outlined by the Commission, the impact assessment and public consultation showed that citizens want to see further harmonised and strengthened organic production rules.

## Stakeholders' views

[Advisory Group on Organic Farming](#) meetings informed and consulted stakeholders in the sector on the review.<sup>4</sup> The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements ([IFOAM EU](#)),<sup>5</sup> a European umbrella organisation for organic food and farming, has as one of its core activities, the task of representing organic interests in Europe. Over the period from July 2012 to the end of June 2017, IFOAM EU issued 31 press releases concerning the organic regulations. In November 2014, it published a [position paper](#) on the Commission's proposal for a new organic regulation. This provided a detailed analysis of the original Commission proposal while setting out a roadmap for the sustainable growth of the sector along with a series of concrete suggestions. (The paper was [updated](#) in January 2015).<sup>6</sup>

In its [response](#) to the proposals,<sup>7</sup> the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations and the General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives, [COPA COGECA](#), indicated it was in favour of more flexibility for mixed farms, mandatory annual controls, and a recognition system for control bodies from third countries in a regime based on compliance with the EU rules. COPA COGECA also wished to maintain the derogation allowing the sector to use conventional seed in certain cases, especially during times of limited supply. Both organisations considered that the EU organic legislation should remain close to the principles and values of the sector, and both supported the improved status quo option to ensure stability. [COPA COGECA](#) urged that organic farmers should get sufficient income for their work and that any new system should be able to attract new entrants.



In a [letter](#) sent to EU Agriculture Ministers on 5 May 2015, COPA COGECA, the European Federation of Trade Unions in the Food, Agriculture and Tourism (EFFAT)<sup>8</sup> and IFOAM EU urged ministers to safeguard the European organic sector and not to introduce measures that could threaten its development. They requested ministers harmonise procedures for pesticide contamination, instead of introducing a decertification threshold, and combine risk-based inspections whilst maintaining annual controls. They also argued for maintenance of the requirement for annual controls for organic farmers. In a subsequent [press release](#), IFOAM EU identified some of the most difficult issues, for example, the setting of specific pesticide decertification thresholds. In its view, this makes organic farmers accountable for pesticides used in conventional farming. IFOAM EU also called for mandatory annual controls to be maintained and embedded in a risk-based approach, to ensure consumer confidence in the organic system.

### Advisory committees

On 16 October 2014, the European Economic and Social Committee adopted an [opinion](#) on the Commission proposal. Drawn up by rapporteur Armands Krauze, it encouraged the Commission to support the development of organic farming and boost consumer confidence in organic products, by, for example, applying stricter controls for products from third countries to ensure that they comply with EU requirements.

On 4 December 2014, the Committee of the Regions adopted an [opinion](#) on the proposal on organic production (Rapporteur: Hester Maij, EPP, the Netherlands). This underlined the need for greater flexibility to take account of differences in the types of farming and specific characteristics of the regions.

### National parliaments

Fourteen national parliaments [scrutinised](#) the Commission proposal.<sup>9</sup> Both the Austrian Federal Council and the Luxembourg Chamber of Deputies issued reasoned opinions,<sup>10</sup> whilst other parliaments issued contributions. The Austrian Federal Council's [reasoned opinion](#) explained why it felt that the Commission's proposals were incompatible with the principle of subsidiarity. The reasons put forward included: the large number of delegated acts, and the need for greater leeway at national level, as well as the absence of provision for a transition period for existing certified organic farms. A [reasoned opinion](#) from the Luxembourg Chamber of Deputies questioned whether the stated aims put forward by the Commission, such as maintaining producer confidence and simplifying the process of converting to organic farming, were achievable under the proposals. Indicating a preference for a process of gradual improvement rather than a radical overhaul of the current legislation, this opinion referred to the excessive use of delegated acts. It also expressed concerns over the discontinuation of a series of derogations and exemptions, as well as concerns over the effect of the changes on the price of organic products.

A number of other national parliaments submitted contributions on the Commission's proposals. These cover a further range of views. Briefly summarised, they highlight concerns over:

- the complexity of the rules which could dissuade small farms from converting to organic farming;
- the removal of the obligation of annual on-site verification controls in favour of a risk-based approach to controls;

- perceived negative effects on the scale of organic production (as parallel production<sup>11</sup> would no longer be possible or would be severely limited);
- a perception that the new rules would be restrictive in nature and be administratively burdensome for farmers and businesses;
- the limited number of derogations, including stricter requirements for basic materials for seeds, breeding cattle and cattle feed;
- the impact of the proposals on organic farmers in developing countries as the current import regime has only been in place for a few years.

### Parliamentary advice

In July 2014, the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) published a briefing on [organic production and labelling of organic products](#), which sought to provide an initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission's Impact Assessment (IA) accompanying the proposal. Subsequently, in October 2014, EPRS published an [Implementation Appraisal](#) focusing on the operation of existing EU legislation (Regulation (EU) No 834/2007). Following the first round of discussions in the Council, in February 2015, EPRS published an in-depth analysis (*[les productions 'bio' et l'Union européenne](#)*), providing a general outline of organic agriculture, illustrating the size and importance of the sector, how it is growing, including its future prospects. Further information is also available in the EPRS briefing on [organic food: Helping EU consumers make an informed choice](#), published in May 2015.

### Legislative process

The legislative debate began on 24 March 2014, when the Commission adopted its [legislative proposal](#) on organic production and labelling of organic products. In April 2014, under the Greek Presidency, debate was launched in the Council on the proposal. During both the Greek and subsequent Italian Presidencies, this file was given top priority, with a first reading of the complete text taking place under the Italian Presidency. Under the latter, Ministers acknowledged a [progress report](#) in December 2014, on the first 19 articles of the Commission proposal, including a set of political guidelines that would allow farmers to continue organic and conventional techniques on their holdings, maintaining current derogations allowing organic farmers to use non-organic animals, seeds and feed, in line with the existing rules. However, Member States remained split on the decertification threshold, import rules from third countries and the control system, with divergent views emerging between those wishing to keep the current system of once-a-year controls on-site and those preferring the shift towards tailored controls focused on farms with the highest error rates.

Under the Latvian Presidency, after several meetings, EU Agriculture Ministers agreed on the adoption of a [general approach](#) on the proposal on 16 June 2015. This represented a political agreement on the position of the Council, making it possible to launch negotiations between the Parliament and the Council with a view to reaching a political agreement between the EU institutions.

In Parliament, the file was referred to the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee (AGRI), where Martin Häusling (Greens/EFA, Germany) was appointed rapporteur. His [draft report](#) was presented to the AGRI committee on 7 May 2015. Consisting of 353 amendments to the Commission proposal, it revived a number of the current regulation's provisions. These included mandatory annual inspection and some derogations – with a mechanism to phase them out – taking into account the lack of



organic seeds, young animals, feed and other organic inputs which impede the development of the sector, and which are behind some exceptions to organic production rules.

On 6 May 2015, Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) voted on an [opinion](#) on the Commission proposal. Noting that it contained 'crucial elements' to improve the longevity of the organic sector, the committee felt that the Commission's proposals could be improved by adding greater flexibility. For example, if all reproductive material was required to be organic without any derogations, the committee felt this would make it difficult for farmers in northern Europe to find winter-proof seeds, as the pool of such seeds was very narrow. The committee indicated that different geographical conditions needed to be taken into account in the rules governing greenhouse cultivation.

On 13 October 2015, the AGRI committee voted on the [draft report](#) (33 votes in favour to 4 against, 7 abstentions) and also voted on a mandate to launch negotiations with the Council (37 votes in favour to 5 against, 2 abstentions). The committee's report, compared to the Commission proposal, was more adapted to farmers' needs. It made the point that organic farming requires a 'tailored controls regime along the entire supply chain to avoid food fraud'. Considering the relevant number of mixed farms in the EU (organic and conventional), farms producing both conventional and organic food would still be allowed, on condition that their conventional farming activities are clearly separated and differentiated from organic farming activities. On the presence of non-authorized substances, the AGRI committee rejected the threshold of 0.01 milligrams per kilogram proposed by the Commission, instead introducing some precautionary measures, which would aim to increase the accountability of operators throughout the organic supply chain and avoid the use of non-authorized techniques, as well as more harmonised investigation procedures in cases of contamination.

On the import of organic products into the EU, the committee supported the Commission proposal to ensure that all imported products comply with the EU organic farming rules. The current equivalence regimes, which require third countries to comply with similar but not identical standards, should be phased out within the next five years, with some derogations.

Trilogue meetings began under the Luxembourg Presidency in November and December 2015. These continued through 2016 and 2017. The Council provided an update on the state of play on the proposed organic regulation on 27 June 2016.

A (public) Council [debate](#) on the proposed regulation took place on 12 June 2017. Focusing on the negotiations with the European Parliament, ministers restated their commitment to securing agreement. The Maltese Presidency was tasked with working on a compromise text, and bilateral meetings were subsequently convened with Member States.

On 28 June 2017, the Maltese Presidency and the European Parliament reached a preliminary agreement on the new regulation in the form of a revised text. At its meeting on 10 July 2017, the Council's Special Committee on Agriculture (SCA) took note of the revised text provisionally agreed with the European Parliament.

Parliament's position on a number of issues has been included in the agreement. To address the current unavailability of organic seeds in the EU, Parliament insisted on introducing **greater transparency** into the current market situation. In this regard,

Parliament promoted the idea of setting up a computer database of organic plant reproductive material in each Member State, as well as establishing national systems connecting organic farmers with operators able to supply organic reproductive material within a reasonable time. If the collected data indicate that the quality and quantity of organic reproductive material is insufficient, the competent authorities could continue to allow farmers to use non-organic seeds to produce organic-labelled foodstuffs. Overall, better data-gathering on the availability of organic seeds and animals should increase their supply to meet the needs of organic farmers.

Parliament also pushed for legalisation of the use of what is known as **heterogeneous material**, which is usually traded and used locally. Parliament also managed to **adapt production criteria** for organic varieties produced by professional breeders, so that they would be tailored to the specific needs and constraints of organic production.

To make sure that imported organic foodstuffs are trustworthy, Parliament and ministers supported the Commission's proposal to do away with **equivalence rules**, which require imports from third countries to comply only with rules similar to those applied in the EU. Following a transitional period of five years, all imported products will have to comply with EU standards. To avoid supply disruption, the Commission will be empowered to authorise the use of products and substances in third countries and in the EU's outermost regions which would no longer comply with EU standards for organic production; this authorisation would be issued for a renewable period of two years.

On the theme of increasing consumer trust in organic products, Parliament 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. The frequency of such checks could be reduced to once every two years if the operators present a low risk profile and if no non-compliance is discovered in the preceding three years. The controls would be applied throughout the organic production chain. This is intended to give consumers guarantees that any organic products they buy are truly organic. At the same time, Parliament ensured that the regulation included rules on controls additional to those laid down in [Regulation \(EU\) 2017/625](#).<sup>12</sup> Parliament argued that organic farming required specific rules to tackle food fraud and enhance consumer confidence.

To ensure that organic foodstuffs are not contaminated by pesticides, the new rules will increase the responsibility and accountability of organic operators throughout the supply chain for using only **authorised techniques and adhering to organic production rules**. If farmers, processors, traders or importers suspect a breach of organic production rules, they should separate out the product, withdraw it from the market and notify the control authorities. If any subsequent investigation concludes that the organic product is contaminated with pesticides and the contamination was a result of a deliberate fraud or the negligent behaviour of the operator, the product would lose its organic status. The issue of contamination will continue to be examined, as the Commission will report on the efficiency of the EU anti-contamination rules and national thresholds four years after entry into force of the new regulation.

As requested by the Parliament, the principle of soil-based production i.e. that plants have to be grown in living soil, has been defined as a basic organic farming rule. As a consequence, hydroponic production (the growing of plants in water solvent) should by default be prohibited. However, it has been agreed that growing crops in demarcated

beds<sup>13</sup> shall continue to be allowed for those surfaces in Denmark, Finland and Sweden only that had been certified as organic before 28 June 2017. Extension of these surfaces will not be allowed, and the derogation will end in 2030.

The new agreement will mean that conventional and organic farming can co-exist, provided that the two farming activities can be effectively separated into clearly distinct production units. Group certification for small farmers should make it easier for them to pursue organic farming.

On 20 November 2017, Member States represented in the SCA [endorsed](#) the new agreement. The AGRI committee also approved the agreement at its [meeting](#) on 22 November 2017. The agreed text still requires approval by the Parliament in plenary, and the Council, before it can be signed, published in the EU's Official Journal and enter into force. Once agreed, the regulation will apply from 1 January 2021.

## Main references

[Facts and figures on organic agriculture in the European Union](#), European Commission, December 2016.

[Global Policy Toolkit on public support to organic agriculture](#), IFOAM-Organics International September 2017.

Katsarova I., [Organic food: Helping EU consumers make an informed choice](#), Katsarova Ivana, Briefing, EPRS, European Parliament, May 2015.

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[Organic in Europe, Prospects and developments 2016](#), IFOAM EU, FiBL, Marche Polytechnic University and Naturland, 2016.

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Weissenberger J., [Les productions "bio" et l'Union européenne](#), Weissenberger Jean, Analyse approfondie, EPRS, European Parliament, February 2015.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> See p. 2, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the EESC and the CoR, [Action plan for the future of organic Production in the European Union](#), COM(2014) 179 final, 24 March 2014.

<sup>2</sup> In practical terms, these changes will require the addition of these import certificates into the Trade Control & Expert System (TRACES) – the existing EU electronic system for tracking movements of food across the EU. This enables trade partners and competent authorities to obtain information on the movements of their consignments and to speed up administrative procedures.

<sup>3</sup> In October 2015, the Commission made a proposal for a regulation on official controls in food and feed, ([COM2013/265](#)). This regulation was adopted on 15 March 2017 as [Regulation \(EU\) 2017/625](#).

<sup>4</sup> As from July 2014, the [Advisory Group on Organic Farming](#) was replaced with new [civil dialogue groups](#).

<sup>5</sup> IFOAM EU is a European umbrella organisation for organic food and farming with more than 160 member organisations: from farmers and processors, retailers, certifiers, consultants, traders and researchers to environmental and consumer advocacy bodies.

<sup>6</sup> An update of IFOAM EU's position paper was released on 16 January 2015, specifically with regard to the Commission objectives on import regimes in the organic sector.

<sup>7</sup> COPA-COGECA's reaction to the proposal for a regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products COM (2014) 180, 25 September 2014.

<sup>8</sup> European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions ([EFFAT](#)).

- <sup>9</sup> This section is not intended to be an exhaustive account of each national parliament or chamber's contributions on the proposal. These can be found in the procedure file 2014/0100(COD), European Parliament Legislative Observatory.
- <sup>10</sup> A reasoned opinion is issued by a national parliament or chamber when a legislative proposal is deemed not to comply with the principle of subsidiarity.
- <sup>11</sup> In the case of the Netherlands, parallel production is considered to be crucial to encouraging and facilitating the switch from conventional to organic farming.
- <sup>12</sup> See Article 1 and Chapter VI 'Official controls and other official activities' from the [Provisional Agreement](#) resulting from inter-institutional negotiations in respect of proposals for a regulation on organic production and labelling of organic production.
- <sup>13</sup> Nordic countries have a tradition of organic production in 'demarcated beds' in organic greenhouses. Such traditional production methods involve growing in beds, sacks, or containers.

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