

**FINAL VERSION**

**Strategic agenda**

**Civil Dialogue Group on Organic Farming**

Over the last 10 years, the EU organic market has quadrupled in value. The total value of the organic market was estimated at around 22.2 billion Euro in 2013. From 2000 to 2012, the yearly increase in total surface area under organic production averaged 6.7%, reaching 9.6 million hectares in 2012, which equates to 5.4% of the total agricultural surface area in the EU. There were more than 225,000 organic farmers registered in the EU in 2011.

The Civil Dialogue Group (CDG) on Organic Farming provides a forum for exchange between stakeholders and the European Commission on all matters regarding this sector. Constructive debate and constant communication between the EU legislator and different stakeholders is essential for practical, efficient and effective legislation. The role of this CDG will be to assist the Commission in maintaining regular dialogue on all matters related directly to organic farming issues ahead of decisions.

The strategic agenda aims to provide an overview of the main policy areas to be covered by the work of the CDG on Organic Farming. Therefore, it is an indicative list that should not exclude new developments in future.

**1) Review of EU organic farming legislation**

During the years 2011-2014, EU organic production legislation underwent a process of legislative review. On 24<sup>th</sup> March 2014, the European Commission adopted a legislative proposal for a new Regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products COM(180)2014. The review process will come to an end during the upcoming years.

The CDG shall be informed about and consulted:

- throughout the final stage of the review process and
- during the implementation stage of the new organic farming policy: the high number of delegated and implementing acts will play an important role in shaping the new EU organic policy as they will address key rules for production of organic products, such as organic poultry and cattle.

**2) European Organic Action Plan**

The CDG shall monitor the implementation of all the actions included in the European Organic Action Plan.

**3) CAP 2014-2020**

The reform of the CAP was agreed in 2013. The CDG will monitor the implementation of the new CAP and in particular the impact of these new rules on the organic sector and the opportunities they afford (greening, rural development measures etc.).

**4) Innovation, research and development for organic sector**

The CDG shall monitor the implementation of the European Innovation Partnership, the establishment of Operational Groups and Horizon 2020 research priorities.

**5) Follow up on the EU trade regime and in particular the equivalence agreements with third countries**

The CDG shall monitor the impact that equivalence agreements with third countries and equivalent control bodies have on EU organic products so as to ensure that no distortion of competition can arise.

**6) Follow up of initiatives in view of having more exhaustive data for the sector**

There is currently a lack of reliable, comprehensive, up-to-date and transparent data available on the different categories of organic products at European level (production, consumption, imports, exports, OFIS'S non compliance and safety data, trends and forecasts). This is why the CDG will follow initiatives that will ensure improved visibility for the European organic market. This will be done alongside the implementation of the European Organic Action Plan.

**7) Follow up of the EGTOP activities**

The CDG will follow the EGTOP's work. In particular, a discussion should take place on the future EGTOP's activities ahead of the adoption of the mandates and once the reports are adopted, a discussion should take place on the recommendations before the work on the secondary legislation.

**8) Follow up of the results of the implementation of the control system in the Member States (for example exchange of information on the decertifications)**

The CDG should monitor:

- the state of play of the controls done by control authorities and certification bodies in the member states.
- the summary of the exchange of information between member states and the Commission, and the actions initiated by the Commission to ensure transparency on control activities and results from the individual member states.
- the state of play of audit missions from the Commission. The CDG should also be involved in the discussions on the upcoming initiatives based on audit missions in the member states.

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