



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 16.07.2015  
C(2015) 4980 final*

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Nationalrat for its Opinion on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on organic production and labelling of organic products, amending Regulation (EU) No XXX/XXX of the European Parliament and of the Council [Official controls Regulation] and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 {COM(2014) 180 final}, and for the strong interest it has taken in the proposal.*

*The Nationalrat refers to the Presidency compromise text, which is a document of the Council of the European Union, drafted by the Council Presidency, and which serves as basis for discussion among Member State delegations in the Council. The Commission, not being responsible for the text, cannot comment on its content. The Commission has however taken note of the issues raised by the Nationalrat with regard to the organic sector, including on production rules, controls, transparency and red tape.*

*The proposal on organic production and labelling of organic products comes in a context where the challenges for the sustainable development of the organic sector are increasing. In the last decade the market for organic products in the EU has quadrupled. However, the internal EU production only doubled. This shows that the increase of the market is based mostly on imports. More needs to be done in order to increase the EU organic production capacity.*

*Increasing production at a high pace risks putting pressure on the standards of organic production and consequently on the credibility of the system. Moreover, an extended public consultation with over 45 000 replies, which is one of the elements that supported this proposal, has clearly shown that citizens have high expectations as regards the standards and the integrity of the organic production. Currently there are many possibilities for derogations from the rules, which are applied differently across Member States and also for imported products. The resulting absence of a level playing field and of transparency spills over into the control system, which as the European Court of*

*Ms Doris BURES  
President of Nationalrat  
Dr. Karl Renner-Ring 3  
A – 1017 Wien*

*Auditors underlined in its 2012 report<sup>1</sup>, needs serious improvement. In addition to simplification and clarification of the legal framework, these were the grounds at the basis of the Commission's legal proposal for the organic sector.*

*The points made above are based on the initial proposal presented by the Commission, which is currently in the legislative process involving both the European Parliament and the Council in which your government is represented.*

*The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the concerns raised by the Nationalrat and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*

*Phil Hogan  
Member of the Commission*

---

<sup>1</sup> Special Report No 9 from 2012 of the European Court of Auditors on Audit of the Control System Governing the Production, Processing, Distribution and Imports of Organic Products.