



Organic farmers call for an end to the misguided negotiations on the organic regulation proposal that does not deliver

We are facing many major crises in farming today; from the market crisis to the alarming rate of farmer loss; to the degradation of soil, reduction in air and water quality and loss of biodiversity. Organic farming offers solutions that help farmers stay farming, helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and helps to protect our natural resources.

European farmers and citizens are increasingly showing they believe in the value organic delivers. In the first 6 months of 2016 France saw more than 21 farmers a day deciding to go organic, while there been almost 2000 conversions in Germany this year alone. Across the EU the market share for organic food sales continues to grow at 6-7% year-on-year, whilst there is stagnation in the rest of the food and drink sector.

Despite these clear signs from farmers, citizens and science, the future development of organic will be significantly hindered if these misguided negotiations on a revised EU organic regulation continue any longer. The uncertain legal situation and operating conditions created by the now nearly four-year discussion cannot be allowed to continue any longer.

We thank all those involved for their determination and resolve. Yet the enormous effort dedicated by the EU and National institutions, farmers and organic organisations, and others has undoubtedly cost millions of euros and yielded no results. Six presidencies have come and gone from the initiation of the Commission proposal, and as the current presidency draws to a close, there is still no agreement in sight on the critical areas.

What is currently on the table does not add any innovative aspects or developments to the regulation currently in force, and could significantly impair the livelihoods of farmers. In addition to the lack of positive developments, detrimental elements have been included, such as:

- the potential removal of the requirement for an annual inspection which would undermine an important pillar for consumer trust

- organic farmers might be forced to pay for contamination and pollution which is beyond their control
- the crucial concept of soil bound crop production is at risk
- the proposed conversion rules will not incentivise the conversion of new farmers into organic
- no step forward in animal welfare is provided for
- the import rules are not in favour of small organic farmers in developing countries

The time and money spent on the negotiations to date could have been much better spent on improving the current regulation, for example by working on much needed implementing rules for poultry production and greenhouses. It is time to see the writing on the wall. Negotiators should stop trying to fix a sinking ship and recognise that the plans on which it was built are inherently faulty.

We the undersigned organisations – representing more than 50,000 organic farmers in Europe – call on all the EU institutions to withdraw the current proposal for a new organic regulation. This is because it does not meet the interests of farmers and citizens, does not promote the further development of the organic sector and will restrict the uptake on environmental and climate-friendly organic farming practices.



Organic farmers give the negotiations a red card

Bio Austria, Austria

Bioforum Vlaanderen, Flanders, Belgium

Biohuis, the Netherlands

Bioland, Germany

Demeter, Germany

Ekoland, Poland

Ekologiska Lantbrukarna, Sweden

Ekotrend, Slovakia

Fédération Nationale d'Agriculture Biologique,
France

Federbio, Italy

Irish Organic Farmers & Growers Association,
Ireland

Lithuanian Association of Organic Farmers,
Lithuania

Malta Organic Agriculture Movement, Malta

Naturland, Germany

Organic Denmark, Denmark

SEAE, Spain

Soil Association, United Kingdom

Union of Organic farmers of St. Francis of Assisi,
Poland