



International Aspects of Organic Agriculture

**Civil Dialogue Group
International Aspects of Agricultural Policy
Brussels – 5 May 2015**

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Reform of the EU organic policy

- *Impact assessment backing the policy review finalised in 2013*
- *Organic review package adopted in March 2014:*
 - **Commission Proposal for a Regulation of the EP and the Council on organic production and labelling of organic products (COM(2014)180 fin)**
 - **Action Plan for the future of organic production in the EU (COM(2014)179 fin)**
 - **Recommendation for negotiating directives**



Legislation review: state of play

- *Discussions in the Council (SCA and WP on Foodstuff Quality OF) started in 2014 (under EL, IT and LV Presidencies)*
- *LV Presidency objective: general approach in the May Council*
- *EP Rapporteur: Mr Häusling (Greens), appointed in September 2014*
- *COMAGRI to deliver a draft report that will be adopted in Plenary*
- *Next steps: trialogues in view of the adoption of a new Regulation*

Trade regime: current situation

Two systems in R. 834/2007:

- Imports based on equivalence:
 - **12 equivalent third countries:** Argentina, Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, India, Israel, Japan, Korea, Switzerland, Tunisia, United States and New Zealand
 - **59 control bodies** recognised for the purpose of equivalence
 - **Import authorisations by MS** (not allowed since July 2014, no longer valid after July 2015)

- Imports based on compliance: foreseen in R. 834/2007 for control bodies but never activated



Imports from equivalent control bodies

- Most of the products imported are unprocessed plant products (coffee, bananas, cacao)
- Increase in imports of feed
- Few imports of livestock products, mainly honey
- Few imports of processed products, mainly tea and coffee

...what will change in the review?

- New provisions on exports
- Imports based on equivalence will remain for recognised third countries
 - ✓ Recognition of third countries will be granted only through international agreements (directives for negotiation adopted by the Council on 16 June 2014)
- Imports based on compliance: recognition of control bodies will shift from equivalence to compliance. Equivalence will be phased-out.



Shifting from equivalence to compliance for control bodies in non-recognised third countries

- What are the shortcomings of equivalence?
- How will compliance improve import regime?

88% of all derogations granted by CBs are:

- Retroactive recognition of the conversion period
- Use of non-organic seeds

Derogations are granted by CBs according to their **own criteria**

Control bodies authorise **substances** that are not listed in Annexes to R. 889/2008

Competition among control bodies to gain clients => rules are watered-down



Flexibility associated with the equivalence recognition leads to

- **Unfair competition between EU and third countries operators**
- **Risk of damaging consumer's confidence on EU organic logo**
- **Complex supervision increasing the risk of fraud**



How will compliance improve import regime?

Level playing field for operators:

- Clear rules for all in EU and in third countries
- No decision-making at control bodies level

Increased consumer's confidence:

- All products bearing EU organic logo produced according to EU rules or to equivalent third countries' rules



How will compliance improve import regime?

Simplification of recognition process => **better response to control bodies and operators needs**

Simplification of supervision => **lowered risk of fraud**



Production in tropical countries

- EU production rules can apply everywhere in the EU where there is a big climate diversity (also in the French DOM-TOM)
- Are not product-specific: apply to product categories (plants, livestock, processed,...)
- Easy adaptation to some particularities (e.g. authorising some substances for TCs)



Action Plan on the future of Organic Production in Europe

- 18 actions to be implemented till 2020
- 3 areas: competitiveness producers, consumer confidence and external dimension

External dimension

- *Increase EU exports of organics. Actions:*
 - **Convergence of standards between trade partners, explore plurilateral agreement**
 - **Codex: organic aquaculture and possibly wine**
 - **Data on trade on organics (study and electronic certification)**
- *Challenge for developing countries*
 - **Regular consultations with developing countries**
- *EU logo:*
 - **Increase protection in Third countries**



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http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/eu-policy/policy-development/index_en.htm