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Press Release

New EU legislation for the organic sector must promote European organic production

Reacting to new EU Commission proposals on organic production and labeling, Copa-Cogeca stressed that they must be based on the success of current EU legislation and must allow EU organic production to continue to develop. The EU organic sector is one of the fast growing agricultural sectors.

Copa-Cogeca Secretary-General Pekka Pesonen stressed “The new rules must let production continue to develop, whilst supporting the growth of the organic market, using the right tools. In particular, the rules must not discourage new farmers from converting into organic farming nor existing organic farmers to continue production”.

He continued “For example, in many regions, farms often convert into organic farming in a series of stages, for various reasons, like economic or structural reasons. Without the ability to adapt gradually to organic production, it will put the breaks on the development of the sector”.

“We would also like to highlight that organic farming is a holistic production system based on a specific management of natural resources, which puts strict limits on the use of chemical and synthetic inputs, and which prohibits the use of genetically modified organisms. Organic farming is a global production method that needs extra requirements, especially on animal welfare and the preservation of the environment. The production process must therefore be looked at as a whole and not just the final product. That is why it is of the utmost importance that controls remain process-oriented”

Chairman of Copa-Cogecas’ working party for organic production Mr Rousseau said “Indeed, organic production cannot be isolated from its environment. As a result, organic producers should not have to bear the costs for example of accidental contamination or residue analysis as this would greatly increase their costs, resulting in severe income losses. A solution also needs to be found to respond to the problems of seed availability within the proposed new EU seed law and vegetal reproduction”.

The new draft legislation was debated at EU Farm Ministers meeting. It aims to strengthen and harmonise production rules by removing exceptions and also improving the control system by putting all provisions in a single text. The risk-based approach to official controls is reinforced. Organic agricultural holdings have to be managed entirely in compliance with the organic production rules and ingredients must be exclusively organic under the proposal. And Copa-Cogeca wants to be fully involved in the discussions.

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