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**NOTE**

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
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Delegations will find in the annex the above-mentioned Council conclusions as adopted by the Council “Agriculture and Fisheries” at its meeting on 19 July 2021.

**Council conclusions on the action plan for the development of organic production**

**The Council of the European Union**

- (1) **RECALLS** the Council Conclusions of 19 October 2020 on the Farm to Fork Strategy and Regulation (EU) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007.
- (2) **EMPHASIZES** the important contribution of organic farming and production for ensuring the sustainability and sovereignty of European agriculture and food production.
- (3) **NOTES** the potential it holds for organic producers and rural economies to reach significant economic and other benefits by securing and supporting incomes and creating employment, while making a sizeable contribution to the protection of the environment and biodiversity, to the fight against climate change and to the improvement of animal welfare.
- (4) **WELCOMES** the Commission Communication on an Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production, which reflects the central role of organic farming and production in the Union's Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies, aiming to promote more sustainable models of agricultural production and food systems, and which supports the achievement of the target of 25% of EU agricultural land under organic farming and a significant increase in organic aquaculture. **RECALLS** that each Member State should make its contribution to the collective effort.

- (5) **SUPPORTS** that the Action Plan also aims to encourage and support farmers in converting to organic farming and **STRESSES** the need to support setting up of farmers, relying on existing networks in organic farming. **RECOGNISES** in this respect the potential of other sustainable farming methods in contributing to environmental benefits and in facilitating the conversion to organic farming. **SHARES the VIEW** that group certification can potentially lower costs and may lead to a lower administrative burden for organic producers and processors, while maintaining the controllability.
- (6) **WELCOMES** the comprehensive approach to the development of organic farming and production in the Action Plan and **AGREES** that demand, production and sustainability are key factors for the further development of the sector.
- (7) **STRESSES** at the same time the need to ensure a market-oriented approach and a balanced development of demand and supply so as to ensure the future profitability of an organic food market and organic farmers in the EU.
- (8) **AGREES** that the proposed actions in the action plan can contribute to a further positive development of organic farming and production in the EU.
- (9) **REITERATES** in this respect the need to take into account the specificities and different starting points, circumstances and conditions of Member States and regions in Member States, and the successes already achieved, when defining targets for, and interventions in support of organic farming and production in national strategic plans under the Common Agricultural Policy and in voluntary national organic action plans.
- (10) **UNDERLINES** that the success of the Action Plan will depend on the involvement of all stakeholders including the public sector at all levels of governance and the entire private sector along the value chain and **STRESSES** the need to coordinate measures at all levels in order to achieve the best possible synergies.
- (11) **ACKNOWLEDGES** at the same time that the implementation of all these measures will be challenging for stakeholders in the organic farming sector.

- (12) **SUPPORTS** the outlined actions for stimulating demand and ensuring consumers' trust including through an ambitious budget within the EU promotion policy and **WELCOMES** in particular the aim of raising awareness of organic farming and the EU logo, including through organic school schemes.
- (13) **BELIEVES** that the increased use of green public procurement and stronger involvement of the private sector should contribute to increasing the distribution and sales of organic products.
- (14) **REAFFIRMS** the importance of consumer trust and actions aiming at improved traceability and supervision, as well as the system of controls both in the EU and in third countries to prevent fraud in organic production and trade, including by using IT solutions.
- (15) **ACKNOWLEDGES** that, in order to stimulate production and processing, further development is needed along all stages of the supply chain.
- (16) **AGREES** that the CAP post-2020 provides important tools for further adequate incentives to farmers and processors to enable a transition and/or to guarantee a high level of organic farming in the respective Member States. **RECOGNISES** that organic farming and production will have an important role to play in national strategic plans under the common agricultural policy.
- (17) **RECOGNISES** that the Commission encourages Member States to draw up national action plans or roadmaps for the development of organic farming and production. **REITERATES** that the national action plans are voluntary.
- (18) **WELCOMES** in particular the actions relating to the organisation of food chains, also in the context of fostering direct marketing and short supply chains in compliance with the functioning of the single market.

- (19) **EMPHASISES** the relevance of local development and eco-regions based on the multiple positive externalities of the organic sector in terms of employment and social inclusion. **REAFFIRMS** the importance of the availability of indigenous breeds and varieties, organic heterogeneous material, high-yielding plant varieties suitable for organic production and organic seed.
- (20) **RECOGNISES** the importance of speeding up the development of organic aquaculture in the EU.
- (21) **REITERATES** the need to strengthen the systemic approach of research in organic farming to meet societal expectations, by increasing the consideration of animal welfare and encouraging a more efficient use of resources. **WELCOMES** the Commission's intention to earmark funding under Horizon Europe for research and innovation projects for genetic resources and the development of safe, effective and affordable alternatives to current plant protection products. **INVITES** the Commission to explore policy support in the area of research and innovation to those countries where the sector still lags behind.
- (22) **CONSIDERS** that the availability of organic protein feed and vitamins are the basis for encouraging a further conversion of livestock farms and their development and **INVITES** the Commission to develop the initiatives mentioned in the Action Plan in the area of organic nutrition, including initiatives concerning feed additives and research on the use of insects and marine biomass as feed materials.
- (23) **WELCOMES** the Commission's intention to adapt the authorisation procedures for biological plant protection products based on microorganisms and for low-risk plant protection products (i.e. those based on plant extracts and pheromones). **STRESSES** the need to foster where appropriate the use of alternative plant protection products and plant protection methods, such as those containing biological active substances and to strengthen farm advisory services in this context
- (24) **WELCOMES** the forthcoming negotiations with trading partners of the EU on reciprocal equivalence agreements for organic production and looks forward to receiving regular information on their development.

- (25) **STRESSES** that increased market transparency is important for further development with due attention to the need to limit cost and administrative burden and to the principle of simplification for stakeholders and public administrations.
- (26) **REQUESTS** the Commission to report regularly on implementation of the actions to support the development of organic farming and production in the EU.
- (27) **WELCOMES** related initiatives and looks forward to the EU's annual organic day to promote organic farming and production across the EU.
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