



Council of the
European Union

061266/EU XXVII. GP
Eingelangt am 18/05/21

Brussels, 18 May 2021
(OR. en)

8809/21

AGRI 226
AGRILEG 105

NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council
Subject:	Organic farming - action plan for the development of EU organic production

With a view to the meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on the 26 and 27 May, delegations will find attached an information note on the above-mentioned subject.

Organic farming - action plan for the development of EU organic production**Preparation of the Council debate.**

1. According to the European Commission, the new organic action plan builds upon the achievements of the 2014-20 action plan and takes into account the outcome of a public consultation on organics held between September and November 2020. It is divided into three interlinked axes that reflect the structure of the food supply chain and the ambitions of the Green Deal sustainability objectives:
 - Axis 1: stimulate demand and ensure consumer trust
 - Axis 2: stimulate conversion and reinforce the entire value chain
 - Axis 3: organics leading by example: improve the contribution of organic farming to environmental sustainability
2. The three axes will be supported by 23 actions, continuing some of the successful 2014-20 actions as well as putting forward an array of new actions and mobilising different sources of funding. Financial support for organics will continue to be offered through rural development commitments, with an additional stream of funding to be made available through eco-schemes. In addition, an ambitious budget in the EU promotion policy will be dedicated to boosting the consumption of organic products.
3. CAP support will also include technical assistance and the exchange of best practices and innovations in organics. Farm advisory services will be strengthened, notably as part of Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS), to promote relevant knowledge exchange. To support the ambitions of the action plan, the Commission intends to dedicate at least 30% of the budget for research and innovation actions in the field of agriculture, forestry and rural areas to topics specific to or relevant for the organic sector, such as increased crop yields, genetic biodiversity and alternatives to contentious products.

4. In more detail under the three different axes the proposed actions will aim to:

Axis 1: stimulate demand and ensure consumer trust

- A. promote organic farming and the EU logo;
- B. promote organic canteens and increase the use of green public procurement;
- C. reinforce organic school schemes;
- D. prevent food fraud and strengthen consumer trust;
- E. improve traceability;
- F. facilitate contribution of private sector.

Axis 2: stimulate conversion and reinforce the entire value chain

- A. encourage conversion, investments and exchanges of best practices;
- B. develop sector analysis to increase market transparency;
- C. support the organisation of the food chain;
- D. reinforce local and small-value processing and fostering short trade circuit;
- E. improve animal nutrition in accordance with organic rules;
- F. reinforce organic aquaculture.

Axis 3: organics leading by example: improving the contribution of organic farming to sustainability

- A. reducing climate and environmental footprint;
- B. enhancing genetic biodiversity and increasing yields;
- C. developing alternatives to contentious inputs and other plant protection products;
- D. enhancing animal welfare;
- E. making more efficient use of resources.

5. Ministers are invited to use this opportunity to conduct a political discussion on the proposed actions and, more generally, on the direction of the EU policy on organic farming, taking due account of the realities on the ground and of the CAP reform.

6. Ministers would inter alia have the possibility to give their initial reaction on the ambition and scope for action in support of organic production, taking into account the invitation in the Action Plan to set national targets and develop national organic action plans and the proportionality and subsidiarity principles; and to comment on whether they go far enough, considering that organic farming is an area where EU producers have considerable expertise and a potential to reap significant economic benefits by capturing a greater part of the consumer surplus, while making a sizeable contribution to the protection of biodiversity, climate neutrality and overall sustainability of agriculture.
 7. Based on the discussion, the Presidency will consider how to take this item forward in collaboration with the incoming Presidency, with a view to the adoption of Council conclusions during the Slovenian Presidency.
-