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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
On:	17 December 2024
To:	Delegations

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Subject:	Special Report No 19/2024 from the European Court of Auditors entitled: "Organic farming in the EU: gaps and inconsistencies hamper the success of the policy" - <i>Council conclusions</i>
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Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on:

European Court of Auditors special report 19/2024 entitled: "*Organic farming in the EU: gaps and inconsistencies hamper the success of the policy*",

approved by the Council at its 4071st meeting held on 17 December 2024.

Council conclusions

European Court of Auditors on its Special Report 19/2024 entitled:

“Organic farming in the EU: Gaps and inconsistencies hamper the success of the policy”

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. NOTES the Court's Special Report No 19/2024 entitled “Organic farming in the EU: Gaps and inconsistencies hamper the success of the policy”, which assesses the design, implementation and support for organic farming at EU level in the 2014-2022 period and the replies of the Commission to this report;
2. TAKES NOTE of the Court's conclusion that CAP funds were used to increase the organically farmed area at EU level and that gaps existed in both EU and national policies for organic farming and of the Court’s recommendations to the Commission to strengthen the EU strategic framework for the organic sector and improve the link with the CAP support.
3. WELCOMES the Court’s view that the current Action plan for organic farming (2021-2027)¹ represents an improvement compared to the previous one and TAKES NOTE of the recommendations to the Commission to establish a way of measuring progress in the area of organic farming, to better integrate the environmental and market objectives into CAP support and to make available the relevant data to assess the development of organic sector.

¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on an action plan for the development of organic production, COM/2021/141 final.

4. EMPHASIZES the strong commitment of Member States to continue the development of organic farming also confirmed in their CAP Strategic Plans, and WELCOMES the setting up of Member States' ambitious national plans for the development of organic farming to accompany the CAP framework in the area;
5. UNDERLINES the need for prudence in assessing the progress made on organic farming at EU level in a context of political and economic uncertainty and CONSIDERS that Member States need flexibility to decide on the most appropriate solutions targeted to their specific conditions in line with the principle of subsidiarity;
6. HIGHLIGHTS the need for a clear, simplified and predictable legal framework in the area of organic farming;
7. EMPHASIZES that the further development of the sector requires a holistic approach and in order to strengthen demand, implies the use of a wide-range of tools such as awareness campaigns, public procurement and promotion activities, school schemes programmes and education campaigns and DRAWS THE ATTENTION to the need for appropriate advisory services and education campaigns for farmers. Therefore INVITES the Commission to provide support for these activities;
8. WELCOMES the fact that the Commission will encourage Member States to better link the use of CAP support to the needs identified in the organic sector in order to strengthen the EU strategic framework for the organic sector, as recommended by the Court;
9. AGREES with the Commission's intention to provide guidance to Member States in order to apply the rules defined in the Organic Regulation consistently and its willingness to assess the contribution of CAP funds to the economic sustainability of organic farming, in order to better integrate the environmental and market objectives of organic farming in the CAP.

10. WELCOMES the Commission's readiness to work with the Member States to evaluate the impact of CAP support for organic farming on reaching CAP objectives and to improve the quality of data collection for environmental and social dimensions with a view to ensure the availability of relevant data to assess the development of organic farming while EMPHASIZING that the burden arising from data collection under the current CAP is already challenging and should be subject to simplification.
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