

New Organic EU Regulation not mature enough

Brussels, 13/11/2006 – The IFOAM EU Group urges the EU institutions that there is still much work to do on the revision proposal for a new Organic EU Regulation as it is still not mature enough. The latest text (1) has progressed since the original proposal but there are still issues and concerns that will cause significant problems. This was the main message the IFOAM EU Group delegation brought to Agriculture Commissioner Fischer Boel at a meeting today.

The delegation emphasised the major problems which would hamper the private sector from playing the crucial role in developing organic farming in the EU. In addition, there are a number of technical shortcomings that, if not resolved, will cause unintended disfunction.

“We share the European institutions’ aims that the new organic regulation will enable a successful organic sector. This must happen without creating additional bureaucracy, but we fear the proposal does not deliver this”, said Francis Blake, president of the IFOAM EU Group. “Under the flag of the Lisbon strategy the EU wants to strengthen innovation, competitiveness and wants to simplify EU legislation. As it is now, the new Regulation contradicts this.”

Private standards and logos are named as “trade barriers” in the explanatory memorandum of the proposal. This is wrong – they do not prevent trade, rather they stimulate demand. The private label programmes are the main driving force in developing a dynamic and competitive organic sector. Only they provide the innovation and leadership in organic standards development and marketing – this can never happen at the pan-European level.

The IFOAM EU Group urges the Commission and the Finnish Presidency to give the necessary time to achieve a quality regulation (2). The priority must be to ensure a successful future development of organic farming.

Ends (Characters 1,527)

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Notes:

(1) Latest compromise paper of the Finnish Presidency:

http://www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/around_world/eu_group/PDF_Revision_Organic/Com_promispaper_FIN_25.10.2006.pdf

(2) The Finnish EU Presidency and the European Commission aim to finalise the discussion on this regulation by the end of the year based on a compromise paper the Finnish Presidency sent on 25th October to Member States. This week there will be trilateral talks with member States before the Council will discuss the issue on its November meeting.