Organic food and farming: imports of organic products from third countries (amend. Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91)

2005/0279(CNS) - 12/07/2006

The committee adopted the report by Friedrich-Wilhelm GRAEFE ZU BARINGDORF (Greens/EFA, DE) broadly approving the proposed regulation on organic production of agricultural products. It nevertheless tabled a number of amendments under the consultation procedure, designed to promote organic farming in non-EU countries through technical assistance measures and preserve standards for imports in the intervening period before a new regulation. MEPs were also concerned that EU operators - who are subject to very strict standards - could be exposed to unfair competition. They stressed that the Commission's recognition of third countries must be reciprocal and that third countries must also grant EU organic products access to their markets.

In other amendments, the committee called for the Commission to report to Parliament and the Council by 1 January 2009 on the specific sources of risk for imports from third countries and to submit a proposal for the training and/or promotion of local certifiers and inspectors in third countries. The competent national authorities should be involved in the procedure for recognising third-country control bodies and should be able to carry out random on-the-spot checks on such control bodies. Lastly, MEPs wanted Member States to operate a public Community EU-import databank, coordinated by the European Food Safety Authority.