

Basic information	
2004/2202(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
European action plan for organic food and farming Subject 3.10.09.04 Organic farming 3.10.10 Foodstuffs, foodstuffs legislation Geographical area Bulgaria	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible		Rapporteur
	AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development		AUBERT Marie-Hélène (Verts/ALE)
	Committee for opinion		Rapporteur for opinion
	ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meetings	Date
	Agriculture and Fisheries	2611	2004-10-18

Key events			
Date	Event	Reference	Summary
10/06/2004	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2004)0415 	Summary
18/10/2004	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
18/11/2004	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
03/02/2005	Vote in committee		Summary
11/02/2005	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0039/2005	
10/03/2005	Decision by Parliament	T6-0072/2005	Summary
10/03/2005	Results of vote in Parliament		
10/03/2005	Debate in Parliament		

10/03/2005	End of procedure in Parliament		
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Technical information	
Procedure reference	2004/2202(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AGRI/6/23726

Documentation gateway				
European Parliament				
Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0039/2005	11/02/2005	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0072/2005 OJ C 320 15.12.2005, p. 0171-0242 E	10/03/2005	Summary
European Commission				
Document type		Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2004)0415 	10/06/2004	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2005)1714	07/06/2005	
Other institutions and bodies				
Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES1657/2004 OJ C 157 28.06.2005, p. 0167-0172	16/12/2004	

European action plan for organic food and farming

2004/2202(INI) - 10/06/2004 - Non-legislative basic document

In this Communication, the Commission intends to assess the situation and to lay down the basis for policy development in the coming years, thereby providing an overall strategic vision for organic farming's contribution to the common agricultural policy (CAP).

In designing a global policy concept for organic farming, the dual societal role of organic farming should be recognised.

1) Organic food marketing, responding to the concerns of some consumers, and should therefore be rewarded by the markets and hence be financed by the consumers. The development of organic farming will, in this respect, be governed by market rules.

2) Organic land management is known to deliver public goods, primarily environmental, but also rural development benefits and in certain respects may also result in improved animal welfare. Seen from this angle, the development of organic farming should be driven by society.

In order to ensure stable market development, there needs to be a balance between supply and demand.

The Commission analysis has shown that more emphasis should be put on facilitating the development of the market. The current market share is on average about 2% in EU-15. In order to increase this figure or even to maintain the current figure in the long run, more focus on consumer expectations is needed. Consumers need better information on the principles and objectives of organic farming as well as the positive impact on, for example, the environment. At the same time, it is important to safeguard the integrity of the inspection system.

The internal trade of organic products is hampered by the many different national and private standards and their implementation, which can make it very complicated to sell organic products in other Member States. The developing of common objectives, development of a multilateral concept of equivalence, further harmonisation of inspection requirements and more emphasis on the EU logo would help to minimise these problems.

To facilitate the expansion of organic farming, but also to increase production capacity, new information and, above all, new technologies are required. It is therefore essential to ensure the necessary research into organic farming and processing methods. At the same time, the gathering of statistical information about production and the market should be improved.

One of the objectives in the 2003 CAP reform was to promote production that supports environmentally friendly, quality products. Organic farming is an important device towards the attainment of this goal.

Organic farmers are currently entitled to receive support from the first pillar of the CAP through direct payments and price support measures. More importantly, organic farming is fully integrated in the rural development policy in the second pillar of the CAP and has a prominent place in the agri-environment measures. The 2003 CAP reform has provided a useful framework for the future development of organic farming and has made a range of instruments available to Member States.

Based on this analysis and building upon the achievements already accomplished, the main proposals in the Action Plan concentrate on:

- an information-led development of the organic food market, by increasing consumer awareness, providing more information and promotion to consumers and operators, stimulating the use of the EU logo, including on imported products, providing more transparency on different standards, and improving the availability of production, supply and demand statistics as policy and marketing tools;
- making public support for organic farming more effective by encouraging Member States to make a more coherent and greater use of the different rural development measures, for example, by means of the national action plans, and by strengthening research on organic farming;
- improving and reinforcing of the Community's organic farming standards, import and inspection requirements by defining the basic principles of organic agriculture and thus making its public service explicit; increasing transparency and consumer confidence; by establishing an independent committee for scientific and technical advice; by a further harmonisation and reinforcement of the standards making use of international organisations; by improving standards, for example, with regard to animal welfare; by completing the standards for areas not yet covered such as aquaculture or environment-related standards such as fossil energy use, etc.; by explaining the standards laid down for the prohibition of the use of GMOs; by increasing the efficiency and transparency of the inspection system and, finally, by making import provisions more efficient.

European action plan for organic food and farming

2004/2202(INI) - 10/03/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Parliament adopted own-initiative report by Marie-Hélène AUBERT (Greens/EFA, FR) on the European action plan for organic food and farming by 527 votes in favour, 8 against and 7 abstentions. (Please refer to the document dated 03/02/2005).

On the issue of research, Parliament suggests that in the European research framework programme, organic farming as a production method should be recognised as a priority, as should the coexistence of organic with conventional and genetically modified crops and assessment of the impact of the technologies that pose a threat to this production method, including environmentally directed research on selection, with regard to both crop species and farm animals.

Parliament stresses that the definition of organic farming must relate not only to the production method but also to a set of agricultural practices which guarantee respect for the environment and biodiversity, and enable the production of healthy, high-quality foodstuffs. Acceptance must be gained for this definition of organic farming in international fora in order to safeguard the specificity of the organic farming industry in the context of international trade.

Lastly, Parliament considers it regrettable that the Commission presents no concrete financial measures relating to the organisation of distribution channels, and calls for support, including financial support, to be given in the framework of the structuring of production, processing and marketing.