



## *Demeter International Press Release*

### **Reject the damaging compromise on the EU organic regulation!**

Sekem, Egypt, 11th June 2015. The annual Members' Assembly of Demeter International calls on the European Agricultural Ministers to reject the recent compromise proposal for a new EU organic regulation. The text constitutes a worsening compared to the current legislation in place. Ministers will decide on the text in the Council meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> June in Luxemburg.

“Also the new proposal of the EU Council presidency is a step backwards. The suggested compromise to introduce pesticide thresholds for individual EU member states contradicts the idea of an EU single market and leads to market distortion”, criticizes Alexander Gerber, Vice President of Demeter International. “Moreover certification of organic products on the basis of residue testing would deny the well-established process based on controls along the whole production chain. This means that the polluter pays principle would be reversed – the lack of stricter rules on the use of pesticides in the environmental legislation would have to be paid for by organic farmers who are not using these pesticides.”

The text also foresees that imports from non-EU-countries, which have no bilateral agreement of recognition with the EU, would be controlled according to compliance with EU rules. “If the EU ends the proven equivalency-principle for organic imports, this would not give any security to consumers. It would instead kick many small scale producers for example of coffee, cocoa and herbs out of the market, because the hurdles for organic certification would become too complicated and only partly achievable under the compliance rule”, warns Helmy Abouleish of Demeter Egypt, host of the current Demeter International Members' Assembly. “Products which are produced outside the EU need rules adapted to the local conditions. This helps to assure organic quality, for example, in many countries, the framework legislation for water purity is below EU level. Therefore, respective rules for irrigation are added to the equivalency standards.”

“The compromise text moreover contains many technical weaknesses. It is unlikely that all these flaws can be corrected in the trilogue negotiations process that would now follow,” adds Antje Kölling, head of Policy and Public relations in Demeter Germany. “A new regulation only makes sense if it brings significant improvements compared to the legislation in place. The recent text does not fulfil this criterion. Therefore, we call on the European Commission to come back to its announcement made earlier this year: To withdraw the proposal if no essential progress towards legislation carried by all member states is achieved!”

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