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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	AOB item for the meeting of the “Agriculture and Fisheries” Council on 27 January 2025 Reducing administrative burden for organic farmers and processors - Information from Germany, supported by Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Organic farming is a key contributor to a more sustainable agriculture, which is acknowledged in the EU Organic Action Plan, which was adopted in 2021 to encourage the production and consumption of organic products. Despite this recognition, organic producers face increasing bureaucracy that detracts from their primary activity of food production.

Organic farmers and processors already go the extra mile to implement sustainable practices and to comply with the principles of organic production. In addition, they are also subjected to additional regulations specific to organic production, which increase their administrative workload. The complexity of the EU Organic Regulation, the need for extensive documentation and often short adaptation periods for new rules discourage many from transitioning to organic.

There is an abundance of regulations governing the organic sector, comprised in both the basic act and the secondary legislation. For organic operators, it is of crucial importance to guarantee the coherence between those legislative texts. Such exercise must result in simplification and may entail amending the basic act.

The Fit for Future Platform is tasked with assisting the EU Commission in simplifying existing legislation and reducing unnecessary administrative burdens. In 2024, member states and stakeholders have proposed recommendations to streamline the EU laws governing production and labeling of organic food and feed, aiming to simplify and cut costs.

Many of the recommendations in the final report could ease the burden of companies operating in accordance with the EU Organic Regulation. The suggestions made in the report warrant careful consideration, in particular:

- Examination of the necessity of specific rules and regulations and overlapping procedures.
- Clarification of ambiguous regulations, which currently cause a large administrative burden for producers and competent authorities.
- Minimization of duplicate controls and the documentation effort for organic farms in the context of the CAP.

Regarding the context described above, we invite the European Commission:

- To provide a plan of action to the Member States on how the Commission intends to follow up on the final report.
- To pave the way for suitable initiatives to simplify organic legislation and to reduce the administrative burden.
