



Demeter International Press Release

Organic trade needs rules that respect diversity

Brussels, 4th June 2015. Biodynamic farmers worldwide are concerned about the ongoing discussions on the revision of the EU regulation on organic food and farming. A shift from the equivalency principle for third country standards towards full standard compliance for imports would be detrimental for organic farmers in developing countries and would harm long standing and successful trade relationships.

For many farmers, cooperatives and rural communities in Africa and other regions of the world, exports of certified organic and biodynamic food are a relevant source of income. Moreover, organic farming brings an important impulse to rural regions to develop sustainable farming also for local markets. Farmers in many regions of the world produce according to organic rules which are equivalent to the EU standard, but in details adapted to their specific local challenges. If the EU would now turn towards strict compliance, these farmers would become subject to a standard that has been made for Europe and does in parts not work for their region.

Thomas Lüthi, President of Demeter International, warns that such a shift would also have impacts on the EU market: "Demeter food processors in Europe have long standing trade relationships with suppliers in third countries. These relationships are based on the common commitment to the biodynamic idea and the organic principles, and they work due to respect for the diversity of backgrounds and production challenges. The currently discussed proposal to require full compliance with EU rules from all farmers or processors in third countries speaks of a lack of understanding for the situation of organic farmers worldwide and would put the availability of many organic food products for European consumers at risk. Therefore, we call for the continuation of the equivalency principle and targeted improvements of controls to avoid fraud. "

Contact: Dr. Andreas Biesantz | Demeter International e.V. EU Liaison Office
Rue du Trône 194 | B-1050 Brussels | Belgium
Phone: 0032-(0)2 - 646 21 17 | Fax: 0032-(0)2 - 647 70 47
Email: demeter.eu@gmail.com | Web: www.demeter.net

Demeter-International was founded 1997 as a network of biodynamic certification organisations world-wide. Presently Demeter International has 18 members and 5 guest-members from Europe, America, Africa and New Zealand and represents about 5.000 Demeter farms, with nearly 150.000 hectares in more than 50 countries. The basis of Demeter-International is the Biodynamic agriculture method, which was founded by the "Agriculture Course" given by Rudolf Steiner in 1924, and has since developed to a holistic organic food and farming system through practice, knowledge exchange and research. More information at: www.demeter.net