

Background note

Informal Council of Ministers for Agriculture 1-2 June 2015, Riga

On 1-2 June, under the Latvian Presidency of EU Council, the informal meeting of Ministers for Agriculture and Fisheries will take place in Riga. The subject of Council's discussion is **“Organic production: Sustainability, growth and consumer needs before and beyond 2020”**.

During the last ten years until 2012, the organically farmed area in the EU has doubled with an increase by about 500 000 hectares per year. Over the period 2000-2012, the overall organically farmed area increased by approximately 6.7% annually, reaching 10.1 million hectares that is 5.7% of all agricultural area land in the EU.

The Latvian Presidency has prepared a discussion document on the subject to be addressed at the Council. The document incorporates a short description of the current situation and the development of organic agriculture in the EU and outlines possible future challenges, which the sector could face in the coming years.

Taking into consideration the rapid development of the sector, the EU must react to the growing demand for organic products without putting at risk consumers' confidence in the principles of organic farming and in the quality of organic products. There is also a need to harmonise the regulatory framework to ensure a level playing field and to reduce the risk of fraud.

Discussion should be held on the existing problems between the organic and conventional farmers to ensure adequate co-existence between the two systems. More attention should be paid to the provision of organic plant reproductive material and organic stock of young animals, as currently the EU is not able to provide itself with this.

The Presidency is offering the Ministers for Agriculture two discussion items:

- Which of the existing policy instruments have been successful in addressing the challenges? Why?
- What should be done at EU and international level as regards future policy instruments to address the challenges?

Media opportunities:

On 31 May at 15:30 – press briefing by Jānis Dūklavs, the Council President and the Latvian Minister for Agriculture at the Ministry of Agriculture, 2 Republikas laukums, Riga

2 June – [media programme](#)

For photos and videos, visit the Latvian Presidency audio and visual [database](#).

Media accreditation is available on the Presidency [website](#).

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