



SLOVAK PRESIDENCY  
2014/2015 OF THE VISEGRAD GROUP

## DYNAMIC VISEGRAD

### **Common declaration of the Ministers of Agriculture of the Czech republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia on the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on organic production and labelling of organic products**

Organic production and the development of the market of organic products is very important for our countries. WE SUPPORT any ideas, changes and a reform in this field, which will lead to the development of the sector and an increase in the numbers of organic products and producers.

WE are AWARE that the Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 *on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91* should be in alignment with the Lisbon Treaty. All of the proposed changes should be deeply considered in the context of the overall aims of the review and should guarantee the development of the sector. The current regulation contains many solutions which result from many years of gained experience, therefore the review should mainly focus on the reduction of unnecessary burdens and the improvement of existing requirements.

WE ASK to take into account that the development of the organic farming sector and the organic market differs in Member States. We have to keep the diversity of the organic sector of the Member States in mind. Some of the proposed amendments could create a lot of difficulties for organic operators and competent authorities and it is therefore very important to avoid such a situation.

WE ENCOURAGE the European Commission, European Parliament and Council to find a solution to the issues regarding the implementation of changes as proposed by the European Parliament and the Council, especially when it comes to producer support and a fair imports system.

WE ASK for a more profound focus on traceability in relation to the organic controls system. WE INVITE the European Commission, European Parliament and Council to carefully revise the proposed articles on the organic productions control system, to maintain the current system of official controls and to avoid a shift from a process-based approach towards simply an end-product approach. The unique status of the whole sector of the organic production control system is based on annual controls and additional risk based approach controls at all stages of organic production. This is the key element to consumer confidence and the transparency of the system. The impact of the introduction of de-certification threshold for non-allowed substances should be better assessed to find the best solution for that problem.

WE HIGHLIGHT the importance of exceptions when it comes to the flexibility, for example the use of non-organic plant propagation material and non-organic feed along with non-organic animals, the retraction of which can cause issues with primary organic production on an organic farm level in regions where the organic farmers directly depend on these

mentioned exceptions. We would also like to stress that the absence of GMOs in organic food and products is crucial for our countries. WE EXPECT the definition of production rules for all species which are kept by our farmers.

WE CONSIDER that it is necessary to maintain mixed organic and non-organic production units at all stages of production (from farming to distribution). WE EXPRESS CONCERN that the proposed changes might ultimately lead to the decrease of the number of organic operators throughout the EU. (With the exception of the Czech Republic with regards to the non-organic production at the primary production level.)

WE would like to EXPRESS OUR CONCERN about the number and scope of delegated acts. WE ASK for a review of that area and for reconsideration of a move towards more solutions in the basic act. It would lead to simplification and better overview of the act, the organic sector needs stable rules that will not change for a reasonable period of time.

WE SUPPORT the idea of the promotion of the common European logo and national logos for them to assist with the consumer's orientation in the organic produce and products market. WE SUPPORT the idea of the increase of consumer trust in organic products.

WE APPEAL on the European Commission, European Parliament and Council to take into consideration our joint position and WE BELIEVE, that common ground and consensus between the consumers and producers can be reached. This could also contribute to the increase of production, the increase of consumer trust and also to satisfy demand for organic products and produce.

Nitra, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2014

On behalf of the:

Czech Republic:

Hungary:

Poland:

Slovakia:

Bulgaria:

Romania:

Slovenia:

The image shows a series of seven horizontal dotted lines, each corresponding to a country listed on the left. Handwritten signatures in blue ink are present on these lines. The signatures are: 1. Czech Republic: A signature that appears to be 'Jana' or similar. 2. Hungary: A signature that appears to be 'János' or similar. 3. Poland: A signature that appears to be 'Janusz' or similar. 4. Slovakia: A signature that appears to be 'Jana' or similar. 5. Bulgaria: A signature that appears to be 'Jana' or similar. 6. Romania: A signature that appears to be 'Jana' or similar. 7. Slovenia: A signature that appears to be 'Jana' or similar.