

PRESS RELEASE

EU organic movement calls on Member States to provide reliable data on organic and other Farm to Fork targets

BRUSSELS, 2 FEBRUARY 2022 – As the first triologue on the Regulation on Statistics on Agricultural Inputs and Outputs (SAIO) takes place on 3 February, IFOAM Organics Europe calls on the Council of Ministers of the EU to enable systematic data collection on organic agriculture. This regulation will cover statistics on agricultural production, agricultural prices, nutrients, and plant protection products, but the EU Council’s position introduces provisions that would limit the collection of data on organic farming. For IFOAM Organics Europe, restricting the amount of data collected on organic would be a missed opportunity. The organic food and farming movement calls on the co-legislators to seize this opportunity to finally integrate organic agriculture in all statistical categories of the SAIO regulation.

Jan Plagge, IFOAM Organics Europe President, said: “EU agricultural statistics need to reflect the impetus to reach the target of 25% organic farming in 2030 in the Farm to Fork Strategy and the EU Action Plan for Organic Agriculture. If organic agriculture should represent a quarter of EU agricultural land in 2030, we cannot rely on agricultural statistics that do not take organic agriculture into account.”

Eduardo Cuoco, Director of IFOAM Organics Europe, added: “Member States need to provide accurate data to properly monitor progress on the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies’ targets. Given the expected contribution of the organic sector to these targets, it is imperative to create sub-categories on organic farming for each of the statistical categories established by the SAIO Regulation. Furthermore, the future SAIO regulation offers a great opportunity to improve our knowledge on how organic farming contributes to the EU agricultural system. Researchers on organic farming have been asking access to accurate data on organic farming for years.”

The availability of organic data is not the only issue at stake in the SAIO Regulation. While the Commission and Parliament proposed significant improvements in data collection on pesticides use, ensuring the availability of accurate and comparable annual data at EU level, the EU Council wants to seriously weaken these possibilities. Reports from [Client Earth](#), [PAN Europe and Global 2000](#) published today show this. IFOAM Organics Europe joins these NGOs in condemning the retrograde position of the Council, which would make progress towards the 50% pesticide reduction target of the EU Farm to Fork Strategy impossible to measure. Member States should not get away with years of failures in reducing the use of synthetic pesticides by hiding their use and refusing to provide data to the EU institutions.

IFOAM Organics Europe calls on the French Presidency of the EU – which will lead the SAIO dialogues on behalf of the Council – to be coherent with its own priorities to speed up the agroecological transition and reduce pesticide use. The French Presidency should ensure that the Council position does not undermine the EU Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy.

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Background information

Regulation on Statistics on Agricultural Inputs and Outputs (SAIO)

In February 2021, the European Commission published its [proposal for a Regulation on Statistics on Agricultural Inputs and Outputs \(SAIO\)](#) and its [annex](#). The proposal establishes a common framework for aggregated European statistics related to the inputs and outputs of agricultural activities, as well as on the intermediate use of such output in agriculture, its collection and industrial processing. It covers agricultural production (crops and animals), agricultural prices, nutrients, and plant protection products. The proposed regulation should replace the numerous legal acts based on which European statistics on agricultural inputs and outputs are currently collected, produced, and disseminated.

The SAIO Regulation is supposed to provide the necessary data to monitor three of the six key quantified Farm to Fork targets for 2030: the share of agricultural land under organic farming, the reduction of the use and risk of chemical pesticides, and the reduction of nutrient losses. It should also aim to inform the decision-making process with updated data related to the CAP indicators.

The Commission's proposal on SAIO includes two important new dispositions:

- Specific data on organic production and products shall be integrated into the data sets;
- Data on pesticide use should be submitted annually in electronic format, with records covering at least the name of the plant protection product, the dose of application, the main area, and the crop where the plant protection product was used.

EU institutions' positions

In the European Parliament, the Committee of Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) worked on the SAIO proposal. The [report adopted by AGRI MEPs](#) in October 2021 preserved and improved overall the key elements of the SAIO Proposal relating to organic and pesticide data.

The [mandate for negotiation on the SAIO proposal of the Council](#) was adopted on 10 December 2021. Germany and Austria voted against this mandate because of its lack of ambition. The Council's position clearly limits the collection of data on organic farming to crop and animal production, by introducing provisions that specify what domains of SAIO shall include data on organic farming (Article 5(4)). Even though the formulation in the Commission's proposal is general and may be interpreted to only integrate data on organic farming into the statistics on animal and crop production, at least it does not exclude organic farming from the data sets on agricultural price, nutrients, and pesticides, and may leave room for interpretation. Regarding data on the use of pesticides, the Council's mandate has seriously weakened the Commission's proposal. For instance, instead of annual data on the use of pesticides, the Member States still want to collect and submit this data only every five years. Member States also reject the Commission's proposal for a uniform and mandatory use of existing farm records on pesticide use and the obligation that farmers' records be kept and sent in electronic form.

On February 3, 2022, the first official talks on the SAIO proposal between the Parliament and the Council will begin as part of the trialogues. Behind what may appear to be technical discussions, important political decisions will be taken. The credibility of the Green Deal is at stake, as the outcome of the trialogues will determine whether it will be possible to monitor the progress of Member States in achieving the targets of the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies.