Official Journal
of the European Union

EN
C series

C/2026/3235

2.7.2026

Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee

Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) 2018/848 as regards certain production, labelling and certification rules and certain rules on trade with third countries

(COM(2025) 780 final – 2025/0417(COD))

(C/2026/3235)

Rapporteur: **Andreas THURNER**

Legislative procedure	EU Law Tracker
Referral	European Parliament, 19.1.2026
Legal basis	Article 43(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
European Commission documents	COM(2025) 780 final – 2025/0417(COD) Summary of COM(2025) 780 final – 2025/0417(COD)
Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production SDG 13 – Climate Action SDG 15 – Life on Land
Section responsible	Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment
Adopted in section	26.2.2026
Adopted at plenary session	18.3.2026
Plenary session No	604
Outcome of vote (for/against/abstentions)	204/2/1

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE (EESC)

1.1. supports the Commission's proposal for a precise and targeted revision of the EU organic framework legislation and considers the proposed amendments overall to be appropriate and necessary;

1.2. emphasises that all elements of the proposal are important to achieve the desired outcome of a future-proof organic framework. Thus the targeted opening of the basic act, the proposed roadmap for further clarification and simplification in the area of secondary legislation and the update of the EU Organic Action Plan should be seen as a package and should go hand in hand;

1.3. insists that any legislative changes must not lead to additional administrative burden for business operators but rather contribute to simplification while maintaining the integrity of the EU organic standard;

1.4. recommends swift adoption of the Commission proposal to provide simplification and legal security for business operators and stakeholders in the field of organic production, labelling, certification and trade.

2. EXPLANATORY NOTES

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.1 and 1.4

2.1. The targeted opening of the basic act includes a) legal clarification regarding the applicable labelling rules for imported organic products from third countries under the equivalence regime, b) an extension of the applicable equivalence regime for certain third countries and c) concrete entry points of simplification while maintaining the organic standard.

2.1.1. The clarification regarding the applicable rules for labelling is necessary because of the 'Herbaria II ruling ([1])' of the Court of Justice and seems adequate to ensure that consumers can make informed decisions when purchasing organic products from third countries and ensures fair competition within the internal market between products that fully comply with EU production rules and those that comply with rules equivalent to these.

2.1.2. Existing equivalence agreements with 11 third countries are about to come to an end on 31 December 2026. The postponement of the expiry of these equivalence recognitions is necessary to avoid potential disruptions in international trade from which the EU organic sector largely benefits. However, this extension should, in any case, be accompanied by a clear and credible roadmap to ensure timely renegotiation and efforts towards closer alignment of these equivalence agreements, whereby the most relevant markets should be given priority. Trade with equivalent third countries is a key issue and must be monitored closely to avoid market distortions and competitive disadvantages for domestic producers. At the same time, the EESC stresses that equivalence must not result in lower effective production standards nor create competitive disadvantages for EU organic producers. Transparency towards consumers and a strict monitoring of the implementation of equivalence rules are essential to safeguard trust and market integrity.

2.1.3. The proposal simplifies cleaning/disinfection rules in organic processing and storage by repealing restrictive lists, allowing the use of market-available products suited for organic production. This is appropriate, given that the current lists create additional costs and administrative burden without a clear added value.

2.1.4. A targeted amendment adjusts the exemption from certification for small operators selling unpacked organic products to final consumers. It removes turnover- and cost-based thresholds and relies on a sales-volume limit of a maximum of 10 000 kg per year instead. This is a simplification for smaller operators without compromising standards.

2.1.5. The proposal simplifies the rules for groups of operators regarding group certification by removing the turnover criterion, increasing area thresholds and easing requirements on legal personality. This should support small-scale organic producers without compromising standards.

2.1.6. The proposal introduces specific rules for quails for meat production which will provide for a harmonisation of production rules across Member States.

2.1.7. A targeted amendment aligns withdrawal period rules in relation to veterinary treatments for terrestrial animals with those for aquaculture. This eliminates extra waiting times for products related to veterinary treatments that have a general zero-day withdrawal period, which will improve animal welfare and lower barriers for organic producers while maintaining high standards for animal health, product quality and consumer safety.

([1]) EUR-Lex – 62023CJ0240 – EN – EUR-Lex.

2.1.8. The Commission proposal clarifies the conditions for continuous daytime access to open-air areas for young poultry if they are sufficiently feathered to regulate body temperature. Current rules may expose young birds to health and welfare risks, particularly in split-rearing systems.

2.1.9. The maximum usable surface area for fattening poultry is shifted from the production unit level to the individual poultry house level. This will solve current limitations for farm development without compromising animal welfare or environmental aspects.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.2

2.2. The proposal for a targeted opening of the basic act regulation is accompanied by a roadmap for further actions in view of simplification and harmonisation in the field of secondary organic legislation. The implementation of this roadmap will be key to achieving tangible outcomes towards simplification for organic operators.

2.3. An update of the current EU Organic Action Plan will be useful to take stock of the development of the EU organic sector and to ensure that the sector stays on a sustainable track. In this regard, the EESC refers to the recommendations in the opinion NAT 818 ([2]). Organic production forms part of the broader EU quality policy framework. Coherence between organic rules and other quality schemes is essential to strengthen consumer trust, improve market uptake and ensure that quality-oriented production models contribute effectively to rural development and sustainable competitiveness.

2.4. The EESC underlines that simplification must contribute not only to legal clarity but also to the economic viability and competitiveness of the EU organic sector. Regulatory stability, proportional requirements and fair trade conditions are essential to ensure that organic production remains an attractive business model for farmers and food producers. At the same time, the EESC stresses that the preservation of fair labour conditions and well-functioning industrial relations must remain a core principle in the development of the organic framework. Organic farming is a labour-intensive activity and therefore depends to a significant extent on skilled and fairly treated workers. Maintaining decent working conditions, social protection and social dialogue in the sector is essential to safeguard the credibility, sustainability and social dimension of EU organic production.

Brussels, 18 March 2026.

The President
of the European Economic and Social Committee
Séamus BOLAND

([2]) OJ C 517, 22.12.2021, p. 114.