Republic of North Macedonia
Ministry of agriculture, forestry and water economy

2025 AGRICULTURAL POLICY FORUM
2nd – 5th June Ohrid, North Macedonia

20 Years
South Eastern Europe SWG RRD
Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group

Navigating EU Integration and impact of Climate Change on Agriculture: Ensuring the future of our farmers and food in South East Europe

Working group 1: Organic Agriculture

Concluding remarks

Marina Ilusca, Head of Department

Ohrid, North Macedonia
03 - 05 June, 2025

Regional Climate Partnership
GERMANY – WESTERN BALKANS

german cooperation
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Main Purpose of the WG

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- Supporting organic agriculture development in WB economies;
- Networking, capacity building, knowledge exchange/transfer;
- Support in harmonization of organic law and bylaws;
- Make sure a continuous export of organic products from the Western Balkan countries/territories to the European market.
- Assist and support the integration process of the Western Balkans and Moldova into the European Union.

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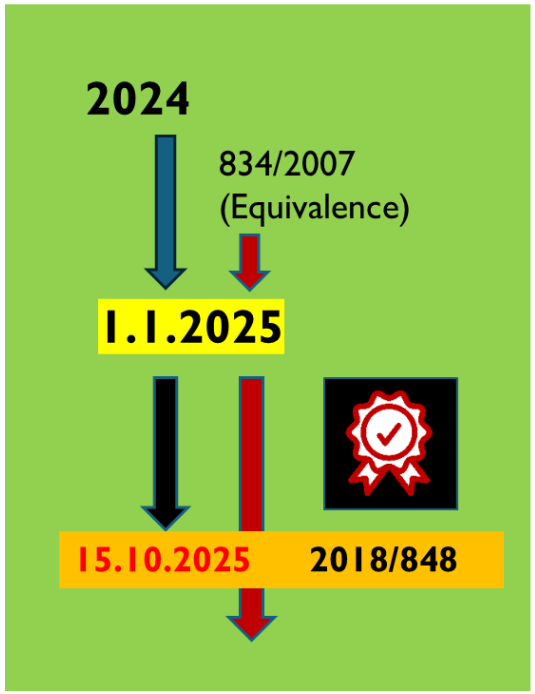
The time for legal adjustments is pressing...



Certification

- Till the end of 2024, certification was according to the old system.

From January 1, 2025, the new Organic Regulation 2018/848 will only apply to organic exports from third countries to the EU.

- This means that almost all producer groups will be inspected for the first time in 2025 as a "Group of Operators" in conformity with all EU requirements.
- Organic goods produced in 2024, certified under the old regulations, allowing shipments to the EU market until **15.10.2025**
- By 15 October 2025, all businesses and groups of operators must be certified under the new regulation or can no longer deliver shipments to the EU market as organic.

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Key Assets/Opportunities

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- Social capital created
- New Organic Laws have been adopted/drafted
- Regional and national Organic Action Plans developed
- Successful Capacity Building for staff from competent authorities
- International/national experts
- To use commonly available resources
- Communication with the EU Organic Unit has improved

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Key Barriers

- Organic sectors/markets partly struggle (requirements regulation, market conditions, labor shortage);
- Many with weak organic sector representations / sometimes selling products as conventional;
- Weak level of exchange with the EU Commission at the technical level;
- Administrative barriers in terms of slow and rigid procedures for setting up new (or upgraded) laws/bylaws;
- Lack of capacities (institutional/producers/processors/NGO‘s);
- Lack of national IT Systems (e.g. registers, electronic cetificates);
- Lack of national funds to build up and maintain IT Systems;
- Lack of procedures for exports and imports.

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Ways Forward

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1. **Legal harmonisation:**
   Continue aligning the national Organic Law and relevant bylaws with EU Regulation 2018/848 to ensure legal consistency and readiness for integration into the EU organic framework.
2. **Support for implementation:**
   Provide targeted support to the organic sector for the effective implementation of the new EU Organic Regulation, including guidance, training, and institutional backing.
3. **Operationalization of Organic Action Plans:**
   Implement National Organic Action Plans with relevant institutions and market stakeholders to boost organic production and consumption, enhance sustainability, and encourage stakeholder involvement in developing and enforcing organic standards.

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Ways Forward

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1. **Regional Cooperation:**
   Strengthen regional collaboration to ensure policy coherence, knowledge exchange, and alignment of national organic strategies with broader EU and regional objectives.
2. **Capacity Building:**
   Invest in developing the technical capacities of institutions, certification bodies, advisory services, and producers to improve compliance, quality assurance and innovation.
3. **Stakeholder consultation platform:**
   Establish and maintain a functional platform for regular consultation with key national stakeholders in the organic sector, enabling inclusive dialogue, feedback, and shared decision-making in policy development.
4. **Strategic dialogue with the EU Commission:**
   Leverage the collective expertise and influence of the Working Group to engage in meaningful dialogue with the EC, advocating for the interests and priorities of the SEE organic sector.

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