

PRESS RELEASE**EU ORGANIC FOOD COMPANIES (OPTA EUROPE) CALLS ON THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO RECONSIDER THE SUSTAINABILITY LABELLING INCLUDED IN THE 'EU SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS' POLICY**

Brussels, 9 November 2022- At the occasion of the Policy Exchange "*Organics in the future EU Sustainable Food System*" the organic traders and processors expressed their request to the European Commission to foster the well-recognized and principle-based EU organic logo instead of establishing an additional sustainability logo that might promote less environmentally stringent practices.

The organic food and farming sector has a long history of commitment to sustainable diets. At the occasion of the Conference '*Organics in the future EU Sustainable Food System*' held on 8th November in Brussels, participants encouraged the European Commission to not establish a sustainability label as indicated in the future 'EU Sustainable Food System'. Rather than setting up additional labels which rely on third-party data and cannot reflect the sustainability efforts of a single farmer or food processor, the future policy could focus on the already well-established organic logo that is backed up by the EU organic legislation.

'A huge effort has been made by Member States and the organic sector to increase the recognition of the organic label during the last years' said Stefan Hipp, President of OPTA Europe. *'In order to reach the goal of 25% of land organically farmed in 2030 we need to send clear and unambiguous signals to consumers, farmers and food operators. With substantial political support, the organic label and the organic community will relentlessly pursue its contribution to the EU's ambition for making its food system a model of sustainability at all stages of the value chain.'*

'We hope that the future EU sustainable food system will take inspiration from the organic features instead of creating competing ones' said Aurora Abad, Secretary General of OPTA Europe. *'We believe that the organic standard can provide a valuable base for the discussions on the criteria underlying the sustainable food system. We can contribute with our experiences and lessons learned from the organic scheme, which has a high level of recognition and trust among consumers.'*

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Note to Editors:

- *OPTA Europe www.opta-eu.org is the membership organization representing the interest of EU organic processing and trade companies. Its membership encompasses 11 EU Member States plus North America and Switzerland. Taken together, the companies represented by OPTA Europe account for a large share of total EU import & export and processing of organic products.*

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