

PRESS RELEASE

EUROPEAN ORGANIC COMPANIES WELCOME THE EFFORTS TO FIGHT THE PROLIFERATION OF GREEN CLAIMS & LABELS BUT REQUEST POLICY COHERENCE TO BETTER ENCOMPASS THE FARM TO FORK STRATEGY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANICS

Brussels, 22 March 2023- At the occasion of the Commission's adoption of the Green Claims Directive, the EU organization representing organic processors and traders (OPTA Europe), **applauds the efforts to fight the proliferation of green claims & labels, but requests policy coherence and a specific framework for agri-foodstuffs that supports the objectives of the Farm to Fork Strategy.**

The European Commission proposal for a Directive on Green Claims published today is intended to enable consumers to make informed purchasing decisions. It also aims at creating a level-playing field for companies making green claims by setting up harmonized requirements to substantiate and communicate all types of environmental claims, including labels.

For OPTA Europe, the Commission's proposal includes positive aspects but also major concerns. On the positive side, some key benefits of extensive agroecological systems, namely biodiversity and nature protection are recognized as important impacts that *'should'* be integrated when assessing the sustainability of food products.

However, the Commission's proposal does not address the reduction of chemical pesticides, which is a core feature of organics and a key target in the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies.

In addition, OPTA Europe wonders how these choices preempt the upcoming regulatory proposal on Sustainable Food Systems & Sustainability Labelling, expected later this year.

OPTA Europe Secretary General Aurora Abad said *'We are concerned by the provisions about environmental sustainability that are scattered in different legal texts, lacking the required coherence and applying equally to industrial goods and agricultural products.'*

We would prefer a specific regulatory framework for agri-foodstuffs, able to model the multifunctional agricultural systems with their surrounding landscapes. Only with the appropriate definitions and tools the transformational approach in the Farm to Fork Strategy, with organics as one of its cornerstones, can be achieved.

---End---

OPTA Europe, Organic Processing and Trade Association

4, Rue de la Presse, 1000 Brussels | Admin. office Untere Badersgasse 8, 97769 Bad Brückenau (Germany)

Phone +32 (0)495 28 18 72 | info@opta-eu.org | www.opta.bio

EU Transparency Register Number 168090639506-30

For any enquiry, please contact Aurora Abad, Secretary General OPTA Europe aurora@opta-eu.org Tel:+32 (0)495 28 18 72

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.*

--End--