



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 23 October 2012

15360/12

**FIN 821
AGRIFIN 194
AGRI 700
AGRISTR 143
AGRILEG 151**

"I/A" ITEM NOTE

from: Working Party on Financial Agricultural Questions (AGRIFIN)
on: 7 September 2012
to: Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1) / Council
Subject: Special Report No 9/2012 from the European Court of Auditors entitled
'Audit of the control system governing the production, processing, distribution and
imports of organic products'
- Adoption of Council Conclusions

1. At its meeting on 23 July 2012, the Working Party on Financial Agricultural Questions (AGRIFIN) examined the Special Report No 9/2012 from the European Court of Auditors entitled 'Audit of the control system governing the production, processing, distribution and imports of organic products' (doc.12119/12).
2. At its meeting on 7 September 2012, the Working Party on Financial Agricultural Questions (AGRIFIN) discussed draft Council Conclusions on the Special Report (doc.12728/12)
3. After the meeting on 7 September 2012 and in the light of these discussions, the Presidency drew up the final version of the draft Council Conclusions, which the General Secretariat of the Council then circulated and which all delegations were able to accept.

4. In accordance with the Conclusions adopted by the Council on 8 May 2000 on improving the examination of special reports drawn up by the Court of Auditors, the Working Party on Financial Agricultural Questions (AGRIFIN) invites the Permanent Representatives Committee to suggest to the Council that it adopt the Council Conclusions as set out in the Annex to this note as an "A" item at a forthcoming session.
-

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

**on the Special Report No 9/2012 from the European Court of Auditors entitled
'Audit of the control system governing the production, processing, distribution and imports of
organic products '**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- (1) WELCOMES the Special Report No 9/2012 from the European Court of Auditors entitled 'Audit of the control system governing the production, processing, distribution and imports of organic products';
- (2) RECALLS the essential role of the control system of organic products in order to ensure consumer confidence, protect consumer interests and ensure the effective functioning of the internal market;
- (3) UNDERLINES the importance of adequate and timely exchange of information within Member States, between Member States and control bodies, between Member States, and between Member States and the Commission; INVITES the Commission as well as the Member States to continue to work together in order to ensure a direct flow of all relevant information on infringements and irregularities;
- (4) ENCOURAGES both the Commission and the Member States to work together in order to strengthen their monitoring and supervisory roles respectively;
- (5) ENCOURAGES the Commission to work towards increased harmonisation of the control and supervision measures enforced in the Member States.
- (6) STRESSES that coordination between control bodies, stakeholders and authorities is essential for the traceability of organic products; INVITES the Commission to evaluate whether improvements are necessary for the application of organic traceability requirements and to underpin the integrity of the organic production system;

- (7) NOTES the intrinsic weaknesses outlined by the Court of the system of import authorisation; WELCOMES the introduction of a new system of recognised control bodies, managed directly by the Commission and Member States, ensuring harmonised application of the import regime at the EU borders;
- (8) STRESSES the necessity of ensuring that control systems in third countries recognised as equivalent for organic production fulfil all regulatory requirements; CONSIDERS that the Commission could strengthen the supervision of third countries' control systems; INVITES the Commission, in co-operation with Member States to assess the feasibility of establishing European electronic import certificates in order to facilitate and reinforce the control procedures at EU border;
- (9) NOTES that the Commission is currently assessing the EU legal framework governing organic production; CONSIDERS, in this context, that the Court's recommendations could be taken into account in this assessment.
-