


REPORT TO THE WALLOON PARLIAMENT

Organic farming support in the Walloon Region



The Belgian Court of Audit examined how the Walloon Region provides organic farming support.

In 2013, the Walloon government adopted a strategic plan for developing organic farming. This plan is an important step towards a better structuration of the support provided by the Walloon Region to this sector.

However, the integrated approach from production to consumption should be consolidated by a better objectification of the targets. The aim is to improve the balance between production, processing and consumption because several targets will probably not be achieved by the end of the plan.

In addition, the organic farming support policy lacks vision for the medium and long terms and is not integrated into other related policies. For instance, the organic farming's contribution to reducing agricultural pollution has not been defined. Besides, although the implementation of the above-mentioned strategic plan is satisfactory in most respects, it is still poorly coordinated.

Furthermore, the development of organic farming activities in the Walloon Region is subject to significant systemic risks, such as, in particular, the persistent risk of imbalance between supply and demand in some branches and its effects on the sector's financial return. Moreover, the sustainability of the financial organic farming support is not guaranteed beyond 2020.

Finally, as far as certification is concerned, the supervision by the Walloon Region does not offer adequate assurances as to the quality of the controls carried out by the certification bodies and to the consistent application of organic farming regulations.

As regards the import of organic products from outside the European Union, there is a real risk of importing products that are qualified as being "from organic origin" when they are not.