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Failure to adopt the draft fertilising products regulation would be an own goal: A World Food Day reminder on the importance of encouraging integrated plant nutrition and soil fertility

In March 2016, the European Commission released draft regulation 2016/0084 (COD) laying down rules on the making available on the market of CE marked fertilising products and amending Regulations (EC) No 1069/2009 and (EC) No 1107/2009. The Commission noted as the **“first reason and objective” for drafting this legislation was the fact that “virtually all fertilisers produced from organic materials, such as animal or other agricultural by products, or recycled bio-waste from the food chain [currently have difficulty accessing the Single Market].** Research, innovation and investment are currently developing rapidly, contributing to the circular economy by creating local jobs and by generating value from secondary, domestically sourced resources which would otherwise have been used directly on land or disposed as landfill waste, causing unnecessary eutrophication and greenhouse gas emissions.”

Yet, today the draft regulation risks being abandoned because of differences on issues related to mineral fertilizers, products that already have access to the Single Market under Regulation (EC) No 2003/2003 ('the existing Fertilisers Regulation'). **Preventing bio-based products from having access to the Single Market because of issues related to mineral fertilizers would be an own goal from the perspective of the Circular Economy and the Bioeconomy.**

Better plant nutrition and soil fertility management are crucial to feed a growing population under challenging conditions

ECOFI is concerned that negotiators have lost sight of the primary objective of the draft regulation: to create opportunities for bio-based plant nutrition and soil fertility management products such as organic fertilisers and soil improvers and organo-mineral fertilisers. Today on World Food Day, it is all the more important to recall the importance of achieving more sustainable plant nutrition and soil fertility management in order to feed a growing population while facing changes such as the more volatile growing conditions associated with climate change. Enhanced sustainability results from an integrated approach to plant nutrition and soil fertility. Failing to provide a Single Market for bio-based products would handicap Europe's capacity to foster more efficient and sustainable management.

An imperfect regulation that can be revised is better than no regulation

The draft regulation, even as amended by negotiators, is not perfect. ECOFI recognizes there are numerous issues that still need to be addressed and refined. This can be done in the spirit of continuous improvement through an ongoing cycle of revisions after adoption, for which the Commission will need adequate delegated power. Failure to agree on a text as a starting point now would risk that the proposal is abandoned during the political transition that is part of the upcoming European election cycle. That would perpetuate the current situation where

about half of the fertilising products that farmers need for sustainable management would be excluded from the Single Market.

ECOFI urges negotiators to recall that the primary objective of the draft fertilising products regulation is to provide a Single Market for bio-based products that contribute to more sustainable plant nutrition and soil fertility management and to agree on a text as well as a program for ongoing revisions in the spirit of continuous improvement.



The European Consortium of the Organic-Based Fertilizer Industry (ECOFI) is the representative voice of European producers of organic fertilizers, organo-mineral fertilizers and organic soil improvers. ECOFI promotes the contribution made by the organic-based fertilizers sector to the emergence of a knowledge-intensive, environmentally sustainable and high-employment economy in Europe. ECOFI was founded in March 2014 by 12 innovative companies who are deeply committed to the development of organic-based fertilizing technologies that support sustainable models of agricultural productivity, social cohesion and economic growth. Members are active in most European countries and also export to, or are active in, many other countries, including the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Together, the membership accounts for roughly 60% of the European market in organic-based fertilizers, which is worth about 250 million euros. ECOFI membership is open to any European producer in the sector whose production fully ensures the upstream traceability and the origin of raw material components.