

AöL e.V. ▪ Untere Badersgasse 8 ▪ 97769 Bad Brückenau

European Commission
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Bad Brückenau, 01.09.2021

Regarding: Signing the Code of Conduct

Dear sir or madam,

the Assoziation ökologischer Lebensmittelhersteller e.V. (Association of Organic Food Processors) and its members have, since its foundation, aimed at making companies that process food more sustainable in a holistic way. The two main corner stones of this engagement are the introduction of sustainability management concepts in the companies and the orientation towards organic foods. The association's membership is composed out of 126 medium and big food processing companies today <https://www.aoel.org/mitgliederseite/>.

We have been involved in drafting the Code of Conduct from the very beginning, as we welcome the Commission's intensive efforts to bring the issue of sustainability more into focus with the help of the "Farm to Fork" strategy. We also welcome the fact that food production and its consumption within the EU are to be improved and sustainable products are to be promoted. Entrepreneurship is characterised by comprehensive responsibility for the environment. This attitude is the orientation for every AöL member, the common work and one of AöL's guiding principles. We have therefore decided to sign the Code because we support its goals.

In many parts they reflect the goals of our association. With our signature, we will work to achieve the Code's goals of transforming the food sector towards more sustainability. We will regularly inform our members about what the Code is about and encourage them to aspire to these goals as well. There are various working groups in our association that deal with the topic of sustainability. Here we offer our members the opportunity to get involved, to exchange ideas with each other, exchange on best practice, to get information on various topics related to ecological and social responsibility and to get new ideas for implementation in their own companies

A basic requirement of membership in the AöL is that the company should aim for continuous development in the context of environmental matters.

We coordinate regular campaigns with which we want to support and encourage our members to improve themselves and become more sustainable, for example our biodiversity campaign "Vielfalt verbindet" (Diversity connects). <https://www.aeel.org/themen/biodiversitaet/> Furthermore, we support our members in questions concerning sustainability labelling, ecological building techniques, introduction of environmental management systems and much more.

At the same time, we see room for improvement in the Code of Conduct. The Farm to Fork Strategy clearly highlights the positive influence of organic agriculture and food production. This should also be reflected in the Code. In our view, the issue of biodiversity performance of companies and the impact of food design on consumption patterns has not been taken into account enough so far. Furthermore, we do not consider it sufficient if a commitment to already reached goals is possible, but see the strength of the Code above all in the continuous improvement, as well as the motivation for ambitious goals at company level.

Best regards

Dr. Alexander Beck
Managing Board Member