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# OPSON VIII DEBRIEFING: organic targeted action



**DG SANTE**

**Unit G5 – Alerts, Traceability  
and Committees**

**DG AGRI**

**Unit B4 – Organic production**

Health and  
Food Safety

**Brussels, 25 November 2019**

# Organics in a nutshell 2017



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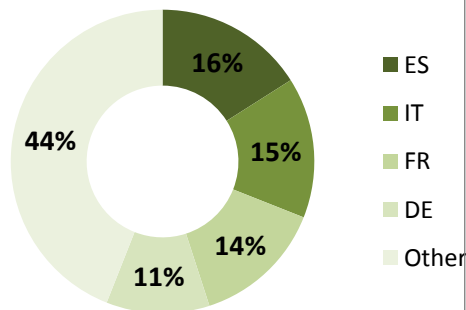
**European Union**  
**12,8**  
**Million ha**

**+67%**  
**in the**  
**decade**  
**2008-2017**

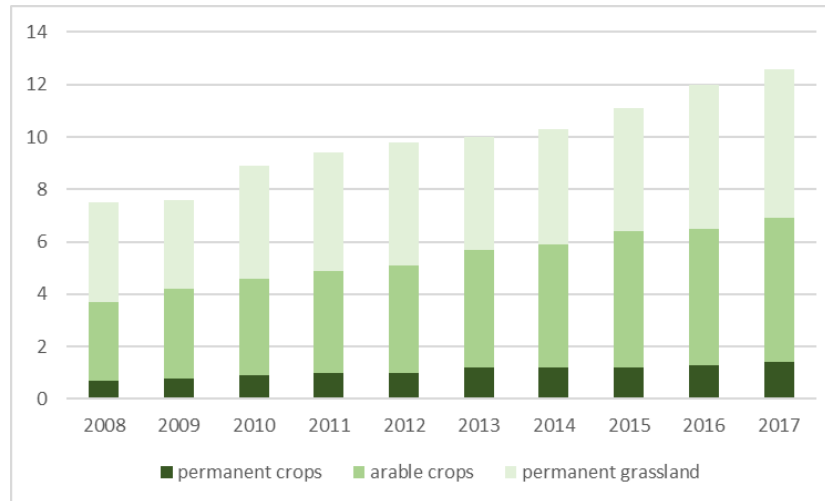
**+ 5 million hectares in the decade 2008-2017**

**In 2017, almost 0.85 million hectares more were reported compared with 2016. (+6,4%)**

**More than half (56%) of EU organic farmland is in 4 countries.**



**Share of EU organic land 2017**



**7,2%**  
**of EU**  
**farmland**  
**is organic**

# ORGANIC RETAIL SALES 2017



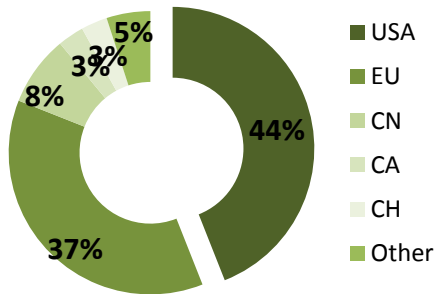
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**World market**  
92 bio €

**European Union**  
34.2 bio €

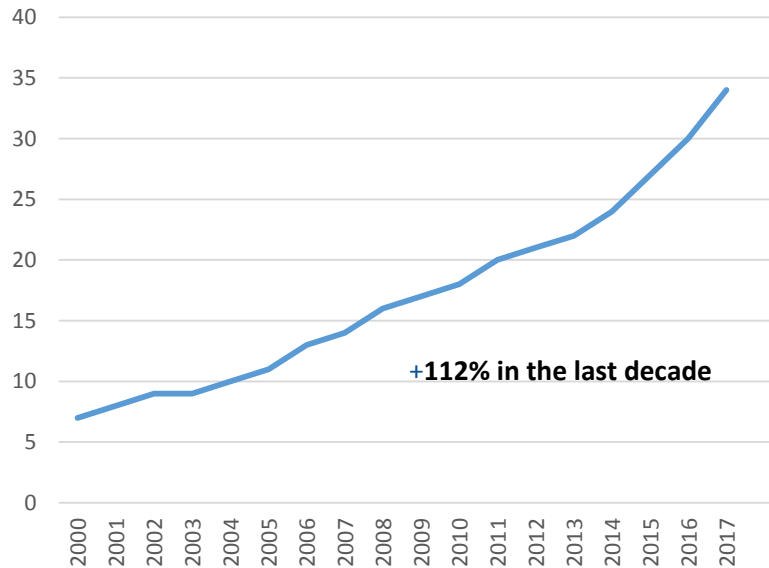
**Germany**  
10 bio €

The European Union (34,2 billion €) is the second largest single market after the US (40 billion) and followed by China.



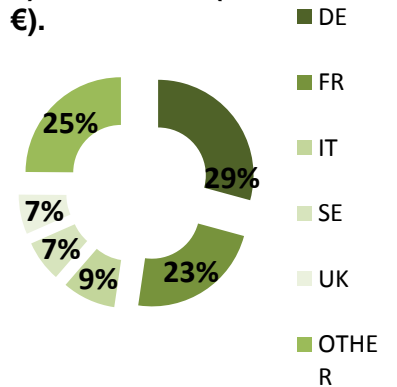
Distribution of retail sales value worldwide by country 2016

Retail sales value from 2000 to 2017 in bio €



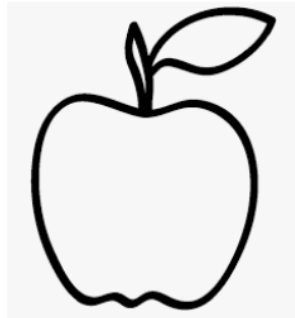
In 2000 organic market worth around 6,5 bio euro

The European countries with the largest markets for organic food are Germany (10 billion €), France (7,9 billion €), Italy (3,1 billion €), and the SE (2,3 billion €).



The countries with the largest markets for organic food 2017

# At the beginning of organics



then imports



**E  
x  
p  
o  
r  
t  
e  
r**



**I  
m  
p  
o  
r  
t  
e  
r**



# And then traders...



- **OFIS - non conformities**
- **TRACES - imports**
- **Reinforced legislation**
- **Specific guidelines**
- **AUDITS**
  
- **and...participation to OPSON**





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# Who?

<b>EUROPOL-INTERPOL</b>	<b>Coordinator</b>
<b>EC (SANTE)</b>	<b>Action leader</b>
<b>EC (AGRI)</b>	<b>Action co-leader</b>
<b>EU FFN</b>	<b>FFN contact points</b>
<b>16 countries: AT, BE, BG, CY, ES, FI, FR, HR, IE, IT, LT, PT, SE, SI, SK and UK</b>	<b>Specific national strategy and activities</b>
<b>6MS (DE, GR, HU, NL, PL and RO) and 18 non-EU countries (AR, CL, CN, CR, CA, UAE, EC, EG, IN, KZ, MD, RS, RU, TG, TN, TR, US, and ZA)</b>	<b>Concerned by launched requests</b>



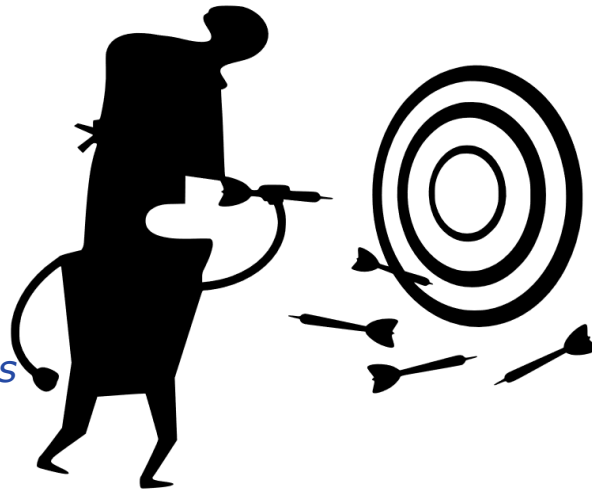


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# Objectives

## Strategic

- ✓ *Prevent fraud*
- ✓ *Raise awareness*
- ✓ *Identify improvement areas*



## Tactical

- ✓ *Fraud schemes*
- ✓ *Risk profiles for a long-term use*
- ✓ *Identify organised criminal groups*

## Operational

- ✓ *Seize substandard organic food/feed*
- ✓ *Investigate concrete cases*
- ✓ *Cooperation between different authorities*
- ✓ *Sharing knowledge/experience*



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## Documents

- ✓ **Traceability: product and money flow**
- ✓ **Analytical reports**
- ✓ **Organic certificates**

## Product

- ✓ **EU organic label**
- ✓ **In bulk**
- ✓ **EU / non-EU origin**
- ✓ **From farm to fork**



## Where?

- ✓ **EU borders - ports**
- ✓ **Warehouses and distribution platforms**
- ✓ **Important market players**
- ✓ **Control bodies**



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# Operational level

*1. Requests in EU FFN*

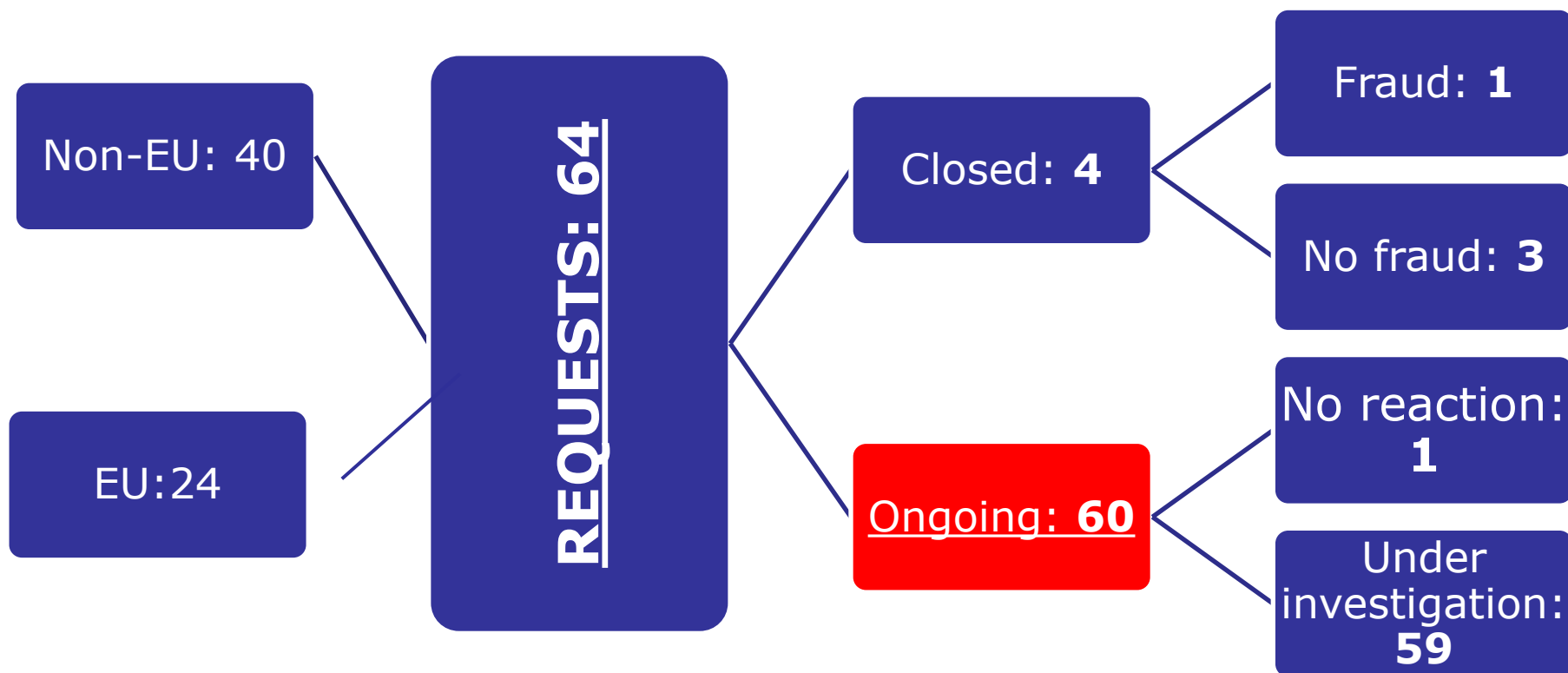
*2. National actions*





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## State of play - requests in AAC-FF



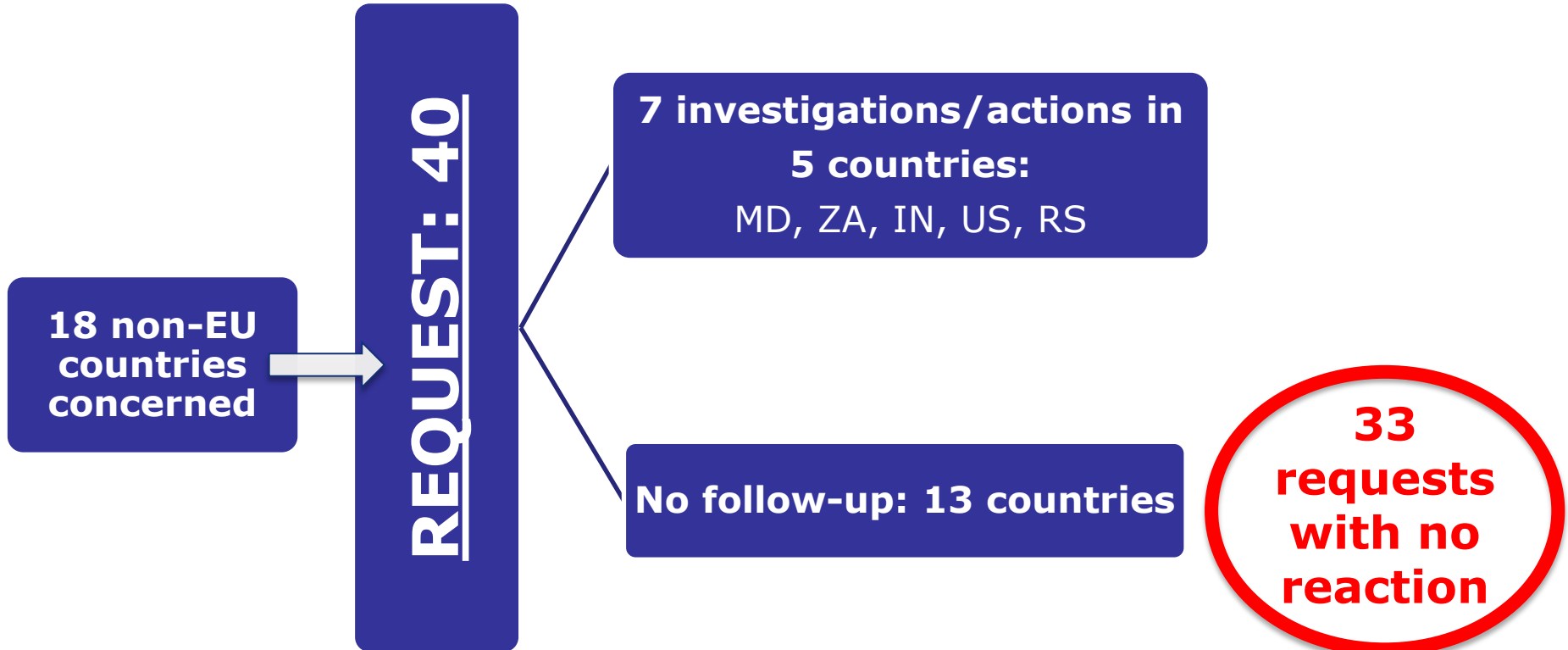
Quantity covered by action: over 90 000 tonnes



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# Requests to non-EU countries

Exchange via Europol/INTERPOL





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# EU FFN request – ongoing cases

- 45 presence of pesticide residues
- 15 certification /documentation issues
- 2 hygiene issues
- 4 control at the borders/violation of TRACES
- 19 traceability check requests

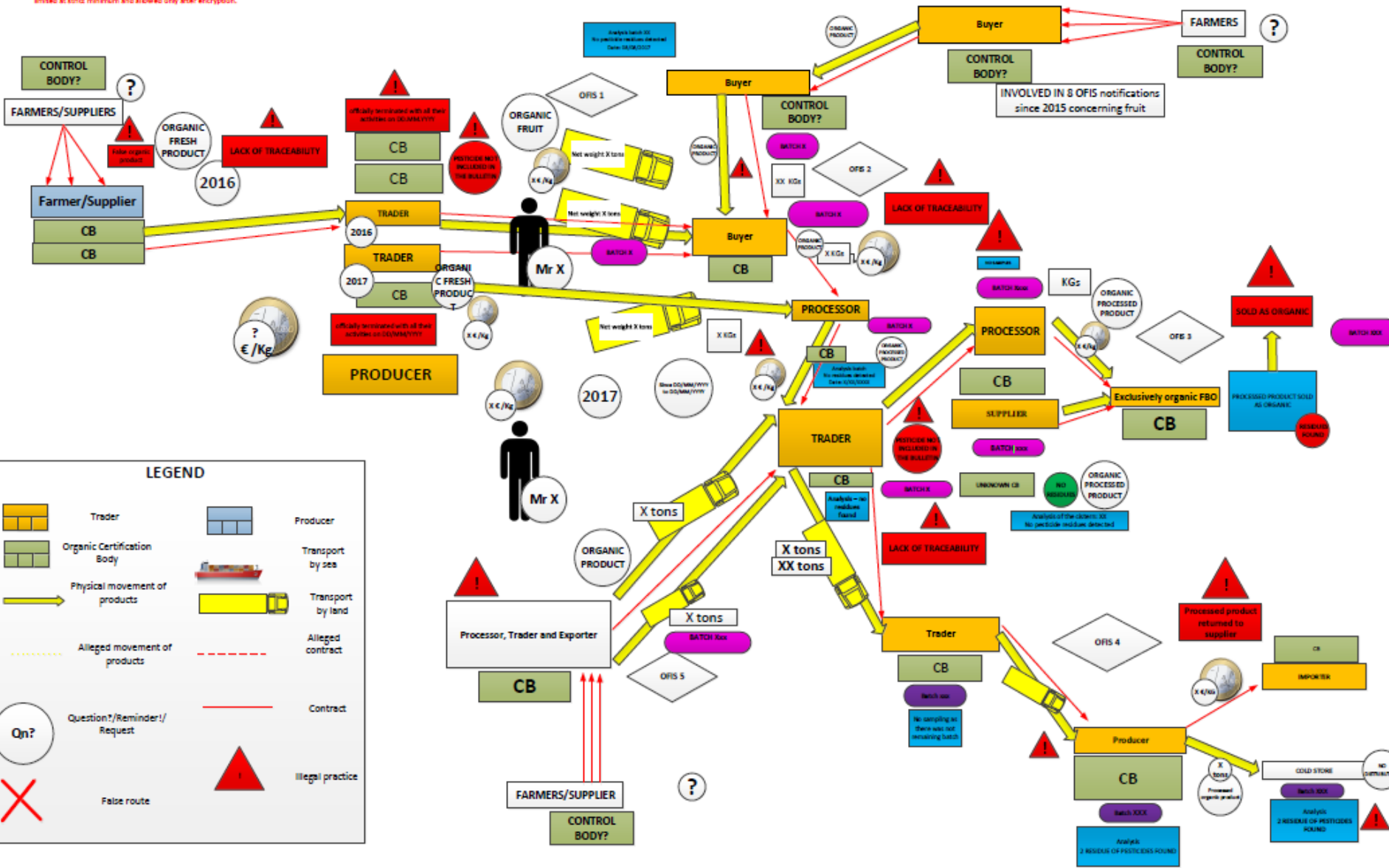
Suspicious of:

- 'In conversion' sold as organic
- Mixing with conventional
- Mass balance not matching
- Documents/certificates/lab reports
  - Lack
  - Falsified
  - Manipulated
  - Not covering production/surface
  - Expired

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## CASE MAPPING – 5 OFIS NOTIFICATIONS



### LEGEND

	Trader		Producer
	Organic Certification Body		Transport by sea
	Physical movement of products		Transport by land
	Alleged movement of products		Alleged contract
	Question/Reminder/Request		Contract
	False route		Illegal practice

## EU FFN results so far...

- *120 administrative investigations*
- *10 judicial investigations*
- *16 000 tons of products downgraded to conventional*
- *9 operators withdrawn/suspended*
- *2 CB's withdrawn in 6 countries*
- *Suspicion of involvement of 7 CBs*
- *3 cases linked to RASFF -> health risk*





## National actions results

- 19 judicial investigations
- 6 + 9 people arrested; 2 under investigation
- 105 administrative procedures
- 2 organised criminal groups neutralised (IT, ES)
- Downgraded: 162 tonnes





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# Challenges

- *Improve cooperation and information exchange*
- *Non-EU countries:*
  - **CA of non-EU country not involved - the power is with control bodies (supervised by DG AGRI)**





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## Case example – EU pesticide residues in garlic 29,5t

**@producer => 79k €**

**@retailer => 292k €**

- *Request based on OFIS case -> closed*

Contamination  
source not  
found

No  
responsibility  
established

No measures

- *Additional intelligence investigation in EU FFN*

➤ *Request to producing country*

➤ *Investigation*

➤ *Results transmitted via EU FFN*

➤ *Producer's certification withdrawn for 3 years*

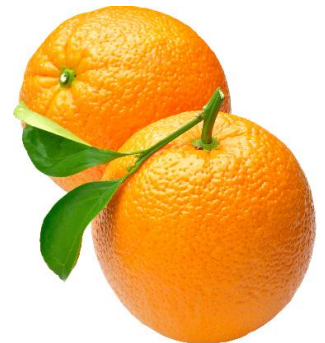


## Case example – non-EU country



- *Feed material*
  - **Irregularities with organic certification**
  - **Police investigation**
  - **Product confirmed to be sold as conventional in producing country**

- *Citrus with pesticide residues*
  - **Confirmed serious traceability issues and non-organic status of goods; investigation ongoing**



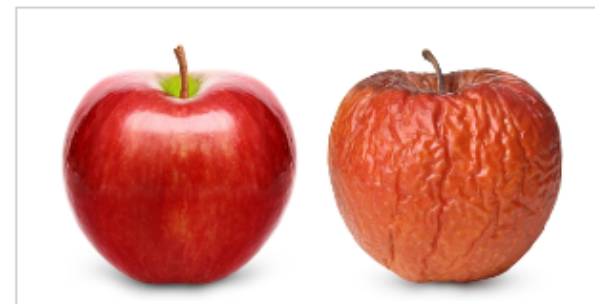
# Investigations' results published



## Eurojust helps reveal fake organic food fraud

The Hague, 1 July 2019

In close cooperation with Eurojust, Italian and Serbian national authorities unraveled a transnational large-scale fraud in the production and trade of allegedly organic food and beverages from rotten apples. In a successful joint action, coordinated by Eurojust, 9 suspects of an organised crime group (OCG) were arrested. Illegal assets worth €6 million as well as 1,411 tonnes of adulterated product with an estimated value of almost €5 million were seized. 6 companies involved in the criminal activities were searched in the countries concerned.



- ✓ <http://eurojust.europa.eu/press/PressReleases/Pages/2019/2019-07-01.aspx>
- ✓ <http://www.guardiacivil.es/es/prensa/noticias/7036.html>
- ✓ <https://www.politicheagricole.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/14123>
- ✓ <https://www.economie.gouv.fr/dgccrf/lutte-contre-fraudes-alimentaires-dgccrf-a-participe-a-action-coordonnee-europeenne-dans>

# Conclusions and way forward



- Huge and successful exercise
- Further cooperation of DG AGRI and SANTE
- Intelligence continues - screening of EU databases
- New organic regulation will strengthen the organic system
- Increased administrative cooperation with TC

# EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS' audit conclusions:

*The control system for organic products has improved but some challenges remain.*



- ***Success of organics: trust in the logo***
- ***Shared responsibility between the parties***
- ***Integrated cooperation to achieve concrete results***

