



European Commission and Mexico to start negotiations on a bilateral agreement on trade in organic products

Mexico City, 10 February 2016

The government of Mexico and the European Commission announced today the start of negotiations towards a bilateral agreement on trade in organic products. Both sides confirmed their interest to swiftly conclude an agreement that would allow expanding the market for organic farmers, reducing the burden for companies and supplying more organic products to consumers.

Secretary of Agriculture José Calzada of Mexico and EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Phil Hogan met earlier today in México City and agreed to launch negotiations with a view to acknowledging the equivalence of each other's organic legislation and control systems. EU Commissioner Phil Hogan is visiting Mexico from 10 to 12 February 2016, accompanied by a delegation of 35 European businesses representing a wide range of the European Union's agri-food sector.

EU Commissioner Phil Hogan stated: *"I very much welcome the start of negotiations with Mexico with a view to concluding an agreement on trade in organic products. The European organic sector continues to be one of our most dynamic production sectors and Mexico has great potential in developing opportunities for organic farmers and businesses"*.

Secretary of Agriculture Calzada stated: *"We have agreed to work together to determine if our organic production rules and control systems are equivalent. The goals of this exercise are to bring greater prosperity and welfare to our citizens, to reinforce our cooperation and to share our common responsibility with regard to regional and global issues of common interest"*.

Organic production is an overall system of farm management and food production that combines best environmental and climate action practices, a high level of biodiversity, the preservation of natural resources and the application of high production and animal welfare standards.

In Mexico, organic farming is going through a period of expansion. During 2014, total area planted with organic crops amounted to 24.5 thousand hectares, producing 104.4 thousand tonnes of these products, valued at 1,062 million pesos. Tomatoes, coffee, strawberries and raspberries stand out as the leaders in value generation among organic crops.

In the European Union, the organic sector has been rapidly developing in recent years, with a total area of 10.3 million hectares cultivated as organic in 2014 compared to 6.4 million hectares in 2005.¹

The EU market for organic products amounts to some 40% of the world market – second only to the USA (43%).²

¹ Eurostat

² Data from "The world of organic agriculture – Statistics & Emerging Trends 2015", FiBL and IFOAM