(English version)

Question for written answer E-002409/24
to the Commission
Gilles Pennelle (PfE)
(5 November 2024)

Subject: Supervision of third countries recognised as equivalent for organic farming production

A 2012 audit by the European Court of Auditors of the control system governing the production, processing, distribution and imports of organic products states, on page 39, that 'given that the Commission services have no internal procedures on how the supervision of recognised third countries should be carried out, it is uncertain when the Commission on-the-spot visits should be conducted after third countries are included in the list. […] no regular on-the-spot visits have been conducted to third countries (e.g. last visit to Israel in 1999, last visit to Costa Rica in 2000)'.

1. Since 2012, has the European Commission had a plan in place for regular monitoring of third countries recognised as equivalent for organic farming production?

2. Since 2012, what visits have been made to third countries recognised as equivalent?

Submitted: 5.11.2024

Answer given by Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission
(9 January 2025)

According to the data collected at the border through the system TRACES, only 5% of the total imports in volume of organic products come from equivalent third countries. The supervision put in place by the Commission on equivalent third countries encompasses various actions, including annual reporting supervision exercises, yearly meetings to discuss regulatory matters, non-conformities and possible shortcomings of the sector, beside on-the-spot visits.

For this purpose, very strong administrative cooperation has been set up with most of the third countries. In the last years Canada, the United States, Japan, Costa Rica, Argentina and Australia have been visited.

Moreover, reports on audits conducted in third countries recognised as equivalent, are available on the dedicated Commission webpage ([1]).

([1]) https://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/audit-report