



## Progress Report: BULGARIA

**Work Package:** WP01 - Regulation & policy framework regarding production, use, and transparency of organic seed

**Dissemination level:** Public

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**Authors:** Petya Pencheva (Bioselena), Martin Sommer (IFOAM Organics Europe)

**WP Leader:** Freya Schaefer (FiBL-DE)



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## 1. About the report

This report is part of the Work Package 01 of the [LIVESEED project](#), which explores EU Member States in terms of their implementation and best practices connected to the EU Organic Regulations, in the contexts of national regulatory and policy frameworks.

After the [Country Report on the National Visit](#) and the Report of the [Regional/National Workshop](#), this Progress Report shall, on one hand, reflect on actions taken by stakeholders ([blue tables](#)). Those actions have been formulated and committed to during the National workshop by the Declaration of Organic Seed (see Annex I in Report of the Regional/National Workshop), but such actions might also have been carried out by the stakeholders without having made a respective commitment before. On the other hand, this report shall elaborate developments in regulation compared to the previous reports, ergo the previous years, of the LIVESEED project ([green tables](#)).

To promote an easy assesment, actions and developments are sub-categorized into different topics, similar to those used in the workshop report.

This report has been produced in the framework of the Horizon 2020-funded project LIVESEED. The main aim of LIVESEED is to boost the production and use of organic seeds and plant breeding for organic agriculture across Europe. It is co-ordinated by IFOAM EU, and its scientific coordinator is FIBL-CH.

For further information concerning this report, please contact:

Martin Sommer: [martin.sommer@organicseurope.bio](mailto:martin.sommer@organicseurope.bio)

For further information concerning the LIVESEED project, please contact:

IFOAM EU Group

Bram Moeskops: [bram.moeskops@ifoam-eu.org](mailto:bram.moeskops@ifoam-eu.org)

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## 2. Evaluation of Progress

### 1.1. Database

#### 1.1.1. Committed actions of the Declaration of Organic Seeds

<b>Bioselena writes a letter to the Ministry with recommendations for requirements regarding the organic seed database (improvement of current database of return to organicXseeds)</b>	
<p>Almost one year after our meeting in Sofia, there were some developments regarding the Bulgarian national organic seeds database.</p> <p>Bioselena sent a letter to the Deputy Minister with a proposal to return Bulgaria to the OrganicXSeed database last year. The same subject was discussed again with Mr. Chavdar Marinov on 20.02.2020, but there was no response. This deputy minister was fired in April and communication with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry on the topic of OrganicXSeed stopped. Our database continues to be an Excel file with 4 organic seed producers.</p> <p>On August 26, 2020, a new letter was sent to Deputy Minister Virginia Krasteva, who oversees the organic farming department, with a proposal to return to organicXseed, but we have no official answer yet.</p>	<p>September 2019-September 2020</p>

#### 1.1.2. Non-committed, concrete actions by stakeholders (may be left empty)

<b>Reflection on developments/progress</b>	
<p>Our national database is still an Excel file. We succeeded in helping some of the Bulgarian seed producers to be listed in the database. However, it is very difficult to communicate with the Ministry and farmers are having trouble placing their offers on the database. The big Dutch seed producer Vitalis (Enza Zaden) is also on the list now.</p>	<p>September 2019-2020</p>

#### 1.1.3. Regulatory and general developments concerning the database

<b>Regulatory and general developments compared to previous years of the LIVESEED project</b>	
<p>The department for organic production from the Bulgarian ministry of agriculture, food and forestry is responsible for management of the database and for the derogation policy. The technical management of the database is done by an external IT company. They maintain the website and update the database. Until 2014, Bulgaria worked with OrganicXSeeds hosted by FIBL. Since 2015, they have a different database system. This database is updated twice a year. Before the update, the ministry sends all the seed suppliers on the database a letter to check if they still have organic seed available. If they do not react their offer on the database will be marked as “exhausted”. If they are sold out, the seed suppliers can also send an e-mail to the ministry themselves and their offer will be removed directly from the database.</p> <p>To offer seed on the database, it is required to provide proof that you are an authorised seed producer or supplier and your seed must be certified organic. Seed suppliers must submit all documents to the ministry, which will respond within a month. Foreign companies (traders or producers) need to present an additional certificate from the Seed Control Agency. In addition, they must submit the contract between the original seed producer and the certifying body. When offering seed on the database, seed suppliers must include information about the quantity and delivery period of the organic seed or vegetative propagating material and about the region where it can be delivered.</p>	<p>Period / Date</p>

### 1.2. Derogations

#### 1.2.1. Committed Actions of the Declaration of Organic Seeds

<b>Bioselena requests the Ministry to make the Derogation report public</b>	
<p>Reflection on developments/progress: The derogation report for Bulgaria is public information since last year. It is uploaded on the website of the Ministry of agriculture, food and forestry as a part of the database</p>	<p>November 2019</p>



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for organic seeds.

### 1.2.2. Regulatory and general developments concerning derogations

#### Regulatory and general developments compared to previous years of the LIVESEED project

A farmer can ask for derogation if the variety he wants to use is not available on the database. The derogations are granted by one of the certification bodies according to a standardized procedure, checked by the ministry.

To receive a derogation, farmers must fill in a form with information about the variety they want to grow, the quantity of seed needed, and where (on which field) and when (day of planting) they are going to sow it. Besides that, they must show proof of their search on the seed database (screenshot) and they must provide proof that the seed they want to use is untreated, non-GMO and not produced by hydroponic production methods. If it turns out a farmer used conventional seed without a derogation, the product can't be sold as organic anymore.

Developments regarding the number of derogations: 2014 – 1065 number of derogations; 2015 – 849 number of derogations; 2016 – 1478 number of derogations. The total number of derogations for 2019 are 1340.

Period  
/  
Date

### 1.3. Training/Information/Communication

#### 1.3.1. Committed Actions of the Declaration of Organic Seeds

#### Two organic demonstration fields will be organised

The idea was to organize 2 demonstration fields in 2 different places:

- Agricultural University in Plovdiv will provide fields, Vitalis will provide vegetable seeds
- Bonevi Perfect will provide fields, Research Institute Sadovo will provide seeds for cereals

Due to national Covid-19 restriction measures, the Agricultural University was closed during spring semester and the working team did not have the opportunity to organize a demonstrational field. When they got back to work, it was too late to plant vegetables.

Bonevi successfully managed to fulfil the commitment and planted a demonstrational field with 3 wheat varieties. The organic seeds were provided by the Institute of Plant Genetic Resources in Sadovo. These 3 varieties are created by the Institute - Murgavets, Boryana and Sadovo.

The field that Bonezhi provided, is located in the area of the village of Elenovo, Nova Zagora. The total area of the demonstration field is 10.5 ha. After harvesting, seed samples were taken for analysis and the results were very good. Bonevi are happy with the yield, despite the very dry year.

Due to national covid-19 restriction measures, public gatherings were not allowed and demonstrational events on the field were canceled.

June 2020

#### Boril Nikolov (Vitalis) collects and disseminates information about different types of organic seed and the difference to conventional seed

Reflection on developments/progress: Boril Nikolov actively collects information about organic seeds and explains the difference between organic and untreated conventional seeds of organic farmers who are his clients. He and Tsvetanka Dincheva, who participated in the cross-visit in Italy, created a brochure with information about organic vegetable seeds, uploaded on the Bioselena website.

<https://bioselena.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/%D0%91%D0%98%D0%9E-%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%87%D1%83%D1%86%D0%B8-2020.pdf>

April 2020



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<b>Eli Vitanova and Mihaela Metodieva start a group in social media where stakeholders of the organic farming sector can keep in touch and share information.</b>	
No progress was observed.	Period / Date

### 1.4. Production and Use of Organic Seeds

#### 1.4.1. Committed Actions of the Declaration of Organic Seeds

<b>Assoc. prof. Marina Marcheva (Agricultural University Plovdiv) writes a proposal to the Ministry for funding registration of varieties for organic production</b>	
Reflection on developments/progress: Assoc. prof. Marina Marcheva from the Agricultural University discussed the idea with colleagues from different institutions last autumn. Currently, they cannot agree on whether it is right to seek a change in the legislation allowing conventional varieties to be tested and registered as organic. The solution is to follow the law and seek funding for establishing organic breeding gardens and centres. But this action will not happen this autumn.	November 2020
<b>The Bulgarian association of organic producers asks the Ministry to include extra payment for production and use of organic seeds in the payments of CAP</b>	
Reflection on developments/progress: This proposal has been made during a working group to develop the National Action Plan for organic agriculture, followed up by a written proposal. The idea would take the form of an additional payment when calculating subsidy rates. Farmers would receive an additional subsidy when using certified organic seeds.	May 2020

### 3. Summary of Progress

- The national organic seed database is still an Excel file that is updated twice a year and will require updates to live up to the requirements of the New Organic Regulation EC 2018/848.
- Thanks to the derogation report made public, there is more transparency now regarding the amount and details of derogations.
- No developments yet regarding national expert group.
- A demonstrational field with several wheat varieties was planted and the results were good despite the challenging (dry) climatic conditions.
- A brochure on organic vegetable seeds was created that will be helpful to communicate the advantages of organic seed to producers.
- A proposal for an extra payment for the use of organic seed has been made, will require follow-up in the context of the national action plan for organic agriculture.



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## Annex I: Overview of Organic Regulation

The following tables show relevant articles in the organic regulation and give support to the evaluation on national developments/progresses in this report.

### 1.1. Database (T1)

EC No 889/2008	
<b>Article 48: Database</b>	<p>1. Each Member State shall ensure that a computerised database is established for the listing of the varieties for which seed or seed potatoes obtained by the organic production method are available on its territory.</p> <p>2. The database shall be managed either by the competent authority of the Member State or by an authority or body designated for this purpose by the Member State, hereinafter referred to as 'manager of the database'. Member States may also designate an authority or a private body in another country.</p>
<b>Article 49: Registration</b>	<p>3. Each Member State shall decide in which period of the year the database has to be regularly updated for each species or group of species cultivated on its territory. The database shall hold information with regard to that decision.</p>
<b>Article 51: Registered information</b>	<p>1. For each registered variety and for each supplier, the database referred to in Article 48 shall contain at least the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the scientific name of the species and the variety;</li> <li>(b) the name and contact details of the supplier or his representative;</li> <li>(c) the area where the supplier can deliver the seed or seed potatoes to the user in the usual time needed for the delivery;</li> <li>(d) the country or region in which the variety is tested and approved [...]</li> <li>(e) the date from which the seed or seed potatoes will be available;</li> <li>(f) the name and/or code number of the control authority or control body in charge of the control of the operator</li> </ul> <p>2. The supplier shall immediately inform the manager of the database if any of the registered varieties are no longer available. The amendments shall be recorded in the database.</p> <p>3. Besides the information specified in paragraph 1, the database shall contain a list of the species listed in Annex X (Species for which organically produced seed or seed potatoes are available in sufficient quantities and for a significant number of varieties [...]).</p>
<b>Article 52: Access to information</b>	<p>1. The information in the database referred to in Article 48 shall be available through the internet, free of cost, to the users of seed or seed potatoes and to the public. [...]</p> <p>2. The Member States shall ensure that all users [of seed and seed potatoes] are informed, at least once a year, about the system and how to obtain the information in the database.</p>
<b>Article 53: Registration -fee</b>	<p>3. Each registration may be subject to the levying of a fee, which shall represent the cost of inserting and maintaining the information in the database [...]. The competent authority of the Member State shall approve the amount of the fee charged by the manager of the database.</p>



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## 1.2. Derogations (T2)

EC No 889/2008	
<b>Article 49: Registration</b>	2. Any variety which has not been registered in the database shall be considered as unavailable.
<b>Article 6: Specific principles applicable to agricultural activities</b>	(i) without prejudice to Article 14 of Regulation (EC) No 2100/94 and to the national plant variety rights granted under Member States' national law, the possibility for farmers to use plant reproductive material obtained from their own farms in order to foster genetic resources adapted to the special conditions of organic production;
<b>Article 45: Use of seed or vegetative propagating material not obtained by the organic production method</b>	<p>3. Species for which it is established that organically produced seed or seed potatoes are available in sufficient quantities and for a significant number of varieties in all parts of the Community are set out in Annex X. The species listed in Annex X may not be subject of authorisations pursuant to paragraph 1(b), unless these are justified by one of the purposes referred to in paragraph 5(d).</p> <p>4. Member States may delegate the responsibility for granting the authorisation referred to in paragraph 1(b) to another public administration under their supervision or to the control authorities or control bodies referred to in Article 27 of Regulation (EC) No 834/2007.</p> <p>5. Authorisation to use seed or seed potatoes not obtained by the organic production method may only be granted in the following cases:  <b>(a)</b> where no variety of the species which the user wants to obtain is registered in the database referred to in Article 48  <b>(b)</b> where no supplier, meaning an operator who markets seed or seed potatoes to other operators, is able to deliver the seed or seed potatoes before sowing or planting in situations where the user has ordered the seed or seed potatoes in reasonable time;  <b>(c)</b> where the variety which the user wants to obtain is not registered in the database referred to in Article 48 and the user is able to demonstrate that none of the registered alternatives of the same species are appropriate and that the authorisation therefore is significant for his production;  <b>(d)</b> where it is justified for use in research, test in small-scale field trials or for variety conservation purposes agreed by the competent authority of the Member State.</p>
<b>Article 45: Use of seed or vegetative propagating material not obtained by the organic production method</b>	<p>6. The authorisation shall be granted before the sowing of the crop.</p> <p>7. The authorisation shall be granted only to individual users for one season at a time and the authority or body responsible for the authorisations shall register the quantities of seed or seed potatoes authorised.</p> <p>8. By way of derogation from paragraph 7, the competent authority of the Member State may grant to all users a general authorisation:  <b>(a)</b> for a given species when and in so far as the condition laid down in paragraph 5(a) is fulfilled;  <b>b.</b> for a given variety when and in so far as the conditions laid down in paragraph 5(c) are fulfilled</p> <p>9. Authorisation may only be granted during periods for which the database is updated in accordance with Article 49(3)</p>
<b>Article 54: Annual report</b>	1. The authorities or bodies designated to grant authorisations in accordance with Article 45 shall register all authorisations and shall make this information available in a report to the competent authority of the Member State and to the manager of the database.
<b>Article 55: Summary report</b>	The competent authority of the Member State shall, before 31 March each year, collect the reports and send a summary report covering all authorisations of the Member State from the previous calendar year to the Commission and to the other Member States.[...] The information shall be published in the database [...]. The competent authority may delegate the task of collecting the reports to the manager of the database.



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