

Press Release
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The European Rural Poultry Association asserts the needs for ambitious organic production in line with societal expectations

More than 80 people were present on Thursday, February 6 at the European Parliament in Brussels, for the conference-debate organized by the European Rural Poultry Association (ERPA) on the topic: "*European aviculture: One Reality? Focus on organic aviculture*".

Quality, *terroir*, future, health, animal welfare ... the participants took part in the exercise of writing what organic aviculture means for them. These terms refer to the image as well as to consumers' expectations towards a production method on a human scale, respectful of animals and trustworthy. This organic sector represents in the European Union around 60,000 tonnes of poultry meat and 22 million laying hens per year.

Following the warm welcome from MEP **Eric Andrieu** (S&D, France) - host of the event - several speakers took the floor : **Maciej Golubiewski**, Head of Cabinet of the Commissioner for Agriculture Janusz Wojciechowski, expressed the support of his Commissioner for organic aviculture and underlined its potential for achieving the transition provided for by the European Green Deal. An Action Plan for the development of organic farming will be proposed during the year. As for **Laurène Leroy** - from the French Poultry Technical Institute (*Institut Technique de l'Aviculture* - ITAVI) - she presented a recent study entitled "*State of play of organic poultry sectors in the European Union*", which highlights the diversity of organic aviculture systems in Europe as well as the disparities between Member States in the implementation of European legislation on organic farming.

Through its president **Carlos Terraz**, ERPA warned against the risk of industrialization induced by EU Regulation 2018/848 on organic production and the associated implementing acts which will enter into force on January 1, 2021: "***We were able to verify that the future Regulation does not meet our values at all. For example, there will no longer be any restrictions on the size of buildings, a reality that implies an "industrialization" completely moving away from the image that consumers have of the organic production method.***"

The issue of which organic aviculture model should be promoted was precisely discussed during a round-table with **Nicolas Verlet** (European Commission), **Lone Andersen** (Copa-Cogeca), **Yolin Targé** (representative of ERPA and breeder in Wallonia) as well as Mr. Andrieu. The exchanges highlighted the growing demand for organic products but also divergent positions on central elements of European legislation such as the definition of poultry slow growth or the maximum authorized surface of buildings for laying hens.

For Eric Andrieu, the Basic Regulation on organic farming is (already) outdated and the "*matrix*" issue of climate change calls for greater ambitions for organic production, which elected officials must be able to anticipate because of "*the time gap between economic dynamics and legislative processes*".

Attentive to societal expectations and in line with its values, ERPA intends to continue promoting extensive organic aviculture on a human scale, in the open air, respectful of animal welfare and providing high-quality products.



Created in 2007, ERPA aims in particular to preserve and develop rural poultry production in Europe (colored poultry from rustic slow-growing strains) and to promote its particularities as well as to support outdoor, extensive and family oriented farming methods. More information is available on : <https://erpa-ruralpoultry.wixsite.com/erpa-en>