

German-Turkish Collaboration Organic Agriculture
(Project no. TUR 11-01)

	<p>Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue</p> <p>Importer-Exporter Platform Izmir, Türkiye</p> <p>Izmir, 28th to 29th August 2012</p>
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IZMIR PLATFORM QUALITY DECLARATION

4 German; 1 Swedish and 13 Turkish reputable importing and exporting companies, participating in the importer-exporter platform meeting on 28th and 29th of August in Izmir / Turkey, which was hosted by the Aegean Exporters Union (EIB), jointly adopted the following quality declaration.

1. The organic trade sector is aware of its responsibility for quality assurance of organic products throughout the whole supply chain from the producing countries to the markets of final sales. This duty is shared between all actors in relation to their specific field of activity. Better exchange of information on issues, such as legal requirements and legislation, market trends and developments, training activities etc. will help the industry in Turkey and Europe to work more efficient within a professional network.
2. Residues of unwanted substances, such as pesticides, aflatoxin and ochratoxin are a continuous threat to trade with organic sultanas and figs. The participants strongly expressed the need for common solutions, including harmonized procedures among laboratories, control bodies and authorities for handling such cases and interpretation of analysis results.

3. Due to the specific growing situation in Turkey – organic products are mainly produced by smallholders under contract farming conditions - exporters do have explicit responsibility regarding the organic performance of their suppliers. Importers are willing to support these activities, technically through regular supplier audits and visits to the project areas as well as by investing in building up social partnerships.
4. There is accordance among all participants that fraud or intentional misuse in the organic sector must be punished and such operators should be banned from the organic business. Enforced legal actions should be supported by voluntary commitments for quality standards (best practice) and by creating highly visible transparency from field to shelf by integration of stakeholder opinion and information. In regard to this objective, the participants are willing to support an independent organization, such as ETO, to implement a discussion platform, where trade companies, consumers and farmers can place statements regarding their quality concerns or irregularities they came across. Such an internet-based platform will need defined procedures and should not be engaged in any kind of judgements.
5. Education and training are inseparable from commercial activities and there is need for more capacity building on farm level including training of agricultural consultants. The participants are in favour of the idea of a broad training initiative for organic farmers and commit themselves for enhanced investment in such capacity building activities. The bilateral German-Turkish project Organic Agriculture, the Association of Organic Agriculture Organizations (ETO), the Aegean Exporters Union (EIB) and local universities and research institutions are regarded to be the right partners for such a project.