



Regulatory Framework for Organic Farming in the EU & imports from the Global South

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Introduction

Organic farming (OF) is a promising agricultural method with positive effects on the human ecological and social environment.

Governments have taken over a major role in **defining OF by creating legal standards**. All over the world countries have established **various regulatory systems** in order to **protect the justified expectations of consumers** with regard to **along the organic supply chain**.

As they are relevant to international trade, these standards do not only influence the organic farming movement on the national level but also have an **impact across national borders**.

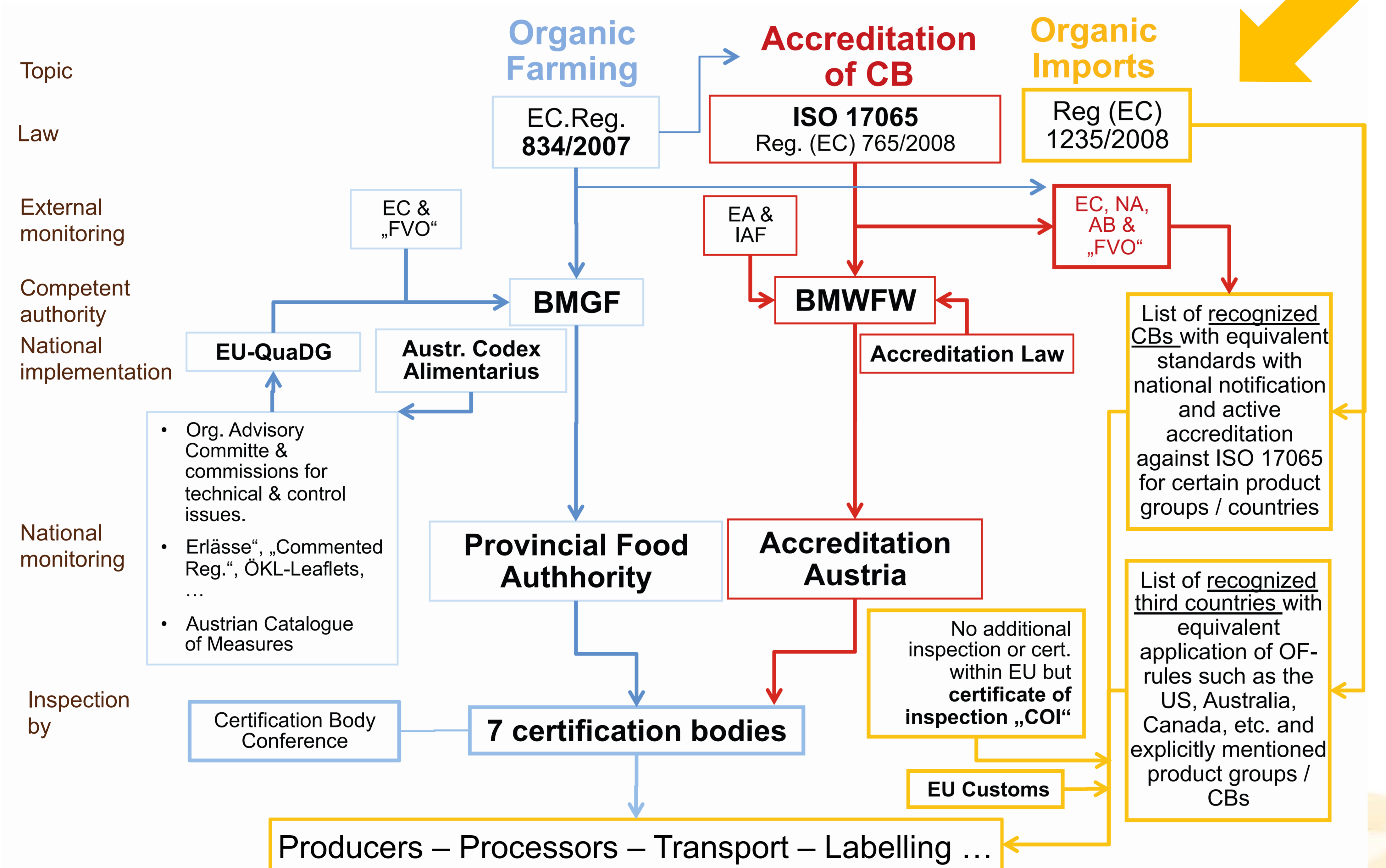
For imports from the Global South into the EU it is of importance having understood the EU regulatory framework for OF.

Methods

This poster introduces a model (for the case of Austria) on how OF and organic imports are regulated. Data is based on key informant interviews with experts on the regulatory system.

The aim of this poster is **facilitating a discussion and supporting a better understanding of the regulatory framework** of OF. Research questions are:

- Who are the **actors** involved in regulation organic farming and organic imports based on the case of Austria?
- How can the **formal institutions and their relations** be visualized?
- What are the ways of **importing** organic products from the Global South to Austria?



Abbreviations

- “FVO” (Former Food and Veterinary Office)
- AB (Accreditation Body)
- BMGF (Federal Ministry of Health and Women’s Affairs)
- BMLFUW (The Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management)
- BMWFW (Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy)
- CB (Certification Body; Term used imprecisely in OF: Control Body)
- EA European cooperation for accreditation
- EC (European Commission)
- EU-Qua-DG EU-Qualitätsregelungen-Durchführungs-gesetz
- NA (National Authority)
- OF (Organic Farming)
- ÖKL (Austrian Expert Table for Technical Issues in Agriculture)
- OU (Organic Unit of the EC)
- Reg (Regulation)

Figure: Import Path (yellow) for trading organic products from outside the EU into the EU, shown with the national regulatory system of Austria (blue: EC Organic Farming Law, red ISO 17065). The regulatory system for additional private OF & environmental schemes are not shown here.

Debate

OF was established in a bottom-up process as farmers aimed to design sustainable ways of using natural resources. Farmers’ traditional knowledge and their awareness of ecological, as well as, of social affairs was the main base for the development of private OF standards. Since public interest in OF has grown rapidly, some scholars argue that the ownership on the process of defining OF is no longer in the hands of farmers and the original principles and aims of the movement seem to be threatened by a bureaucratic view of “recipe”-organic farming. Nevertheless this vies seems being necessary in global trade for avoiding fraud and ensuring consumer expectations.

Unsolved problems exist between the necessities of global harmonization and the local adaptability of the standards on OF. The debate on **compliance** or **conformity** versus **equivalence** of standards is key for ensuring local adaptation of OF practices. Also alternatives to third party certification such as **participatory guarantee systems** or **group certification** based upon **internal control systems** might help resolving current bottle necks in organic farming governance.

Key resources

- List of so Recognized Third Countries & List of recognized Certification (Control) Bodies with product groups/ countries: to be found in EC Reg 1235/2008 last modified 07/2016

Full paper with references

Please see references to this poster at my page at www.researchgate.org (Christian Reinhard Vogl) (uploaded soon):

VOGL, C. R. & P. AXMANN (2016): Regelungsmechanismen im System Ökologischer Landbau. In: Freyer, B. (Hrsg.): Ökologischer Landbau – Grundlagen, Wissensstand und Herausforderungen. In press. UTB, Stuttgart, Deutschland.

(Although the text is written in German, please see list of references).