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BREXIT UPDATE – Importing & Exporting organic products from 1 January 2021

The context

The United Kingdom officially left the European Union on **31 January 2020**. Since then, it has been a “third country” to the EU.

The transition period, during which the EU and the UK are maintaining close ties, including the free movement of goods and people, will end on 31 December 2020.

In the absence of a free trade agreement, certain measures have recently been taken to ensure that organic products can continue to be traded between the UK and the EU.

What is going on with trade of organic products in practice?

To guarantee an optimal transition, the UK has decided to **recognise the EU as equivalent for the purposes of trade of organic products until 31 December 2023**. That means that the UK will accept organic products from the EU as well as those from 13 Third Countries recognised as equivalent (listed in Appendix III of Regulation EC 1235/2008) and other Third Countries whose certification bodies are listed in Appendix IV of R (EC) 1235/2008. This transition measure will offer some stability to the organic product market. This equivalence will be reassessed by 2023. The United Kingdom aims to negotiate a sustainable, long-term agreement with the EU on the equivalence of organic products.

If you are exporting products to the UK, what will change from 1 January?

If you are a company exporting organic products to the UK, you will need to adjust your organic certification and **register your export activity** with CERTISYS. If you have not already done so, you should contact your CERTISYS controller.

You will require a **specific Certificate of Inspection** in paper format - **GB COI**:

- **From 1 January 2021** if your business is based in a **Third Country**
- **From 1 January 2022** if your business is based in an **EU member state**. This measure was originally planned to apply from 1 July 2021 and it was decided by the UK authorities to postpone the implementation in view of the extension of the covid restrictions.

In time, the British authorities will develop an electronic import system which will replace the paper system.

You will need to fill out a GB COI form with the help of your client in the UK for each shipment that you export. If your shipment is split up during customs clearance, you will have to fill in an “**Extract of GB COI**”.

You can fill in the information that will appear in the GB COI directly via MyCertisys.

You will be required to present a scanned copy of your signed GB COI form to the port customs authorities when your shipment arrives.

The GB COI form, step-by-step guidance and explanatory notes can be downloaded here:

- [Specific Inspection Certificate \(GB COI\)](#)
- [Extract of GB COI](#)
- [GB COI Explanatory notes](#)
- [Extract of GB COI Explanatory notes](#)
- [Step-by-step guidance](#)



What is changing if you are importing products from the UK?

All UK inspection bodies have been **recognised** by the EU as **equivalent** until 31 December 2023. They are listed in R(EU) 1235/2008.

If you are a business importing organic products from the UK, you will need to adjust your organic certification and **register your activity as an importer** with CERTISYS. If you have not already done so, you should contact your CERTISYS controller.

Your business should also be registered as an “**importer of organic products**” on **TRACES NT** and should mention your certification authority.

Your products imported from the UK will need to come with an inspection certificate (eCOI) submitted through TRACES NT and signed by the certification authority which oversees your British supplier.

Find more information about:

- [The procedure for importing organic products](#)
- [the TRACES NT user manual](#)

As the situation is evolving rapidly, we will keep you informed of future regulatory updates.

Find out more:

- ✓ The website of [DEFRA](#) (Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs)
- ✓ The website <https://economie.fgov.be/fr/themes/entreprises/brexit>
- ✓ The website https://finance.belgium.be/en/customs_excises/enterprises/brexit
- ✓ The website https://ec.europa.eu/info/european-union-and-united-kingdom-forging-new-partnership_en

