

EU CODE OF CONDUCT ON RESPONSIBLE FOOD BUSINESS AND MARKETING PRACTICES

Annual report
2025

General information

Name in full + acronym	Assoziation ökologischer Lebensmittelherstellerinnen und -hersteller e.V. (AöL)
Contact person with contact details	Pia Kissinger pia.kissinger@aoel.org
N° in the transparency register*	715596039328-75
Date of signature of the Code	01.09.2021
Step of the food chain represented (ex: primary production, production, processing, trade, retail, ...)	Organic food processing
Who do you represent? (e.g. number of members, companies, SMEs)	130 companies in german speaking countries

About Association of organic food processors (AöL) e.V.

The Association of Organic Food Processors e.V. (AöL) represents the interests of the organic oriented food processing industry in German-speaking Europe. The AöL's tasks include the political representation of interests and the promotion of exchange and cooperation among its members.

The objectives of the EU CODE OF CONDUCT ON RESPONSIBLE FOOD BUSINESS AND MARKETING PRACTICES are among the core topics of AöL's sustainability work. AöL's work on these core topics takes the form of the following strategies: Provision of knowledge, networking between member companies in order to exchange knowledge and political work.



Promotion and dissemination activities linked to the Code

AöL is using the publication of this annual report as an opportunity to inform its members about the EU CODE OF CONDUCT ON RESPONSIBLE FOOD BUSINESS AND MARKETING PRACTICE. Through the Sustainability Working Group's mailing list, members are informed about the standard and the annual report via email. In addition, an article is published in the internal AöL newsletter.

Encourage our members to align their sustainability actions and/or business practices to the aspirational objectives and targets of the Code and invite them, on a voluntary basis, to adhere to this Code, as appropriate / Developed or explored the development of sector-specific tools and resources in support of the Code

The implementation of sustainability measures both at management level and along the process and supply chain was a particular focus here.

Three working groups are established as part of the Sustainability Working Group (Working Group 1 on the topic of "Net Zero" (digital meeting each month), Working Group 2 on the topic of "supply chain legislation (EU and Germany)" and Working Group 3 on the topic of "sustainability reporting") since 2023. 2 more Working Group were set on the topic of Green Claims and EUDR. "

The **Net Zero working group** deals with the setting and implementation of climate targets in companies. In 2025 the accounting of Scope 3 played a major role. Both calculations based on primary data and those based on secondary data were discussed. The companies exchanged regularly their status Quo in the work on this topic. In this context, participants discussed challenges and uncertainties and shared their experiences. The service provider KlimAktiv also presented a software solution for calculating CO2 emissions. In addition to emissions accounting, strategies for reducing and offsetting emissions within the company and along the supply chain were discussed. Also the calculation of the "Product Carbon Footprint" and the related requirements of retailer to the food processors were addressed. The important topic of climate risk analysis was also addressed for the first time. Questions such as "Where are the main risks for companies in the area of climate change?" and "How are adaptation measures developed?" and "Where are the greatest opportunities for action?" were discussed. With this working group, the AöL is contributing to objective 1.2 (Reducing the environmental footprint of food consumption by 2030) and goal 3 (A climate-neutral food chain in Europe by 2050) of the EU Code of Conduct.

The **working group on supply chain** work and supply chain legislation deals with the implementation of current German and European supply chain legislation (CSDDD and LkSG). In 2025, the working group discussed the status quo of the individual participating companies with regard to their work on the guidelines of CSDDD and the german LkSG. In this context, challenges and uncertainties were discussed and lessons learned were exchanged. In addition, the omnibus proposal of EU commission were discussed and a position paper was drafted in collaboration with the working group sustainability



reporting. With this working group, the AöL is contributing to objective 7 (Sustainable sourcing in food supply chains) of the EU Code of Conduct.

The **working group on sustainability reporting** deals with the European sustainability reporting requirements and voluntary reporting standards. Our association has participated in the development of industry examples for the VSME reporting tool from DNK Software Solutions. The AöL members developed organic specific notes and examples. The participants also exchanged experiences and information on the procedure for the dual materiality analysis. Additionally, the working group elaborated a statement for the official feedback to EU Omnibus regulation proposal.

In 2025, AöL regularly informed the participants of the **EU Deforestation (EUDR) working group** about the current status of the regulation and additional guidelines, FAQs etc. During the meetings, uncertainties were discussed and experts from other organisations were invited. Participants reported to each other about their activities concerning EUDR and supported each other with their questions and answers.

In addition, the AöL has developed a high level of expertise in the areas of the **Empowering Consumer Directive** and the draft **Green Claims Directive**. On the one hand, AöL informs its members about the latest developments in the legislative process and supports them in implementing the new rules. On the other hand, AöL represents the interests of the organic sector with European and national legislators.

In 2025 there were **two events of AöL on the topic of sustainability**. In spring the participants of the Sustainability working group visited the AöL member company VILSA and in autumn the AöL member company Neumarkter Lammsbräu. At these working group meetings, the host company presents its sustainability work. In addition, the participating companies shared updates on their current progress in the area of sustainability. This led to many valuable insights. In these meetings AöL contributes especially to objective 4 (An optimised circular and resource-efficient food chain in Europe) and objective 5 (Lasting, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all) of the EU Code of Conduct.

AöL is a supporting member of the **Food for Biodiversity association** and is involved there in dialogue on the topic of biodiversity with other organic and conventional food processing companies and the food trade. The aim is to pull together across all sectors, exchange knowledge and share experiences.

The AöL supports its members in their communication of sustainable activities. On the one hand, the AöL supports companies in the preparation of sustainability reports that comply with the law as part of the sustainability reporting working group. On the other hand, the AöL has set up a **"Communication" working group**. Here, the AöL provides templates to give members a platform to communicate their organic and sustainability activities quickly and easily. The LinkedIn channel is currently frequently used for this purpose.

Engaged with other partners in the food chain.





AöL has a strong network of connections both along the entire value chain and within other institutions. For example the academic community (e.g., research institutes and universities/colleges, with associations in Austria and abroad, with federal ministries and EU commissions, as well as with standards-setting bodies and software producers.

Association of Organic Food Processors e.V.

The Association of Organic Food Processors e.V. (AöL) represents the interests of the organic oriented food processing industry in German-speaking Europe. The AöL's tasks include the political representation of interests and the promotion of exchange and cooperation among its members. The nearly 130 AöL companies, ranging from small and medium-sized enterprises to internationally active companies, generate a turnover of more than 4 billion euros with organic food. The AöL is a discussion partner for politics, business, science and the media in all matters of organic food processing.

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