

Prepared by DigitalTrade4.EU



Draft Amending Delegated Regulation concerning the Fruit and Vegetables Sector

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About Us

The **DigitalTrade4.EU consortium** envisions a **seamlessly interconnected Europe** and **neighbouring regions** powered by harmonized standards for the digitalisation of trade documents and processes. By fostering the digital transformation of trade, we aim to promote economic integration, enhance cooperation, and ensure long-term trade facilitation across borders.

Our consortium is made up of **experts in their field**, including **105 full partners**—trade associations, logistics providers, shipping lines, banks and insurances, technology innovators, etc.—**from 17 European Union countries** (*France, Belgium, Netherlands, Austria, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Latvia, Spain, Germany, Sweden, Poland, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Slovenia, Denmark, Bulgaria*) and **22 non-EU countries** (*United Kingdom, Switzerland, Montenegro, Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, India, Nepal, Canada, United States of America, Cameroon, Morocco, Egypt, Kenya, Pakistan, Nigeria, Brazil, Uzbekistan, Turkey, Ukraine*).

Our consortium is already **aligned with the fundamentals** of the **EU Competitiveness Compass**. Learn more:

- How DigitalTrade4.EU Can Help Achieve the Objectives of the EU Competitiveness Compass (February 2025)

<https://www.digitaltrade4.eu/how-digitaltrade4-eu-can-help-achieve-the-objectives-of-the-eu-competitiveness-compass/>

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Executive Summary

DigitalTrade4.EU welcomes the European Commission's draft Delegated Regulation amending rules for the **fruit and vegetables sector**, particularly its focus on **simplification, harmonisation, and improved notification systems**. We commend the efforts to **reduce administrative burdens** and enhance **legal clarity** for **producer organisations**.

This feedback aligns with the **EU Competitiveness Compass** and the strategic goals of **DigitalTrade4.EU**, advocating for the leverage of **digitalisation** to achieve meaningful **simplification** and boost **competitiveness**. We propose an intensified focus on **international coordination**, the deepening of **digital trade partnerships**, and the championing of global **interoperability** of laws and standards, such as the **UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records (MLETR)**¹, **UNECE Recommendation No. 49 ("Transparency at Scale")**² and **EU eIDAS 2.0**³ regulation.

UNCITRAL MLETR provides a **legal framework** for **electronic documents** (e.g., **contracts, bills of lading**) to have the same **validity** as **paper-based** ones. **UNECE Recommendation No. 49** promotes **transparency** in **global value chains** through **standardized data sharing**, while **eIDAS 2.0** establishes a **pan-European system** for **secure digital identities** and **trust services**.

This includes prioritising **investments in digital infrastructure**, supporting **Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)** in their **digital transition**, ensuring **policy coherence** with **EU digital trade policy**, and integrating comprehensive **Environmental, Social, and Economic (ESE) data**, potentially through **Digital Product Passports (DPPs)**⁴.

***Note:** In this document, the terms **Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)** and **Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs)** are used interchangeably and carry the same meaning and weight. This clarification is important because different sources and contexts may refer to these groups using either acronym, but both encompass the full range of smaller business categories critical for economic development.*

¹ UNCITRAL. Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records

https://uncitral.un.org/en/texts/ecommerce/modellaw/electronic_transferable_records

² United Nations Economic and Social Council. Recommendation No. 49: Transparency at Scale – Fostering Sustainable Value Chains (March 2025)

<https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/ECE-TRADE-C-CEFACT-2025-03E.pdf>

³ European Commission. Discover eIDAS

<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/discover-eidas>

⁴ European Commission. EU's Digital Product Passport: Advancing transparency and sustainability

<https://data.europa.eu/en/news-events/news/eus-digital-product-passport-advancing-transparency-and-sustainability>

Introduction

DigitalTrade4.EU vision is a **seamlessly interconnected Europe** and neighbouring regions powered by **harmonised standards** for the **digitalisation of trade documents and processes**. We aim to foster the **digital transformation of trade** to promote **economic integration**, enhance **cooperation**, and ensure **long-term trade facilitation** across borders.

This document provides feedback on the **Commission's draft Delegated Regulation** (Ref. Ares (2025)3885954-14/05/2025) amending rules for **producer organisations** and the implementation of certain mechanisms in the **fruit and vegetables sector**.

The **fruit** and **vegetable** sector is a **critical** component of the **EU's agricultural economy**, contributing significantly to **food security**, **rural employment**, and **export revenues**. **Modernizing** its **regulatory framework** through **digital tools** is essential to address challenges such as **climate change**, **market volatility**, and **global supply chain disruptions**.

Our input is guided by our commitment to aligning **EU trade policies** with **global digital standards** to enhance **efficiency**, **transparency**, and **sustainability**.

Expectations from the Commission's Side: The Objectives

The **Commission's draft amending Delegated Act** aims to achieve several key objectives for the **fruit and vegetables sector**. These include:

- **Improving alignment and harmonisation:** Aligning definitions with horizontal regulations like **Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2016/232** to **harmonise and simplify** the governance of **producer organisations**.
- **Updating legal references:** Ensuring legal references for calculating the **value of market production** are current, pointing to **Regulation (EU) 2021/2115**.
- **Enhancing clarity:** Improving the **clarity of legal provisions** that govern the recognition of **producer organisations**.
- **Supporting producer organisations during crises:** Introducing new provisions and clarifying existing ones for **producer organisations** affected by **natural disasters, climatic events, plant diseases, or pest infestations**, which are increasing in frequency and intensity.
- **Streamlining notification obligations:**
 - Deleting the **double notification obligation** for extension of rules decisions from **Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/891**, consolidating this under **Delegated Regulation (EU) 2016/232**, while ensuring specific regional needs of the **fruit and vegetable sector** are met.
 - Aligning the methodology for **producer price notifications** with **Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/1185** to ensure consistency across the supply chain.
 - Improving rules on the **notification of prices and quantities of imported products** to reflect market dynamics and trade flow developments, including **alternative data collection methods** and a move to **weekly notifications** to **reduce administrative burden** and increase **robustness**.

- **Clarifying payment suspensions:** Updating provisions on the **suspension and retrieval of payments** for operational programmes, now financed under **Regulation (EU) 2021/2115**.
- **Refining rules for organic production:** Clarifying how producers of **organic products** are counted for representativeness when extending rules specifically applicable to **organic products**.
- **Improving the entry price system:** Clearly setting the **periods of application** when a **guarantee** is required for certain imported fruits and vegetables.

Approach and Recommendations

DigitalTrade4.EU believes that the Commission's objectives for the **fruit and vegetables sector** can be significantly enhanced and streamlined through the strategic adoption of **digital tools** and **globally harmonised standards**. Our approach focuses on fostering **green-digital trade leadership** through **interoperability, robust digital infrastructure, and support for SMEs**.

1. Enhancing Simplification, Harmonisation, and Clarity through Digitalisation

The Commission's aim to **simplify governance** and improve **legal clarity** resonates with **DigitalTrade4.EU's** core mission. We recommend:

- **Adoption of MLETR and eIDAS 2.0 principles**

Integrating principles from the **MLETR** and the EU's **eIDAS 2.0 regulation** would provide a **robust legal framework** for **digital trade documents** within the **fruit and vegetable sector**. This would **simplify cross-border trade** by enabling the **legal recognition of electronic documents** (e.g., for demonstrating value of marketed production, supply contracts, or import/export documentation), **reducing paperwork** and enhancing **legal certainty**.

- **Standardised Digital Reporting**

The move to **weekly notifications** for producer prices and import data is a positive step. This can be further enhanced by promoting **standardised digital formats** for these notifications. Leveraging **eIDAS 2.0** for **secure electronic identification and trust services** can ensure the **authenticity and integrity of data** exchanged between Member States and the Commission. This aligns with the "**collect once, use multiple times**" principle.

- **Interoperable Platforms for Data Exchange**

The development of **interoperable platforms for data exchange**, as envisioned in our input⁵ for **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) simplification**, can support the **harmonised calculation of marketed production** and streamline the **unique identification system** for merged **producer organisations**.

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14704-Simplification-of-the-implementation-of-CAP-Strategic-Plans/F3563472_en

2. Strengthening Crisis Management and Support

The draft regulation rightly addresses the increasing impact of **natural disasters** on **producer organisations**. **Digital tools** can significantly bolster these efforts:

- **Real-time Data for Crisis Response**

As outlined in our **CAP feedback**, **real-time data** from sensors, satellites (like **Copernicus**, already mentioned in CAP documents), and **digital farm management systems** can help assess damage more quickly and accurately following **natural disasters**. This would enable faster verification for **producer organisations** seeking to utilise the new provisions allowing for a decrease in marketed production value due to such events.

- **Digital Platforms for Aid Disbursement**

Digital platforms can streamline the application and verification processes for any **financial aid or derogations**, ensuring **timely support** reaches affected **producer organisations**.

3. Improving Notification Systems and Market Transparency

The Commission's focus on improving **notification methodologies** for prices and imports is crucial for **market transparency**. **DigitalTrade4.EU** suggests:

- **Enhanced Data Robustness through Digital Verification**

For notifications of **producer prices** and **imported product prices/quantities**, **digital tools** can provide more **robust and verifiable data**. **Secure digital channels** and **e-signatures** can ensure **data integrity** from representative markets.

- **Digital Product Passports (DPPs) for Enhanced Traceability and Data Accuracy**

Looking ahead, the concept of **Digital Product Passports (DPPs)** offers a powerful mechanism to enhance **transparency** in the **fruit and vegetable supply chain**. **DPPs** can carry **verifiable data** on a product's **origin, production methods** (e.g., organic), and conformity with **marketing standards**. This would provide richer data for **price reporting** and **import monitoring**, aligning with **UNECE Recommendation No. 49**

("Transparency at Scale"). Integrating **farmer-specific features** like **geographical origin, farm ID, production date, and farming methods** into **DPPs** would ensure **traceability and verification** at the source.

For example, a **Digital Product Passport** for **organic tomatoes** could include data on **pesticide-free cultivation methods, water usage** during growth, and **carbon emissions** from **transportation**. This information would be accessible via **QR codes** or **blockchain platforms**, enabling **retailers** and **consumers** to **verify sustainability claims**.

- **Integrating ESE Data**

Incorporating comprehensive **Environmental, Social, and Economic (ESE) data** into **DPPs**, such as **carbon footprint, water usage, and biodiversity metrics**, can provide a **holistic view of product sustainability**. This would support the **EU's Green Deal ambitions** within the **fruit and vegetable sector**.

4. Supporting SMEs and Capacity Building

While this specific draft does not heavily focus on **SMEs**, the overall **simplification** aims to benefit all **producer organisations**. **DigitalTrade4.EU** emphasizes the need for:

- **Digital Upskilling**

Ensuring that **producer organisations**, especially **SMEs**, have the **digital literacy and tools** to comply with new notification requirements and leverage the benefits of **digitalisation**. Initiatives like a "**Green-Digital Trade Academy**" could equip them with knowledge on **e-signatures, digital reporting, and emerging standards like DPPs**.

- **Accessible Digital Infrastructure**

Promoting access to **affordable and interoperable digital infrastructure** is key for all actors in the **fruit and vegetable supply chain**.

5. Coherence with Broader EU Digital and Green Agendas

The amendments to **Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/891** should be seen within the broader context of the **EU's digital and green transitions**.

- **Alignment with Digital Trade Policy**

The proposed changes, particularly those concerning **data exchange and notifications**, should align with the **EU's overarching digital trade strategy**, including agreements like the **EU-Singapore Digital Trade Agreement**.

- **Synergies with CAP Digitalisation**

There are clear parallels with the **digitalisation efforts** under the **CAP**. Roadmaps for **interoperability and seamless data exchange** mandated for **CAP implementation** should consider the data needs and flows relevant to the **fruit and vegetable market organisation**.

- **Promoting Sustainable Value Chains**

The **fruit and vegetable sector** is pivotal in achieving **sustainable food systems**. The amendments, while focused on operational aspects, should lay the groundwork for future integration of enhanced **sustainability information**, potentially through **DPPs** that include comprehensive **ESE data**.

Conclusion and Next Steps

DigitalTrade4.EU supports the Commission's initiative to amend the Delegated Regulations for the **fruit and vegetables sector**, recognising the positive steps towards **simplification, harmonisation, and improved market mechanisms**. We believe that embracing a **comprehensive digital approach**, rooted in **interoperability, global legal framework like MLETR, and secure digital infrastructure like eIDAS 2.0**, will be instrumental in achieving these objectives more effectively and **future-proofing the sector**.

We recommend the Commission:

1. **Explicitly promote the use of standardised digital tools and interoperable systems** for all **notification and data exchange requirements** outlined in the amended regulation.
2. **Consider pilot projects** within the **fruit and vegetable sector** to explore the benefits of **electronic transferable records** and **Digital Product Passports** (incorporating **ESE data**) for enhancing **transparency, traceability, and sustainability**, thereby **reducing administrative burdens** related to compliance and reporting.
3. **Ensure that capacity-building initiatives** are available to support **producer organisations**, particularly **SMEs**, in adopting the necessary **digital tools and skills**.
4. **Continue to foster policy coherence** between **agricultural regulations, digital trade strategy, and the EU Green Deal** to create a supportive ecosystem for a **competitive and sustainable European fruit and vegetable sector**.

DigitalTrade4.EU stands ready to **collaborate further** with the **European Commission**, offering our expertise and network to support the successful implementation of these reforms and to advance the **digitalisation of trade in the agricultural sector**. We believe a **clear roadmap for embracing digital solutions**, aligned with **EU digital trade ambitions**, will unlock the **full potential of European agriculture**.

Pilot projects could focus on **high-volume export sectors** like **fresh berries or citrus fruits**, where **traceability** and **compliance with international standards** are **critical**. These pilots would test the **feasibility** of replacing **paper-based systems** with **electronic records**, reducing **delays at borders** and **administrative costs** for **producers**.

EU Green-Digital Trade Leadership Roadmap (DigitalTrade4.EU, 2025)

activity	objective	indicative metrics	tools/enablers
1. EU-Singapore DTA & Expand DEPA Partnerships	Strengthen digital trade diplomacy in Asia through high-standard agreements.	- 5+ new digital trade agreements with key Asian partners (e.g., Japan, India, ASEAN) by 2030 - 15% increase in EU-Asia digital services trade by 2028	DEPA framework, EU-Singapore DTA, Global Gateway Initiative, eIDAS 2.0
2. Implement Digital Product Passports (DPPs)	Ensure traceable, sustainable supply chains aligned with EU Green Deal.	- 50% adoption of DPPs by 2030 - 20% reduction in supply-chain carbon intensity by 2030	EU Sustainable Products Initiative, CBAM incentives, UNECE Recommendation 49
3. Fund Secure Digital Corridors in Asia	Build interoperable digital infrastructure for EU-Asia trade.	- ~€2B allocated via NDICI-Global Europe - 10+ blockchain-based traceability pilots by 2027	NDICI-Global Europe, ASEAN digital customs systems, EU Customs Data Hub
4. Harmonize Digital Standards (MLETR/eIDAS 2.0)	Enable cross-border recognition of e-documents and digital identities.	- 90% mutual recognition of e-signatures by 2028 - 70% SME adoption of eIDAS wallets	MLETR framework, eIDAS 2.0, EU Transport Law updates, UN/UNECE protocols
5. Launch Green-Digital Trade Academy	Upskill SMEs and officials on DPPs and carbon accounting.	- 40% increase in SME participation by 2027 - 60% cost savings for SMEs	Erasmus+ grants, COSME programme, tiered compliance thresholds
6. Integrate ESG into Trade Finance	Link trade finance to sustainability metrics for cheaper capital access.	- €10B/year unlocked for green trade finance - 30% lower Scope 3 emissions by 2030	InvestEU guarantees, CSRD-aligned reporting, FinTech platforms
7. Enforce Platform Interoperability	Prevent vendor lock-in and empower SMEs.	- 100% compliance with CJEU rulings by 2026 - 50% reduction in platform dominance	CJEU Case C-233/23, DEPA, eIDAS 2.0, Digital Markets Act (DMA)
8. Global Digitalisation Projects with EU Standards	Extend EU digital infrastructure and norms globally.	- 20+ co-funded projects by 2030 - 80% interoperability with EU systems	Digital Europe Programme, CEF funding, EU-Asia Digital Standards Taskforce
9. Advance UNECE Transparency Protocols	Globalize EU sustainability standards for supply chains.	- 100% alignment with UNECE Rec. 49 by 2028 - 30% reduction in greenwashing claims	UNECE CEFAC, W3C Verifiable Credentials, EU CBAM registry
10. Pilot CBAM-DPP Corridors	Link trade finance to verifiable ESG metrics for tariff incentives.	- 20% CBAM compliance cost reduction - 50% DPP adoption by 2030	IoT carbon trackers, CBAM rebate schemes, EU Customs Single Window

Table 1. The roadmap presented operationalizes the strategic priorities outlined in this feedback, bridging Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) simplification goals with the EU's broader green-digital trade ambitions