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IFOAM EU President Christopher Stopes speaking at the Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA). From left to right: Jon Parr, Chief Operating Officer, Syngenta; Christopher Stopes, IFOAM EU President; Johan Schnürer, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences; Martin Stuchtey, Director, McKinsey Center for Business and Environment; Pavan Sukhdev, Founder-CEO, GIST Advisory and Stephen Sackur, journalist and moderator.
Dear readers,

In the Brussels political world, a clear political commitment can sometimes be turned into a bad piece of legislation. After the approval of the new directive that grants Member States new powers to enact a ban on GM-crop cultivation, the Commission is making another move to change the European legal framework regarding GMOs – by proposing to give Member States the possibility to ban GMOs approved for import at the EU level.

The latest round of discussions on GMO approvals started with a speech at the European Parliament on 15 July 2014, during which Commission President Juncker made reference to the current GMO authorisation system and said that he “would not want the Commission to be able to take a decision when a majority of Member States has not encouraged it to do so.”

Then in November 2014, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis P. Andriukaitis received a clear mandate from Mr. Juncker to focus on the following: “Within the first six months of the mandate, reviewing the existing decision-making process applied to genetically modified organisms (GMOs), in line with the Political Guidelines.”

IFOAM EU and other organisations welcomed this initiative, because in the current voting system the Commission can decide to authorise a GMO even if a majority of governments opposes it in the Council. The Parliament is not even consulted on those authorisations. Given the loopholes in the GMO risk assessment, pointed out by several national authorities, and the many implications of GMO authorisations on our agriculture systems, the use of “comitology rules” (now replaced by “implementing acts”) to approve GMOs is totally inappropriate and undermines citizens’ trust in European institutions. The discussion on the future of our food systems in our democracies deserve better than that. We and others expected the Commission to propose significant changes to the way GMOs are approved in the EU.

We also advocated for the proposal to include a long needed review of the risk assessment made by the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA), as it is based on a poor and incomplete assessment of the health and environmental risks that could be linked to GMOs, and also does not take the impact on organics and the lack of benefits from GMOs into account.

However, the promises have proven empty. The Commission proposal – approved by the college of Commissioners on 22 April despite opposition from several Commissioners – is only a single measure that would grant Member States the possibility to ban imports of GM food and feed, provided that such bans would not be based on “health or environmental grounds”.

In a letter sent to Mr. Juncker on 8 April, IFOAM EU and other organisations warn that this would extend the status quo approval system in which the Commission can continue to authorise GM crops and does not take the opposition of a majority of national governments, the European Parliament and public opinion into account.

Moreover, such an opt-out option for Member States would be impossible to implement in practice due to EU internal trade market for food and feed. The proposal will therefore not offer any new rights or safeguards to governments, citizens and farmers, and would be even more legally fragile than opt-outs for GMO cultivation in the face of international trade rules.

We therefore call on Mr. Juncker to fulfil his commitment to democratic change. As he mentioned in his opening statement: “Let us not try the public’s patience by indulging in institutional debates which prevent us from focusing on what really matters – the people of Europe”. And we call on Member States to stand for a change in the voting system for GMO approvals, and for a proposal that reflects their citizens’ wishes and the needs of the organic and GM-free sector for a better legal framework to keep GMOs out of the value chain. Citizens must be heard and the current approval system must be changed so that their support for environmentally and socially responsible food and farming systems, like organics, prevails.

Sincerely,
Thomas Fertl
What’s your vision for organic in Europe?

Take the survey

Tell us using #EUorganic2030
POLITICAL HOTSPOT

ORGANIC REGULATION UPDATE

The European Parliament and EU Council are actively working on the Commission’s proposal for a new organic regulation and the six-month deadline set by Commissioner Timmermans in December 2014 for agreement or withdrawal is approaching.

The rapporteur on this dossier in the European Parliament’s Agriculture Committee (COMAGRI), Green MEP Martin Häusling, is planning to present his report on 28 May. Once the report has been presented, the shadow rapporteurs from the other political groups will have two weeks to propose amendments. COMAGRI is then expected to vote on the report and the amendments on 15 or 16 July. The report voted by this committee will then be the basis for negotiations with the European Council and the European Commission within the trilogue process.

On the Member States’ side, the Latvian Presidency of the Council is aiming to have a vote on its compromise text during the next Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting on 11 May. However, a consensus still needs to be reached on some point, especially those concerning the control system and the decertification threshold for non-allowed substances.

Though the Council is working to meet the conditions set by the Commission, the Parliament has already announced that they will have two weeks delay, and has asked the Commission to respect its agenda, saying that quality work cannot be done in a hurry, many aspects need to be analysed, especially the consequences and impact of the requirements included in some amendments.

During the last COMAGRI meeting on 23-24 March, it seemed that most of the shadow rapporteurs support the working method of rapporteur Martin Häusling. There was consensus that the Commission proposal does not provide answers to challenges faced by the organic sector and could hinder the development of the organic production in Europe in some cases. IFOAM EU shares these concerns and cannot support the Commission proposal if substantial changes are not made.

Häusling is interested in proposing innovative elements to improve the current regulation and support the development of the European Organic sector. For instance, in the last COMAGRI meeting he proposed measures to protect organic farmers from conventional farming practices that can contaminate their crops, or the establishment of a European Organic Agency that would allow a better implementation of certain organic rules at European level. The aim would be to correct the lack of harmonised interpretation and implementation in Member States, which is the real problem with the current regulation. IFOAM EU agrees that this is the major concern with the status quo, and also the reason why IFOAM EU has said that an improvement of the existing regulation is the real solution, rather than a complete revision which would only multiply the concerns regarding implementation.

In the meantime the European Commission is acting inconsistently. On one hand underlining its “fresh look” on the proposal and willingness to take on board most of the Council changes regarding exceptional rules and scope. On the other hand, the Commission is insisting on maintain its proposal regarding key points of the proposal such as completely transferring control requirements to the official control regulation, introducing decertification thresholds for pesticide residues and maintaining exclusively the recognition of control bodies for the purpose of compliance in the import regime.

IFOAM EU is of the opinion that the Commission’s need for speed should not jeopardize the quality of the final regulation and principle-driven development of the organic sector. The sector must look to the future and think how standards can reach higher to take account of new issues and new concerns, which is not feasible in the time currently allotted. IFOAM EU has proposals on the table, is eager to deliver concrete solutions and continue to work with the institutions on a practical way forward.
NEWS FROM IFOAM EU WORKING FIELDS

1.1 REGULATION

EU PARLIAMENT DISCUSSES ORGANIC REGULATION

The organic regulation review and the state of play of the co-decision process was addressed at the Agricultural Committee of the European Parliament (COMAGRI) meeting on 24 March.

The president of COMAGRI Mr Czesław Adam Siekierski and the rapporteur for the organic dossier, Mr Martin Häusling, stressed that the 6-month deadline set by the European Commission for the EU Parliament and the EU Council to reach an agreement, or withdraw the Commission proposal, is not in line with the Lisbon treaty as the Parliament is free to set timeframe for the 1st reading themselves. Mr Häusling announced that the draft report should be sent for translation at the beginning of May and presented to COMAGRI MEPs at the end of May. The shadow rapporteurs will have the first half of June to present amendments on the Green MEP’s report. And the COMAGRI vote on the report should take place in July. Mr Häusling has asked the European Commission to respect the Parliament timeframe.

Watch the COMAGRI meeting from 24 March 2015

REGULATORY COMMITTEE ON ORGANIC PRODUCTION (RCOP)

A meeting of the Regulatory Committee on Organic Production (RCOP, previously Standing Committee on Organic Farming) took place in Brussels on 18–19 March 2015. The main topics discussed were:

- A document identifying the EU Regulation requirements which are difficult to apply in Third Countries was presented by the Commission
- Testing of the new electronic certification system for import, developed within TRACES, started in March. TRACES is a trans-European network which notifies, certifies and monitors imports, exports and trade of specific products. The objective is to make the system workable and mandatory in 2016
- A new EGTOP report on fertilisers will be adopted in July 2015 and a new mandate on wine has been discussed EGTOP is the independent Expert Group for Technical Advice in Organic Production
- South Korea: An equivalency agreement between South Korea and the EU has been in place since 1 February 2015. FAQ will be updated by the Commission. In particular Commission has clarified that in the label of products to be exported to South Korea:
  » the indication EU/non EU is not sufficient. The Country where the main ingredient has been farmed and its ISO code must be included
  » in addition to the name and the code of the control body, the operator’s code must also be indicated
  » the Korean language has to be used exclusively
- India: The Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) will carry out an audit in India in April 2015 to verify the condition of the equivalence
- Irregularities: the case of sunflower by-products coming from Ukraine and contaminated with substances not allowed in organic farming was discussed
- The Commission announced that as part of EXPO 2015 a conference on research and innovation in organic farming will take place in Milan on 28–29 May 2015

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Support us and donate now!
1.2 POLICY

GMOS

MEMBER STATE BAN OF GMO CULTIVATION NOW REALITY

The new Directive granting Member States the possibility to enact a national ban on GMO cultivation entered into force at the beginning of April. Before, Member States’ attempt to ban GMOs could easily be contested.

IFOAM EU welcomes this initiative since banning GMOs is the most effective way to prevent GMO contamination and to avoid extra costs for the food industry, public authorities and the organic sector. However, in countries where cultivation is not forbidden, measures to prevent contamination have to be put in place across the whole supply chain and throughout the entire territory.

However, EU Member States are not obliged to put contamination prevention measures in place, nor to develop an effective liability regime to compensate victims of contamination. This means that non-GM growers are constantly under threat of GMO contamination.

NEW STUDY: PREVENTING GMO CONTAMINATION – AN OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL COEXISTENCE MEASURES IN THE EU

A new IFOAM EU study of “co-existence” measures in Europe shows that, in many countries, they either do not exist or are clearly insufficient to prevent contamination. The difficulties in preventing contamination through coexistence measures have eventually led Member States with the most developed measures to ban GMO cultivation, as it is the best way to prevent contamination. The study also highlights that contamination prevention measures are costly, difficult to design and implement.

This study is part of the “Keeping GMOs out of organics” project, one objective of which is to enable the organic sector to stay GM-free by advocating for better legal frameworks.

THE LETTER FROM AMERICA – SPREAD THE WARNING FROM AMERICA ACROSS EUROPE

Beyond GM launched an initiative to warn Europeans about the damage GMOs cause to the US food and farming.

The message comes to Europe in the shape of a letter sent by Americans explaining the tremendous pressure from governments, biotech lobbyists, and large corporations to adopt GMOs. Now that the EU has devolved decisions GMO cultivation to individual Member States, the letter is a timely reminder to farmers throughout Europe, and to consumers, of what is at stake if we forge ahead with plans to adopt GMOs.

The letter has been translated in multiple languages and we encourage you to spread the word across Europe and share it widely.

CARE ABOUT THIS ISSUE?
Support us and donate now!
PARLIAMENT’S SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS GROUP TRYING TO PUT SUSTAINABLE FOOD BACK ON THE EU AGENDA

MEPs are looking at ways to put sustainable food policy back on the agenda of the Juncker Commission. Speaking at meeting of the European Parliament’s Sustainable Food Systems Group - attended by IFOAM EU and other civil society groups as well as members of the agri-food industry - Finnish MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen from the Group of the European People’s Party (Christian Democrats) indicated that she is calling on the Commission to present a Communication on sustainable food by 2016.

Pietikäinen and Belgian MEP Bart States from the Green and European Free Alliance Group are co-chairs of the new group, which seeks to develop an active stakeholder forum for moving towards a more sustainable food policy in the EU.

Earlier this year a number of MEPs wrote to Commission President Jean Claude Juncker and First Vice-President Frans Timmermans calling on them to publish the sustainable food communication drafted by the outgoing Commission.

INITIATIVE HIGHLIGHTING THE VOICES OF PESTICIDE POISONING VICTIMS LAUNCHED

An initiative has been launched by the Pesticide Action Network Europe bringing together the voices of the victims of pesticide poisoning – on a dedicated online space – to tell their stories.

Pesticides are found everywhere: in food, drinking water, air and soil, and can be detected even in our blood. Pesticides destroy the balance of biodiversity and human diseases related to pesticide exposure are multiplying.

The Pesticide Action Network is regularly contacted by citizens of diverse backgrounds expressing their concern about pesticide use in the fields but also in playgrounds, gardens and schools. These stories have up until now gone largely unheard, ignored and those telling them have been left to feel isolated and alone.

The initiative is supported by IFOAM EU and people can share their stories on the “voices of pesticides” website.

SURVEY ABOUT MEASURING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF ORGANIC FARMS

In a project supported by the Ekhaga Foundation (SE), the Organic Research Centre (UK) and the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL (CH) there have been intensive discussions about how to measure the sustainability of organic farms, in which experience in developing monitoring tools has played an important role.

Are you a stakeholder? Complete a survey and help identify the sustainability themes highly relevant for monitoring organic agriculture.
PROPOSALS FOR CAP SIMPLIFICATION
INTENSIFY AMONGST MEPS AND MEMBER STATES

The European Parliament’s Agriculture Committee (CO-MAGRI) and the Agricultural Council are expected to outline their proposals for the European Commission CAP simplification process by Summer 2015. Commissioner for Agriculture Phil Hogan has indicated that direct payments, market measures and quality policy will be priority topics with Rural Development Programmes addressed at a later stage in the process. The Commission is currently conducting an analysis of EU farm legislation as well as assessing initial feedback from Member States on their simplification proposals.

Member States and MEPs outlines initial feedback for simplification

Many Member States are requesting simpler rules with regards to greening implementation, with a strong emphasis on the new Ecological Focus Area (EFA) requirements. Other concerns relate to more flexible implementation of farm controls and coupled support. Member States had the opportunity to present their proposals at the Agricultural Council meeting in Brussels on 16 March. Some Ministers noted that while the basic legal acts should not be reopened there should be steps taken to simplify the CAP’s delegated acts.

MEPs from the Parliament’s COMAGRI also provided the Commissioner with their initial feedback on ideas for CAP simplification at their committee meeting on 24 March. At the meeting Commissioner Hogan called on COMAGRI to produce an own-initiative report on CAP simplification by the summer recess. To this end COMAGRI is planning to hold a CAP simplification hearing on 4 May. The Latvian EU Presidency aims to agree Council Conclusions at the Agriculture Council meeting on 11 May.

Based on its analysis and feedback from the Parliament and Council the Commission aims to put forward proposals for simplification later this year, including a review of greening provisions during the first year of implementation.

Commission exploring future agricultural priorities

With CAP simplification a key priority for the Commissioner, officials in DG AGRI are currently identifying the main agricultural priorities for the Commission as part of a new “vision document”. Themes are believed to be related to market and competitiveness; sustainability and knowledge, jobs and growth, generational renewal and the food supply chain.

IFOAM EU is following the process on CAP simplification and wants to hear from you about the CAP implementation process in your country or region on the new RDPs and the EIP-AGRI. For further information, please contact Stephen Meredith.
STAKEHOLDERS EXPLORE STRATEGIES FOR BETTER WATER MANAGEMENT BY THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Opportunities to integrate relevant water measures for agriculture under the CAP cross compliance mechanism in conjunction with the implementation of EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) were explored by IFOAM EU and other stakeholders at the EU’s WFD and Agriculture Expert Group meeting on 5 March. The meeting looked at how the WFD is currently being implemented at national level by the agriculture sector, with the aim develop a more harmonised approach at EU level in particular in the run-up to an expected mid-term review of the CAP in 2017.

Although there has been some progress, the Commission’s assessment of WFD implementation by Member States shows that substantial efforts still need to be made – particularly within the agri-food sector. Almost half of EU surface waters are unlikely to reach good ecological status by 2015, despite this being a central objective of the WFD. These findings are outlined in a Communication to the European Parliament and Council published in March 2015.

As part of the implementation process, Member States are required to draw up river basin management plans for reaching WFD objectives. The first ones were developed in 2009 (albeit with adoption delays in a number of Member States). The second ones are expected to be adopted by Member States by the end of 2015 and are currently subject to public consultation.

Organic food and farming solutions can contribute significantly to sustainable water management. Learn more about pioneering best practices from organic stakeholders in France and Germany.

ORGANIC FARMING ORGANISATIONS DISCUSS STRATEGIES FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING AND COOPERATION

Capacity building, business development, agronomic innovation and knowledge transfer were just some of the issues discussed by IFOAM EU farming organisations at a meeting on cooperation and capacity-building which took place in Galway, Ireland on 19 March. The meeting was organised by the Irish Organic Farmers and Growers Association (IOFGA) and IFOAM EU. It gave farming representatives the opportunity to collect and select best practice examples of capacity-building and cooperation in Europe. This is part of the EU project – Closing Knowledge Gaps and Improving Skills & Competence for Sustainable Farming Enterprises (KSC4Farmers) – a 2-year Leonardo da Vinci Partnership Project, under the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union. The final meeting will take place in Saint-Jean-d’Angelys, France in June 2015. For more information about the project and the final meeting please contact Stephen Meredith.
**CLIMATE CHANGE**

**COMMISSION PROPOSALS ON EMISSIONS WOULD WEaken AGRICULTURE TARGETS**

*How emissions are currently accounted for in the EU*

In the EU, CO2 and non-CO2 emissions from agriculture are accounted for in separate policies. Non CO2 emissions are covered by the *Effort Sharing Decision* (ESD). They mainly concern methane emissions from livestock (CH4 is about 23 times more powerful a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide) and nitrous oxide emissions from nitrogen fertilisers (N2O is 296 times more powerful). CO2 emissions from agriculture are mainly linked to deforestation (or re-forestation) and soils, which are called *LULUCF* (Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry) emissions.

At the global level, emissions from agriculture, forestry and other land use represent 25% of total emissions. But in the EU, the situation is different, because LULUCF are a carbon sink (-6.7% in 2012. The EU agricultural sector therefore accounts for 10% of total EU greenhouse gas emissions and about 17% of non-ETS greenhouse gas emissions.

*New suggestions and consultation opened*

In its communication on the 2030 climate and energy package, the Commission suggested that the LULUCF and agricultural non-CO2 emissions could be merged into one new and independent pillar of the EU’s climate policy. This would significantly weaken any reduction targets that could be set for the agriculture sector. Another option suggested by the European Commission is that the LULUCF sector could be included under the ESD. Given that the LULUCF sector is projected to sequester more carbon than it releases in Europe, this too would weaken the ESD target and would likely lead to fewer mitigation activities in the non-ETS industrial sectors. In this light the Commission has opened a *consultation for stakeholders*, to which IFOAM EU will reply.

**IFOAM EU Launches Task Force on Climate Change**

IFOAM EU is launching a new task force on climate change. Organic farming can contribute significantly to reducing emissions from agriculture emissions for crop production, and in the more challenging livestock sector, as well as contribute to climate change adaptation by making agriculture more resilient. The European organic movement is already active in researching and implementing innovative agriculture techniques that reduce emissions. The current policy context makes it the right time to strengthen its advocacy for more ambitious action on the reductions of agricultural emissions at EU and national levels.

Are you an IFOAM EU member and interested in taking part in this new task force? *Fill in the online contact form by 7 May.*
SOLMACC: FARMERS DEMONSTRATING CLIMATE-FRIENDLY PRACTICES & STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

As part of the SOLMACC project, twelve organic farms throughout Europe are applying climate-friendly practices expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 15% compared to average farms under similar climatic conditions, as well as improve adaptation to the negative effects of climate change. The practices include on-farm nutrient recycling, crop rotation, reduced tillage and agroforestry, which are adapted to the specific climatic area and farm conditions and are closely monitored by scientists.

After a thorough evaluation of each farm and its specific conditions by scientists and a specific training for the farmers involved, the climate-friendly practices are set up and will continue to be implemented until 2018. “Open Field Days” will be organised soon when farmers will show and explain the climate-friendly practices and share their experience with other farmers, farm advisors and citizens.

In a recent meeting of the SOLMACC project steering committee in Rome, project partners shared information about the farms in Sweden, Germany and Italy and discussed the next steps for the ongoing implementation of the project.

For more information on this LIFE funded project, visit the project website or subscribe to the newsletter.
1.3 EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION POLICY

EIP-AGRI UPDATE

INSPIRING IDEAS TO IMPROVE SOIL ORGANIC MATTER CONTENT IN MEDITERRANEAN REGIONS

The EIP-AGRI Focus Group on soil organic matter in Mediterranean regions has published its final report. There are 16 recommendations for future research and 19 ideas for Operational Groups, including Operational Groups on the introduction of conservation agriculture in organic farming systems and on the integration of animal production with horticulture (including perennials), especially in organic farming.

Read the report

The Focus Group’s proposals can be classified in five clusters of practices:
1. optimised use of organic carbon resources;
2. optimised soil management;
3. optimised crop selection and management;
4. use of microorganisms and natural compounds for improving biological quality of soils; and
5. development of tools to adequately measure soil organic matter content and soil quality.

CREATING SPACE FOR AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION: IFOAM EU AND AGRISPIN

Funded by Horizon 2020, the AGRISPIN project aims to detect the blind spots in agricultural innovation and the crucial moments where the process is fostered or held back. It will also facilitate a cross-learning process for supporting innovation and scaling up best practices.

The role of IFOAM EU in the project is to highlight successful examples of multi-actor innovation processes in the organic sector.

The main target groups of AGRISPIN are agricultural innovation intermediaries, advisory services and regional authorities supporting agricultural innovation. AGRISPIN is coordinated by SEGES (formerly known as the Danish Knowledge Centre for Agriculture), involves 15 partners and will last two and a half years.
2 EVENTS

2.1 PREVIEW OF EVENTS

GMO FREE CONFERENCE

6–8 May 2015 – Berlin, Germany

Participants from political circles, economists, scientists and civil society from all over Europe, as well as guests from America, Asia and Africa will discuss the chances of a future agriculture without genetically modified plants and animals. IFOAM EU will represent the voice of the organic sector in this important event.

GMO-free regions have been established throughout the world and their number is growing. Since 2003, the GM-free regions network has enabled actors involved in the development of the GM-free regions to openly discuss the challenges the face in defending the right to an environmentally and socially responsible food and farming system.

The impact of new biotechnologies on food and farming, the need for a definition of a coherent protein strategy guaranteeing the supply of GMO-free feed in Europe and the continuous attempts from the biotech companies to introduce their products in the non-GM free supply chain, are just some of the issues that will be discussed.

Visit the GM-free conference website and join us

SUSTAINABLE FOODS SUMMIT: EUROPEAN EDITION

4–5 June – Amsterdam, the Netherlands

The 7th European edition of the Sustainable Foods Summit will focus on food ingredients, green marketing, and sustainable packaging solutions. For the first time, the summit will look at encouraging sustainability in the food industry by the use of food ingredients and sustainable packaging. The summit will be hosted in Amsterdam on 4–5 June 2015.

The gamut of green packaging options available to food and drink brands will be discussed, as well as green marketing developments. The opportunities provided by sustainable ingredients in food and beverage applications will also be explored. How can such ingredients spur product innovations? How can food and ingredient firms strengthen their supply chains for agricultural materials? What developments in food traceability schemes? What novel sustainable ingredients are emerging? Such questions will be discussed in a high-level forum. Read more in the Summit programme.
Designing our Future

Day I - 11 June
Policies for green growth?

Day II - 12 June
Strategies for Vision 2030

Day III - 13 June
Excursion

More information and programme:
organic-congress-ifoameu.org

9th EUROPEAN ORGANIC CONGRESS: DESIGNING OUR FUTURE
11–13 June 2015 – Riga, Latvia

Where does the organic movement want to be in 2030? What can we deliver to the society? And most importantly, how will we do so?

This year’s European Organic Congress is dedicated to looking to the future and giving ourselves the means to make it possible, both in the short and long term. First, we will explore how the new organic regulation process and the CAP introduced in 2014 can be used to support the development of organic. Then, the results of the vision 2030 process in which so many of you participated will be shared. We clearly share the common goal of improving that vital system which touches all of us: food and farming. Together we will begin to build practical strategies we will need to achieve the shared goals.

Engage with organic leaders and policymakers from the Latvian and Luxembourgish EU Presidencies, the European Commission and Parliament and take part in designing our organic future.

Day I – 11 JUNE: Policies for green growth?
Using the new organic regulation and CAP to generate organic development

Day II – 12 JUNE: Strategies for Vision 2030
Making the vision a reality for the movement, from farmers to processors

Day III – 13 JUNE: Excursion
Visit Latvian organic farms and enjoy rural hospitality

More information and programme on the 9th European Organic Congress website
2.2 REVIEW OF EVENTS

IFOAM EU PRESENT AT THE FORUM FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

On 31 March, IFOAM EU President Christopher Stopes represented the organic movement at the 8th Forum for the Future of Agriculture. During the panel on ‘Innovation for jobs and growth through the circular economy in agriculture’, Mr Stopes said that it is difficult to apply the circular economy concept to the agriculture because inputs, outputs and unintended consequences are hard to control.

We rely on resources provided by the air, the water and the soil over the whole of the planet and changes to one seemingly small element of the system can have pervasive effects on the whole of this complex system - on the environment, biodiversity and the health of animals and people. Too often agriculture research is focused on a single molecule or trait and its effects on a given plant. Organic farming precisely takes complex interactions into account and, as opposed to industrial agriculture, strives to minimise the impact of food production on the environment. As agriculture accounts for one third of climate change emissions, there is a lot of room for improvement in the way our food is produced.

Several speakers highlighted the urgent need to transition our farming systems towards organic farming. The main message from Pavan Sukhdev, leader of the ground-breaking 2008 study ‘The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity’, was that the externalities of the food and farming system must be included in the way the costs of farming are calculated and business models must therefore change. Doing so would both benefit businesses who can take advantage of the changing circumstances as well as smallholders. He argues that serving smallholders well is a very large business opportunity as they represent around one billion jobs and most of the agricultural production force.

This matched American social theorist Jeremy Rifkin’s earlier presentation, during which he stated that the first solution to the climate change caused by agriculture is converting to organic; the economics and science are there to prove it. According to Rifkin, organic agriculture should be combined with an uptake of advanced technology by farmers and a change in consumption patterns by consumers. Together, these changes could account for and reduce the negative impact of “chemical agriculture” and its externalities. He also stressed the role local production and smallholders play, saying that reducing consumption of meat and therefore reduction in agriculture for feed (instead of food) would be good for developing countries and smallholders, who would be able to produce for their own food markets instead of growing animal feed for the rich.

The Forum for the Future of Agriculture is an annual event organised by the European Landowners’ Organization (ELO) and Syngenta, which debates the future of agriculture from a European perspective. This year’s agenda focused on the UN Sustainable Development Goals: a new momentum for European agriculture.
19–20 April, IFOAM EU was present at Natural and Organic Products Europe – the largest trade event of its kind in the UK.

On 20 April, IFOAM EU President Christopher Stopes painted a picture of the ins-and-outs of Brussels lobby work and the impact this has on organics businesses at the session called *Who’s protecting your interests?* He spoke on the costs generated for organic companies as a result of policies decided at EU level such as the organic regulation, Common Agriculture Policy, pesticide and GMO legislation. At the same time major agri-food businesses contribute heavily to lobbying on these issues, with just the top 10 publicly declaring they spend around 17 million a year on EU lobbying.

Natural & Organic Products Europe is a leading natural business event and showcases the very best that the natural and organic world has to offer.
3 MAKING EUROPE MORE ORGANIC – SUPPORT IFOAM EU

IFOAM EU KEY SPONSORS 2015

The contributions of sponsors allow IFOAM EU to focus on its most important work – representing organic stakeholders. This funding is a means to co-finance IFOAM EU events, projects and publications and is a highly valued contribution to our work.

WORKING IN THE ORGANIC SECTOR?
COMMITTED TO MAKE EUROPE MORE ORGANIC?

DONATE NOW!

Protect your interests and help us make Europe more organic by:

• Ensuring that EU regulations match the reality of organic producers
• Ensuring that EU and national legislation do not discriminate against organic and traditional seed production
• Fighting the expansion of GMO use in Europe and protecting organic farmers and producers from contamination

You can help MAKE EUROPE MORE ORGANIC

Join our current partners and make your donation!
Organic Potato starch is produced in accordance with the European Union’s rules on organic farming and by the two well-known potato experts, Finnamyl Oy and Aloja Stärkelse S/A.

The full cycle from seed potatoes, starch potato cultivation and organic potato starch processing in Finland and Latvia is managed by well-experienced professionals.

Potato starch is a natural food ingredient traditionally used in Europe. Our customers are entitled to full application support service.

**Organic Potato Starch**

**BENEFITS**
- A safe product with a clean taste
- A fully allergen-free product
- Provides high-viscous transparent gel
- Enables cost savings
- Is an EU-origin product

**APPLICATIONS**
- For desserts, puddings, soups, gravies and meat products
- For baked and pasta products, and for coatings
- For dry blends, instant meals and confectionery

www.organicpotatostarch.com

Both native and cold-swelling (pre-gel) starch are available. Native starch is mechanically extracted from organic potatoes. Cold-swelling starch is produced by precooking native starch, drying it on steam-heated drums, as well as grounding and sieving.
### Calendar of Events

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<td>6–8 May</td>
<td>GM-free conference</td>
<td>Berlin, Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>4–5 June</td>
<td>Sustainable Foods Summit: European edition</td>
<td>Amsterdam, The Netherlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>11–12 June</td>
<td>9th European Organic Congress</td>
<td>Riga, Latvia</td>
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<td>25–26 June</td>
<td>IFOAM EU Farmer Interest Group meeting</td>
<td>Saint-Jean-d’Angelys, France</td>
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#### Designing our Future

- **Day I - 11 June**
  - Policies for green growth?

- **Day II - 12 June**
  - Strategies for Vision 2030

- **Day III - 13 June**
  - Excursion

More information and programme: [organic-congress-ifoameu.org](http://organic-congress-ifoameu.org)

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