WELCOME NOTE

POLITICAL HOTSPOT

1 NEWS FROM IFOAM EU WORKING FIELDS

1.1 Regulation

1.2 Policy

1.3 EU Research & Innovation Policy / TP Organics

2 IFOAM EU DEVELOPMENTS

3 EVENTS

3.1 Preview of events

3.2 Review of events

4 MAKING EUROPE MORE ORGANIC – SUPPORT IFOAM EU

5 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

As of 8 April Eduardo Cuoco is IFOAM EU’s new Director as Marco Schlüter has officially stepped down. Read Marco’s goodbye in the welcome note of this edition of the newsletter. © Lenneke Pons-Schot, Biojournaal
Welcome Note

Dear readers,

It is my great honour to write to you, opening the IFOAM EU newsletter one last time, as outgoing IFOAM EU director. After more than 12 years I stepped down from my position as IFOAM EU director last Friday, April 8.

I am proud to leave as IFOAM EU has settled in its new framework for continued success. Last week it held its 8th General Assembly and its 10th European Organic Congress in Netherlands. Major conclusions and results can be drawn:

- IFOAM EU presented a new strategy for 2016–2020, outlining its major strategic pillars which are embedded in the IFOAM EU vision to mainstream organic food and farming by 2030. It will further finalise strategic recommendations for the entire sector.
- On this note, transforming the current food and farming system and building alliances were major issues of the 10th European Organic Congress. At the congress, IFOAM EU demonstrated it is a strong political player and has an important role in defining how we want to produce the food of tomorrow.
- In the discussion regarding a new organic regulation, IFOAM EU has underlined its role as key player in discussing the way forward with the three EU institutions and Copa-Cogeca secretary general Pekka Pesonen.
- A new IFOAM EU budget 2016/17 was approved by the General Assembly, with an increase in revenue from 1.3 million euros in 2015 to 1.6 million by 2017 – the highest budget in history of IFOAM EU. This budget is built on the win of a two-year operational grant, as well as increased sector contributions and project income.
- It was assessed that IFOAM EU is a financial stable organisation with sufficient liquidity and solid strategic reserves.
- IFOAM EU plans to extend its team to at least 18 full time people by 2017 and continues to strengthen its professional capacities.
- It further has strong strategies to build national member capacities and enhance membership engagement.
- My successor Eduardo Cuoco took office Monday April 11, 2016. I can assure you that I have complete confidence in him, as well as the professional team that has grown tremendously in its capacities and knowledge over the past years.

Together with your engagement, vision and strategy, IFOAM EU has all the basic ingredients for a successful future.

Last but not least I would like to thank you for wonderful years I had as IFOAM EU director and, as I am staying in the organic sector, I wish all of us robust and inspiring collaboration.

Marco Schlüter
Director from 13 Oct 2003 to 10 April 2016
POLITICAL HOTSPOT

SHOWING THE WAY AT THE 10TH EUROPEAN ORGANIC CONGRESS

With more than 200 participants from 27 countries representing all areas of the organic movement, the three European Institutions, national governments and many like-minded organisations, the 10th European Organic Congress demonstrated IFOAM EU’s ability to engage with key players at all levels.

Organised together with the Dutch organic representation Bionext and entitled “Transforming Food and Farming”, this edition of the European Organic Congress saw key players on the political, advocacy and scientific scenes present, discuss and engage with each other and with the congress participants. Some highlights:

Dutch Minister for Agriculture, Martijn van Dam, praises organic for being a pioneer

In his opening of the congress, the Dutch Minister for Agriculture Martijn van Dam praised the organic movement and spoke to the need to continue development. In his own words: “The organic sector offers an alternative to our industrialised food system. You are pioneers in creating a more natural way of producing food. Where healthy people, healthy animals and a healthy planet are the priority. For decades you’ve used natural fertilisers and plant protection products, and you’ve closely focused on animals’ natural needs. And every year, consumers reward you with higher sales figures. As a result, you’re also inspiring the conventional food sector to improve sustainability. So transforming food and farming through organics is not only the motto of this conference. It’s also your ambition for the future.”

“Our biggest challenge is to keep producing high-quality, healthy food in a responsible way for future generations. That’s no easy task. […] As a sector, you must consider how to maintain production and keep pioneering sustainability. There’s still a lot to be done in terms of saving energy and water, and reducing carbon emissions. You should also take inspiration from the conventional food sector. This conference is a great opportunity to discuss how to work together for sustainable growth,” he continued.

Read the Dutch Minister’s full presentation online
Positive groundswell for change in food & farming felt like never before

Leaders from multiple areas confirm organic is and can play a significant role in the transformation of food and farming.

Organic is at a tipping point, having a never-before-seen influence on the way food is produced – this was the clear message from long-time organic actors Andre Leu (President of IFOAM – Organics International) and Liz Bowles (Head of Farming at the Soil Association). Leu stressed that thanks to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), European farmers were in a privileged position to lead farming towards sustainability, instead of purely competing for the lowest price. Although the need for transformation is large, organic is playing a key role: it is pioneering farmer-led innovation, policy makers are talking about organic as a solution, conventional farmers are taking up organic techniques in order to improve their performance and profitability, and consumer demand, as well as awareness, is steadily growing. Karst Kooistra from Dutch company Tradin Organic also highlighted the positive impact of partnerships with organic producers in developing countries.

We have the science to feed the planet organically, confirmed Angelika Hilbeck (Senior Scientist and Lecturer at ETH Zurich), while calling for a 1 billion European Flagship Project on agroecology in order to radically alter the current system, including in its economic dimension, which is a large barrier to the fundamental transformation of food and farming.

The political system and its impact was also under the microscope as Aurelie Trouvé from AgroParisTech said that a soon-to-be-published study will show that there is a clear correlation between how much farms pollute and the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) funding they receive – more pollution means more funding. She called on policy makers to fundamentally change the CAP and give Pillar 1 funding only to farmers who deliver positive externalities. This was echoed by Patrick Holden, Founding Director of the Sustainable Food Trust, who reiterated that a key obstacle to mainstreaming sustainable farming is economic: polluters aren’t paying.
“They have millions of dollars, but we have millions of people. We can win,” proclaimed Susan George, President of the Transnational Institute, while speaking to the dangers posed by the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). She presented the need to stand up against TTIP and the role organic can take up in this movement to protect ourselves from corporations taking over policy making and the dire impact this could have on agriculture and on the very food we all eat.

High level discussions on the organic regulation
Key negotiators on the new organic regulation were present to share their views of the progress made in the trilogue discussions and the impact on organic in Europe.

Hans Hoogeveen, Director General for Agro at the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, and Diego Canga Fano, the responsible director at the Commission’s Directorate-General for Agriculture, were positive about the progress and expressed the desire and belief that it would be possible to conclude negotiations by the end of the Dutch Presidency this June, as the currently unclear legal framework for organic is causing stagnation in conversion.

Martin Häusling, the EU Parliament Rapporteur for the dossier said, in contrast with Hoogeveen and Canga Fano, that it was more important to have a good regulation than a quick resolution to the negotiations as the next organic regulation must be fit for the long term. He also called out the Commission on what he called their unacceptable, conflicting positions of pushing to allow glyphosate whilst at the same time working to penalise organic operators for contamination beyond their control.

There was significant coverage of the congress in the Dutch and international media.
EXPLORE THE INTERACTIVE MAP

PRODUCTION & RETAIL DATA BY COUNTRY

ifoam-eu.org/en/organic-europe

ORGANIC IN EUROPE

BROWSE DATA ON ORGANIC PRODUCTION AND RETAIL

› How much land is farmed organically in your country?
› How did organic farm land evolve in the last 10 years?
› How many processors & producers produce our organic food?
› Where do people buy the most organic?
› How much does the average person spend on organic?
1 NEWS FROM IFOAM EU WORKING FIELDS

1.1 REGULATION

UPDATE ON EQUIVALENCY AGREEMENTS

The European Commission recently announced that a bilateral trade agreement on organic with Chile is very close to being signed. Chile will be 13th on the list of recognised “equivalent” third countries. Countries that are already on the list are: Argentina, Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, India, Israel, Japan, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Tunisia, the United States and New Zealand.

At the last Committee on Organic Production, Member States gave positive feedback on the proposal to extend the EU-Canada equivalency agreement, in place since 2011, specifically to include the possibility for EU Member States to import Canadian organic wine and Canadian organic products containing ingredients originating outside Canada. At the same time, EU organic wine will also be included, making it much simpler for EU producers to export to Canada.

Finally, in February EU Commissioner for Agriculture Phil Hogan visited Mexico and Colombia, accompanied by a delegation of 35 EU agri-food companies including some organic company representatives. At the end of the official visits, the Commission announced the start of negotiations for bilateral agreements on trade in organic products with both Mexico and Colombia.

EGTOP REPORTS ON “CLEANING AND DISINFECTION” AND ON “ORGANIC FERTILISERS AND SOIL CONDITIONERS”

At the beginning of 2016, two new reports from the Expert Group for Technical Advice on Organic Production (EGTOP) were published.

The first report presents recommendations on a number of products for the cleaning and disinfection of equipment and facilities that are authorised in organic production for plant, livestock (including aquaculture) and food/feed processing operations. These substances will be listed in Annex VII of Regulation EC No 889/2008).

The second report is on organic fertilisers and soil conditioners and the EGTOP gives a positive opinion on a number of substances: xylite, hydrolysed proteins of plant origin and industrial lime from sugar cane production are considered in line with the objectives, criteria and principles of organic farming. Struvite and renewable calcined phosphate are also considered in line, but they cannot be inserted in the organic regulation because they are not yet registered in the horizontal fertiliser legislation.

On the contrary a negative opinion was given for iodine; it is not considered in line with the objectives, criteria and principles of organic farming. The expert group also gave recommendations on production and processing methods, additive and preservatives and other specific issues. Read the full report.

EGTOP recommendations are not binding, but the Commission is supposed to take them into consideration when updating Organic Regulation (EC) No 889/2008.
OVERVIEW REPORT FROM THE FOOD AND VETERINARY OFFICE

In 2012, the Commission’s Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) started auditing “organic control systems in the EU and abroad”. In addition to the overview reports on EU Member States and “equivalent” third countries, a third overview report on control bodies operating in three third countries – China, Turkey and Vietnam – is now available.

COMMISSION BIOFACH PRESENTATION AVAILABLE

The presentations given during BioFach 2016 by the Commission on the EU Legislation Review and on the Electronic Certificate of Inspection are now available.

Revisit the Commission’s presentation given during BioFach
1.2 POLICY

**NEW STAKEHOLDER GUIDE ON ORGANIC ACTION PLANS**

In association with the Organic Research Centre and FiBL

Learn how the development and implementation of Organic Action Plans (OAPs) can help to achieve a more integrated and balanced approach to organic policy-making, in a new stakeholder guide published by the Organic Research Centre, the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture – FiBL and IFOAM EU.

The guide looks at the current status of OAPs in Europe with a special focus on national and regional plans. There is also in-depth analysis of six OAPs, namely those in the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Andalusia (Spain) and Scotland (UK). OAPs developed at EU level by the European Commission are also analysed. To support the future OAP development and implementation, the guide sets out recommendations for the organic sector and EU, national and regional policymakers.

**ORGANIC FARMING SUPPORT SET TO VARY CONSIDERABLY ACROSS THE MEMBER STATES TO 2020**

Organic farming support under the new Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) looks like it will vary considerably across the Member States for the period to 2020, according to the most recent figures for EU expenditure on organic farming maintenance and conversion payments under the European Fund for Agriculture and Rural Development. The figures were presented by Matthias Stolze from the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture at an IFOAM EU’s BioFach workshop on whether the new CAP is capable of supporting sustainable farming or just continuing business as usual.

According to Dr. Stolze it is evident that, in order to further develop organic farming, a clear strategy and package of supportive policy measures that complement conversion and maintenance support are sorely needed.

Dorota Metera from the certification body Bioekspert outlined the potential for the Polish RDP to support organic farming through a combination of policy measures including conversion and maintenance payments as well as investment support, if the RDP is well implemented. This opinion was echoed by Sebastian Mittermaier from the Germany organic farming association Naturland. He also said that the ongoing crisis in farm-gate prices had stimulated strong interest amongst farmers wishing to convert to organic. The workshop was part of the Boosting organic: making the CAP effective project, an action co-financed by the European Commission, Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development.

Dorota Metera, BIOEKSPERT; Sebastian Mittermaier, Naturland; Stephen Meredith, IFOAM EU and Matthias Stolze, FiBL, at the session ‘Is the new CAP capable of supporting sustainable farming or just continuing business as usual?’ at BioFach
Increased demand for organic food, but production not moving at the same speed - Importance of supportive CAP demonstrated

Demand for organic food in Europe saw another record year of growth in 2014, however organic production is not moving at the same speed and more effort at policy level are needed, according to a new publication – *Organic in Europe: Prospects and Developments 2016* – launched by IFOAM EU at 10th European Organic Congress. The growth trends highlight the importance of using the CAP and other agri-food policies to create a more positive environment in which farmers and food companies feel confident making significant investment decisions. And, without these investments, Europe will not be able to meet the growing demand amongst EU consumers for organic food.

In mapping the latest trends across Europe, the research shows that in the EU alone the organic market grew at a relatively very high rate of 7.4% in 2014 and retail sales valued at €24 billion. However, the increase in organic farmland area in the EU slowed – growing by just 1.1% and the number of producers actually fell by 0.2%.

Reflecting on the current imbalances in organic supply and demand in Europe and how such gaps should be closed, the authors describe the need for clear organic sector strategies to be developed, for support to be given to shorter organic supply chains and for the accuracy of organic market data collection to be improved. Policy makers at European, national and regional levels all have a role to play in creating this environment.

The publication was developed in partnership with researchers from FiBL and Marche Polytechnic University and the German organic farmers association Naturland. It looks at the latest market and production developments across Europe in context of the new CAP and current EU agri-food policy, including:

- A think-piece on expanding organics beyond a niche, taking the latest trends and the European organic movement’s vision to increase the area of Europe’s agricultural land under organic management by 50% by 2030 into account.
- Facts and figures on latest farming and market trends across Europe with special focus on the 28 Member States of the European Union, EU Candidate and Potential Candidate countries, and the members of the European Free Trade Association.

*Organic in Europe: Prospects and Developments 2016* and accompanying interactive infographics can be downloaded and explored through the IFOAM EU website. These publications are part of the *Boosting organic: making the CAP effective* project, an action co-financed by the European Commission, Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development.
**GMOs**

**INVASION OF TEOSINTE IN SPAIN: JOINT NGO OPEN LETTER**

On 24 February, IFOAM EU and a coalition of European and Spanish NGOs sent an open letter to the Commission about the invasion of teosinte in Spain. Teosinte is a wild relative of maize originating in Mexico, which appeared in Spain in 2009 but was never reported to EU authorities by Monsanto or the government. It behaves like an invasive species, damages maize production, and could interbreed with GM-maize MON810, grown in parts of Spain. The coalition asks the Commission to start investigations about this issue and to withdraw the authorisation of GM maize 810.

Monsanto is legally obliged to publish annual monitoring reports about the cultivation of MON810 in the EU and potential environmental hazards, including crossbreeding. That maize is not supposed to cross and interbreed with any other species in the EU was an important precondition for allowing genetically engineered maize to be cultivated in the EU.

Meanwhile, the weedy teosinte plants continue to spread through a number of regions in Aragon, Navarra and Catalonia, and have become a serious threat to maize farmers. In some regions, the teosinte population has reached such a high density that local governments have prohibited maize cultivation to prevent it from spreading further.

**NEW GENETIC ENGINEERING TECHNIQUES UPDATE**

According to the latest information, the legal interpretation expected by the European Commission concerning so-called New Plant Breeding Techniques (NPBTs), which was expected in early 2016, has been postponed again. The Commission said that the new deadline is the end of 2016, without specifying further.

This interpretation will indicate whether such techniques fall under the GMO legislation and, hence, are subject to traceability and labelling requirements, as well as to risk assessment.

IFOAM EU met with DG SANTE representatives to discuss the issue and explain the necessity that these techniques be subject to risk assessment, and traceability and labelling requirements. In addition, IFOAM EU, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth Europe and Arche Noah, among others, co-signed a joint position paper urging the Commission to regulate these techniques and to confirm they fall in the scope of the EU GMO legislation.

An event on NPBTs organised by three Green MEPS – Maria Heubuch, José Bové and Bart Staes – took place in the European Parliament on 2 March. Thomas Fertl, IFOAM EU Vice-President and Head of Agricultural Policies at BioAustria, spoke about the significant impact the lack of regulation would have on the organic sector and organic farmers more specifically. Other speakers illustrated the potential risks for food safety, for the environment and for human health. In addition, the implication of patents of living organisms was also discussed. Watch a recording of the event.
SEED

THE NEED FOR SEED: A NEW BROCHURE FOR POLICY-MAKERS

In a new leaflet, ‘Need for a new seed legislation’, IFOAM EU breaks down the issue of seeds and demonstrates the need to review the current EU legislation on the marketing of seed and plant propagating material. The context of the seed legislation in the EU and the latest developments, and the problems caused by the existing legislation for farmers and organics are explained. The three main issues are the fact that current marketing rules:

• Hinder seed diversity
• Promote oligopoly and discriminate against small operators
• Require useless uniformity.

The advantages of organic plant breeding are presented to emphasise the necessity for further research and development of this sector, and recommendations for improvement are also provided.

This leaflet is co-financed by the European Union, under the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME). The sole responsibility for this communication lies with IFOAM EU.
1.3 EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION POLICY / TP ORGANICS

NEW TP ORGANICS WEBSITE

Get the latest news on research and innovation in Europe on the revamped TP Organics website. New features on the website include the possibility to submit innovative practices in organic agriculture, agroecology and low-input farming to be showcased in the Innovation Arena of the website. This section will also feature organic operational groups that are being set up across various European regions as part of the EIP-AGRI.

Members of TP Organics will enjoy a dedicated members-only space on the new website that allows them to get a better insight on the latest developments in the policy arena and learn about consortiums in the setup phase. Later this year the members of TP Organics will also get an exclusive access to the calls and tenders database to find new funding opportunities.

EIP-AGRI UPDATE

THEMES FOR NEXT THREE FOCUS GROUPS

The EIP-AGRI Advisory Board, “Subgroup on Innovation for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability”, has started preparing calls for the next three Focus Groups and the themes will be:

• Robust and resilient dairy production systems: this Focus Group should look for approaches to create good conditions for dairy cattle husbandry taking into account breeding, nutrition, fertility, health, welfare in all parts of the life cycle of animals

• Agroforestry: this Focus Group should discuss how agroforestry practices can be adopted at farm level to design highly productive systems that make use of integrated ecological processes

• Wine diseases and pests: the Focus Group should tackle the entire cycle of diseases and pests in wine: prevention, detection, management and control

We provide more information when the calls for experts for these Focus Groups have been launched.
OPERATIONAL GROUPS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Out of the 118 approved Rural Development Programmes, 94 Rural Development Programmes in 24 Member States provide support to EIP-AGRI Operational Groups. 3205 Operational Groups are expected to be established. Find out about the operational groups that will be funded in your country or region.

NEW FOCUS GROUP REPORTS

- Ecological Focus Areas The Focus Group on Ecological Focus Areas looked at how landscape features such as field margins, hedgerows and grassy or flower strips can contribute to the profitability of arable crop production. The Focus Group also considered other direct economic effects (production of wood, grass) and non-market benefits (aesthetics, social value). Read the final Ecological Focus Area report
- Integrated Pest Management strategies to tackle pests and diseases for Brassica European oilseed rape and brassica vegetable production faces a range of problems with pests, diseases and weeds. The Focus Group identified types of pests and diseases on brassica in different EU regions, compared existing Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and identified needs for further research and innovation. The report is also very relevant for organic farmers as they face the challenge to reduce the use of pyrethrins and spinosad that can have negative impacts on parasitoids and natural enemies of insect pests. Read the final Integrated Pest Management report
- High Nature Value – Farming profitability The High Nature Value (HNV) farming concept recognises that the conservation of biodiversity also depends to a great extent upon the continuation of specific farming systems and practices. The Focus Group addressed the question “how to improve the social and economic sustainability of HNV farming without losing HNV’s characteristics?” Read the report featuring 16 case studies including six of organically certified ones and a factsheet on the EIP-AGRI website.

RESEARCH & INNOVATION FOR ORGANIC FOOD COMPANIES – BIOFACH SCIENCE DAY

The BioFach Science Day morning session focussed on innovation of European organic food companies and also served to explore how the European Commission can better support organic food companies. Particular focus was on the European Food Research Area, the research programme being prepared by the European Commission, which should cover all research related to food and agriculture and which extends beyond 2020.

One of the main outcomes was that more research is needed to translate the requirements of the organic regulations in terms of food processing – such as “processing with care” and “guaranteeing the vital qualities of the product” – into practice. Differences in interpretation of these requirements across the Member States are hampering the development of the organic sector. A Code of Practice is needed, that provides the framework for developing innovative yet “careful” technologies.

The science day was organised by TP Organics and TIPI, the Technology Innovation Platform of IFOAM – Organics International for the 4th time at BioFach.
2 IFOAM EU DEVELOPMENTS

CHANGE OF DIRECTORS AT IFOAM EU

Long-term IFOAM EU Director Marco Schlüter officially stepped down on 8 April and Eduardo Cuoco was appointed to be the new director.

Commenting on the transition, IFOAM EU President Christopher Stopes said: “I have had the honour of working with Marco Schlüter for the last 7 years. In his time as director, Marco has truly built the organisation: from being the only staff member in 2003 to a powerful advocacy organisation and the voice for the organic movement in the EU. On behalf of the entire board and membership, we would like to thank Marco for his tireless work and dedication, and congratulate him on his achievements.”

In his goodbye presentation, outgoing IFOAM EU Director Marco Schlüter said: “It was my great honour to serve the organic movement and sector to make its voice heard in Brussels and to bring our messages to policy makers at highest level. After thirteen years at IFOAM EU, it is now time for me to move on to new challenges. I would like to thank all those who have generously devoted their time and energy to making IFOAM EU what it is today: the current and former board, council, and staff members and our great membership. I am very confident in the future development of the organisation under its new board and director Eduardo Cuoco.”

Christopher Stopes continued: “Eduardo Cuoco has been with the organic movement for 18 years and has vast experience with farming, certification and business, not to mention a deep understanding of the food industry and EU policy. He has led the development of the European Technology Platform for Organic Food and Farming, TPOrganics, from its infancy to an important player on the research and innovation scene. Eduardo is the right person for the job and on behalf of IFOAM EU, we are very happy to welcome him as the new IFOAM EU director.”

The new IFOAM EU Director, Eduardo Cuoco, commented: “Organic is who I am and leading the EU representation for organic food & farming is an extraordinary opportunity. It will not be easy to follow in Marco’s footsteps but I look forward to the future and I am confident in the IFOAM EU team, their dedication and skills. I would like to thank the board for their confidence in me.”
NEW IFOAM EU BOARD ELECTED AT THE 8TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

IFOAM EU is proud to announce that there was a strong turnout for the general assembly, with 28 countries and more than 110 members represented. They had the opportunity to elect nine board members from a candidate list of 18 highly qualified and diverse organic stakeholders.

The members of the new board are:

- President: Christopher Stopes, EcoS Consultancy, United Kingdom
- Vice President for Regulation: Sabine Eigenschink, Austria Bio Garantie, Austria
- Vice President for Policy: Jan Plagge, Bioland, Germany
- Treasurer: Bavo van den Idsert, Bionext, the Netherlands

And:

- Évelyne Alcázar Marín, Ecovalia, Spain
- Sylvie Dulong, Fédération Nationale d’Agriculture Biologique, France
- Thomas Fertl, BioAustria, Austria
- Sybille Kyed, Organic Denmark, Denmark
- Jiri Lehejcek, Czech Technology Platform for Organic Agriculture, Czech Republic

IFOAM EU is proud that the sector, regional and gender representation criteria were all met with in the first round of voting and there was such a strong representation of members at the general assembly.

Besides the election of a new Board the IFOAM EU General Assembly voted motions, approved the budget, and was informed of the new IFOAM EU strategy and the work program for the coming years. There was a moment to say goodbye to outgoing IFOAM EU Director Marco Schlüter and to welcome new Director Eduardo Cuoco.
WELCOMING OUR NEW COLLEAGUE

Caterina Berardi
Caterina is originally from Italy and has recently been living abroad, mainly in Eastern Europe and particularly in Russia where she spent the last three years.

Caterina has a bachelor’s degree in foreign languages and a master’s degree in international relations but since she was young, sustainable topics have always attracted her, especially from a political and economic point of view.

To her, working at IFOAM EU means getting actively involved in organic issues and challenges in the European Union. She really believes that organic represents the future and the alternative model to adopt, in order to make our life more sustainable and equal. At IFOAM EU she will be the coordinator for operations and internal communications.

SAYING GOODBYE TO OUR COLLEAGUE

Maria Ruggiero
At the end of March IFOAM EU and especially the project team bid farewell and good luck to Maria after ten months with us. Maria’s strong commitment to organic food and farming, her background in project management, as well as her good sense of humour brought a welcome dynamic to the team.

Maria demonstrated huge enthusiasm for her work and motivation on multiple topics related to the Common Agricultural Policy. She coordinated an IFOAM EU project running with several partners under a grant from the EU in this area. Her endless patience and agreeable approach greatly helped us in our daily work.

Maria has now decided to say good bye to IFOAM EU and continue her career at the European Commission.

We would like to thank her for her work and wish her the best in her future career!

VOLUNTEER AT IFOAM EU

IFOAM EU is currently accepting applications for the programme “European Voluntary Service” (EVS) starting in June 2016.

Aspiring volunteers from Croatia, Estonia, Hungary and Slovakia are invited to apply before 30 April by filling in the application form and sending it to info@ifoam-eu.org.

Apply now or circulate this opportunity among your network!
3 EVENTS

3.1 PREVIEW OF EVENTS

NATURAL & ORGANIC PRODUCTS EUROPE

Interested in organic farming trends for your sourcing needs? Which countries spend the most on organic per capita? What are the main product category groups and marketing channels for distribution in key markets? Join IFOAM EU at Natural & Organic Products Europe for a session on ‘Explore European Organic Production and Retail Data’ on Monday, 18 April at 3:45 pm.

Natural & Organic Products Europe is Europe’s biggest trade show for natural products – making it a great event for buyers of everything from natural healthcare products, natural and organic foods, through to natural personal care and eco-household products. The launch pad for hundreds of exciting new products, Natural & Organic Products Europe is where retailers and distributors from across the UK and around the world get their first glimpse of the bestselling products of the future. So, if you want to increase sales and brand awareness – make sure your products are seen here by the buyers who can really make a difference to your business!

IFOAM EU’s session at Natural & Organic Products Europe will provide you with insights into European organic production and retail data.
3.2 REVIEW OF EVENTS

IFOAM EU AT BIOFACH 2016, 10–13 FEBRUARY

On 10 February, the IFOAM EU Policy Day brought together EU policy-makers and the organic sector.

Representatives of the EU Commission and the EU Parliament gave an update on the state of play of the negotiations on the new organic regulation and the organic stakeholders took this opportunity to repeat that the new regulation should not represent an obstacle to the sustainable development of the organic sector.

On 11 February the findings of a study conducted by FiBL for IFOAM EU were presented. Organic farming support under new Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) looks set to vary considerably across the Member States for the period to 2020. Read more about this in the CAP section of this newsletter.

On 12 February several IFOAM EU sessions took place discussing:

- The new approach to the organic import regime and its impact on international organic trade was discussed. The difference in the approaches to the organic import regime of the Commission and the organic sector were highlighted. The Commission pushed for a compliance approach according to which the EU Regulation would apply identically all over the world, while the organic sector prefers an equivalency approach in which the organic producers in particular in developing countries are empowered.
- The role of the organic movement following the Paris Climate Conference COP 21 was explored in a session entitled: How will the organic sector contribute to the fight against climate change?
- According to the EU objective of 40% reduction of our GHG emissions, the agriculture sector is expected to reduce significantly its emissions by 2030. The main message of the workshop was that the whole organic sector has to actively engage in this debate if it wants to remain relevant to policy-makers and to society. That is true for farming (organic farming leads to higher carbon sequestration in soils and decreases nitrous oxide emissions), as well as for processing and all stakeholders in the production chain. Ecocert even challenged the sector to become carbon neutral.

A report on Science Day can be found in the ‘EU Research & Innovation Policy / TP Organics’ section of this newsletter.
IFOAM EU KEY SUPPORTERS 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

Organic Potato Starch

**FUNCTIONS**
- WATER BINDER
- GLUING AGENT
- THICKENER
- FILLING INGREDIENT
- ANTI CAKING INGREDIENT

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.

www.organicpotatostarch.com
5 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

17–18 April  
Natural & Organic Products Europe  
London, the United Kingdom

9–10 June  
Sustainable Food Summit  
Amsterdam, the Netherlands

24–25 November  
4th European Organic Processing Conference  
Seville, Spain

IFOAM ORGANIC LEADERSHIP COURSE (OLC) EUROPE 2015
First residential session: 17–24 July 2016, the Netherlands  
Second residential session: February 2017, Germany

Don’t miss this unique opportunity to develop your skills, knowledge and leadership attitude.  
The IFOAM OLC brings international expertise and vision to a course that will help you attain  
your personal development goals. The deadline for applications is 15 April 2016. To apply,  
follow the instructions on the OLC Europe page.

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For further information contact your national board member or the office in Brussels.
Editors IFOAM EU Newsletter: Laura Ullmann, Marco Schlüter, Eva Berckmans
Newsletter layout: Diana Jastrzębska, Heroldart

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Geoff Tansey, Writer, Consultant and Trustee of the Food Ethics Council at the closing session of the 10th European Organic Congress. “Solutions for transforming food and farming through organics – Putting agroecology at the heart of CAP and other agri-food policies.” © John Portelli