IFOAM EU GROUP
NEWSLETTER

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2014
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A “Linda” potato field taken at the Hof Wörme farm during the IFOAM EU team excursion © Lena Wietheger
Dear IFOAM EU members and organic stakeholders,

When travelling around Europe one key question arises among organic stakeholders: What is the next step for organic food and farming? What will it look like in the future?

This year, BioFach addressed this issue together with IFOAM Global in launching the Organic 3.0 campaign, the Commission published a legal proposal for a new regulation and many of you are running your own processes about the future of organic.

Consequently, IFOAM EU has started a vision 2030 process, kicking off at its 10-year birthday conference held in Brussels last November. Participants discussed “Where does the organic movement want to be in 2030?” This was the first step of a vision process which will last about two years and will involve a wide range of stakeholders.

I am happy to announce that you have now the opportunity to help shape the organic vision for 2030 – everyone is invited to fill in this online survey, to add new thoughts to what was discussed or to contribute for the first time. The survey will close on 21 August 2014. Help us answer important questions such as:

- What will make organic food and farming indispensable to society in 2030?
- Which are our particular strengths that we want to foster?
- Which are the values that will navigate us through the next decades?
- Whether you are running a vision process at local, regional or national level, so that we can synergize visions as much as possible.

We want to take our future in our own hands and provide guidance for the development of organic beyond legislation. A vision outlining what organic food and farming will look like in 2030 is therefore needed to guide the sector, to empower it and to develop successful strategies to stay at the forefront. The final vision will be presented at the 9th European Organic Congress in Riga, in June 2015.

You, the people who make up our movement – from organic farmers and processors, retailers, certifiers, consultants, traders and researchers to environmental and consumer advocacy bodies – are its greatest strength and together we can build a bright future for our sector and make Europe more organic.

I cordially invite you to take part in the Vision 2030 Survey and share your thoughts with us. Because your opinion matters!

Sincerely,

Marco Schlüter
Director
POLITICAL HOTSPOT – EU POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

EU ITALIAN PRESIDENCY SETS OUT AGRI COUNCIL PRIORITIES FOR NEXT 6 MONTHS

The EU Italian Presidency announced its work programme at the monthly Council meeting of Agriculture Ministers on 14 June. At the top of the presidency’s priorities relevant to organic is the Council’s work on the Commission proposals for the review of the organic regulation. Other topics of interest are the finalisation of the implementing rules of the new CAP and the completion of the legislative review of the information and promotion activities for agricultural products in and outside the EU. The presidency has also placed a strong emphasis on EXPO Milano 2015 which is dedicated to “Feeding the planet, energy for life” (see IFOAM EU Newsletter No 74 June 2014).

Elsewhere, the presidency will seek to steer the discussions on the Commission’s proposal for a new school scheme on fruit and vegetables and milk as well as making further progress on the debate concerning the future of the milk sector following the end of the quota system in 2015 and the mid-term review of the EU 2020 Strategy – with a special emphasis on young people in agriculture. The presidency also plans to consider ongoing legislative developments on:
- Animal cloning and novel food
- The package of food chain legislation: official controls, animal health, and the production and marketing of plant reproductive material
- Review of legislation on veterinary medicines
- Food fraud
- The implementation of the new EU Forest Strategy

COMPOSITION OF NEW EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT COMMITTEES AGREED

Newly elected Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have agreed to the composition of the parliament’s committees following their first plenary held in Strasbourg on 2 July. At their inaugural meetings MEPs also ratified the chairs and vice-chairs of their respective committees. Relevant committees for the organic sector include the Committees on:
- Agriculture and Rural Development (COMAGRI)
- Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (COMENVI)
- Industry, Research and Energy (COMITRE)

Their composition can be found in the table below.

The size of political groups usually determines the number of seats they may hold in committees. The largest political group remains the European Peoples’ Party – Christian Democrats (EPP), followed by the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats (S&D). Other political groups include the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL), the Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA), and the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD). Currently, all MEPs outside these political groups are considered non-aligned (NI).

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<td>Eric Andrée (S&amp;D, FR)</td>
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<td>Janusz Wojciechowski (ECR, PL)</td>
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<td>Clara Aguileria (S&amp;D, ES)</td>
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<td>COMENVI</td>
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<td>Beneđek Jávor (Greens/EFA, HU)</td>
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<td>Daciana Sărbu (S&amp;D, RO)</td>
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<td>Pavel Poc (S&amp;D, CZ)</td>
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<td>Jerzy Buzek</td>
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<td>Hans-Olaf Henkel (ECR, DE)</td>
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<td>Miloslav Ransdorf (GUE, CZ)</td>
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<td>Morten Helveg Petersen (ALDE, DK)</td>
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* figures include all full members of the committee; but exclude substitute members
1 NEWS FROM IFOAM EU WORKING FIELDS

1.1 REGULATION

COUNCIL ASKS COMMISSION TO NEGOTIATE BILATERAL ORGANIC TRADE AGREEMENTS

During the last EU Council of 16 June, EU Agriculture ministers mandated the Commission to negotiate bilateral trade agreements for organic products with third countries.

The Council of the European Union criticized the fact that most of the current agreements with third countries are negotiated on a unilateral base and do not allow reciprocity for EU organic producers to export to these countries. The Commission now has the mission to improve agreements, making them more bilateral, more transparent and making sure that they do not put EU producers at a disadvantage.

This decision is going in the direction of the Commission proposal for a new organic regulation COM (180) to eliminate the possibility of recognising equivalence through Control Bodies, with this principle only remaining valid when included in trade agreements with third countries. A trend that IFOAM EU does not support as it will limit:

- European consumers’ access to affordable and trustworthy organic products, particularly tropical products
- European organic processors’ access to imported organic ingredients
- Developing Countries’ ability to develop their organic sector to meet the demand of European consumers

For more information please see the IFOAM position.

MINISTERS QUESTION ORGANIC REGULATION PROPOSAL

On 14 July the EU Agriculture Council discussed the Commission’s proposal for a new EU organic regulation. The Italian Council Presidency put the organic proposal on the Council agenda for the first time and asked ministers about exceptional rules, controls and alignment with the Lisbon treaty. The discussion was restricted to only a few elements of the proposal. Similar to IFOAM EU, ministers welcomed the Commission’s good intention, but were critical of initiatives included in the Commission proposal.

Ministers were concerned that the current proposal would lead to a decline in organic production in Europe and urged for a better balance between developing organic standards and recognising the highly varied situation of organic operators across Europe.

Key concerns regarded:
- the inclusion of retailers in the control system
- setting up of separate threshold levels for pesticides residues
- the current use of delegated acts in the proposal, which would significantly increase Commission powers and is not in line with the ministers’ interpretation of the Lisbon treaty.

Several ministers stressed the specificity of organic inspection and therefore the need to keep organic control within the organic legislative framework, and not to shift it to the horizontal legislation for food and feed control as is being proposed by the Commission. Some ministers questioned the proposal as such and recommended improving the current framework, saying that improvement of the current legislation would better achieve the Commission’s aims.

IFOAM EU demands a proposal from the EU institutions that maintains the innovative elements of the Commission proposals while supporting the development of the sector through a progressive step-by-step process with clear vision, taking the diversity of Member States, regions and organic operators into account. Further, improvements to ensure proper implementation of controls in Member States and regions should be a key element of a new proposal.

Read more in the IFOAM EU press release.
OUTCOMES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ORGANIC FARMING

During the meeting of the Standing Committee on Organic Farming of 8 and 9 July 2014, the Commission received positive feedback from Member States to extend two exceptional production rules on organic livestock and feed production until the end of 2017:

- Art. 42(b) of Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 – The lack of harmonised and detailed rules on organic production of young poultry, made it necessary to extend the opportunity for farmers to introduce non-organically reared pullets for egg production of not more than 18 weeks, if organic pullets are not available.

- Art. 43 of Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 – The shortage of protein feed in organic quality made it necessary to extend the possibility for farmers to use up to 5% of organic of non-organic protein feed for poultry and porcine livestock.

In the same meeting, a DG MARE proposal to adapt the organic regulation to the opinion delivered by the Expert Group for Technical Advice on Organic Production (EGTOP) on organic aquaculture production was also discussed. Two main topics were examined: the use of non-organic juveniles, and permitted feed sources and feed additives, with a special focus on histidine, cholesterol and lecithin.

THE COMMISSION ANSWERS MEP QUESTIONS ON ORGANIC REGULATION REVIEW

On 11 March, Member of the European Parliament, Guido Milana, from the Socialists and Democrats group, asked the Commission several questions on the organic regulation review.

The Commission answered these questions and published the responses online:

- Subject: Regulations on specific types of production in organic farming
- Subject: Special production rules for organic farming
- Subject: Impact of new organic farming requirements
- Subject: Substances banned in organic farming

In the answer to the last question, partially about holding conventional farmers responsible when their practices contaminate organic farms, the Commission stated that: “The polluter pays principle, referred to in Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) applies in the context of environmental damage. The economic loss that may incur to organic farmers due to effects of conventional farming cannot be considered as an environmental damage as referred to in Article 191 TFEU. The polluter pays principle in the area of environmental legislation cannot therefore be transposed to the relationship between conventional and organic farming.”
1.2 POLICY

CAP & RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

ORGANIC FARMING ASSOCIATIONS DISCUSS KEY EU AGRICULTURE CHALLENGES

Farmers and representatives from organic farming associations within IFOAM EU gathered in Brussels on 27 June for an internal meeting of the IFOAM EU Farmers Interest Group to discuss the CAP implementation, the EU Organic Regulation review and long-term development of organic production for the coming decades. The discussions were set in the context of practical issues facing organic food and farming including improving the organic seed supply, nutrient cycling with a special emphasis on closing the phosphorus cycle and enhancing animal welfare outcomes. For further details of the event – including access to presentations, results and conclusions from the meeting or to find out more about getting involved in the IFOAM EU Farmers Interest Group – please contact Stephen Meredith: stephen.meredith [at] ifoam-eu.org.

GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABLE BIOGAS PRODUCTION ON ORGANIC FARMING ARE NOW ONLINE

Guidelines for sustainable biogas production on organic farming are now online available in six different languages (Danish, English, French, German, Polish and Spanish), developed as part of the SUSTAINGAS project – exploring the production of biogas on organic farms. These guidelines are for people who want to learn more about biogas production and those already working with biogas plants but want improve the sustainability of biogas production in their farms and introduce new practices. We strongly encourage farmers’ organisations to discuss and apply them and we look forward to your feedback. Further information can be found on the SUSTAINGAS project website.
New publication from IFOAM EU, FiBL and CIHEAM-IAMB

- Latest growth trends
- Europe-wide production & sales statistics, including per country
- Farming and food policy overview
- Case studies on support mechanisms

Order your copy at: shop.ifoam.org/bookstore

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ENVI MINISTERS REACH POLITICAL AGREEMENT ON GM CULTIVATION

On 12 June 2014, under the Greek EU Presidency, Environment Ministers in the Council adopted a political agreement that is supposed to provide a legal basis for Member States to restrict or prohibit the cultivation of GMOs on their territory on the basis of different considerations including socioeconomic reasons, land use and town planning, environmental and agricultural policy objectives, and public policy issues.

The compromise text is somewhat an improvement compared to the initial Commission proposal launched in July 2010 to offer Member States new rights to ban the cultivation of GM crops on their territory. Since 2011, four countries (UK, France, Germany and Belgium) have blocked this so called “opt-out” proposal for different reasons. While the agreement seeks to move things forward it does not provide sufficient legal certainty for the national opt outs. While the agreement seeks to move things forward it does not provide sufficient legal certainty for the national opt outs. While the agreement seeks to move things forward it does not provide sufficient legal certainty for the national opt outs. While the agreement seeks to move things forward it does not provide sufficient legal certainty for the national opt outs. While the agreement seeks to move things forward it does not provide sufficient legal certainty for the national opt outs. While the agreement seeks to move things forward it does not provide sufficient legal certainty for the national opt outs. While the agreement seeks to move things forward it does not provide sufficient legal certainty for the national opt outs. While the agreement seeks to move things forward it does not provide sufficient legal certainty for the national opt outs.

The Council’s political agreement paves the way for a formal adoption of the Council’s first reading position. The Italian EU Presidency is expected to start negotiations with the European Parliament in early autumn 2014.

For further information about the latest developments on EU legislation pertaining to GMOs please contact Alejandro Gil: alejandro.gil [at] ifoam-eu.org.

KEEP GMOS OUT OF ORGANIC FOOD – NEW IFOAM EU PROJECT

Organic food is by definition GMO-free and the ability of the organic food sector to produce and supply high quality food at reasonable cost is under threat from the increasing risk of GMO contamination. In the context of a new EU parliament and the incoming Commission, some of the short and medium term challenges to the organic sector’s efforts to keep European agriculture GM-free includes the new proposal on national cultivation bans, the pending new authorisations of GM crops and the negotiations on an EU-US Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) that could increase the pressure to authorise more GMO crops, especially for import as food and animal feed.

IFOAM EU started a three year project (2014–2016) on “Keeping GMO out of Organic Food” with the main aim to protect the food chain against contamination by GMOs. The project is divided into two main pillars. The first one seeks to develop positions and coordinate advocacy work for a legal framework to aid food chain operators in remaining GMO-free at a reasonable cost. Under this pillar, IFOAM EU will deliver an analysis of the current legal framework, and assessment of the socio-economic impacts of the cultivation and use of GMOs on the EU organic food chain. This report will support the demands to policy makers that will also be developed as part of the project. This advocacy work will be complemented by various face-to-face meetings and a final high level conference in Brussels.

The second pillar of the project will develop practical strategies to assist the organic sector in staying GMO-free, by setting up a roundtable of organic food chain stakeholders, scientists, NGO representatives and EU regions to exchange knowledge, identify current and future needs, and discuss strategies to organise the supply of specific GMO-free inputs. The work of the roundtable will be finalised with the input of various national workshops, who will prepare specific topics for discussions in the roundtable. Finally, using the outcomes of these discussions, IFOAM EU will publish practical guidelines for avoiding GMO contaminations of the food chain.

With this project IFOAM EU aims to play a significant role in agriculture policy by reinforcing strategies to keep the organic sector GMO free.

The project will be officially launched during autumn 2014. For further information about project please contact Alejandro Gil: alejandro.gil [at] ifoam-eu.org.
MORE GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN THE EU

In a letter to the Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik and key DGENVI officials following Green Week 2014, IFOAM EU called on the Commission to ensure that GPP is at the heart of the upcoming Communication on Sustainable Food and to make sure that the new EU Organic Action Plan is used to promote a real circular economy and resource efficiency agenda.

The letter stated that this should include:

• Prioritisation of GPP, including organic food sourcing, in the Commission’s forthcoming Communication on Sustainable Food Consumption to support the development of production and organic supply chains in Member States and regions on a progressive basis to 2020 (Actions 3 and 5)

• Encouragement of Member States to set targets for public canteens to commit to offering at least one organic meal under the revision of the EU’s GPP criteria for Food and Catering Services in 2015 (Action 5)

• Support for the development of organic food supply chains through new rural development programmes and EU information and promotional programmes as well as the forthcoming revision of the CAP Fruit and Milk schemes (recommendations accompanying Actions 1 and 2)

• Advancement of the development of sustainable food solutions, including GPP, under Horizon 2020, the ERA-Net and/or Joint Programming instruments and the European Innovation Partnership for Agriculture (Actions 6 and 7)

On 2 July, the European Commission adopted a Communication on how to transition to EU towards a circular economy with an emphasis on the creation of jobs and economic growth. Circular economy refers to the more efficient management of all resources throughout their lifecycle by re-using, repairing, refurbishing and recycling all existing materials and products: turning waste into a resource. New targets for 2030 include more efficient use of resources, as well as waste and greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

In particular the Commission wants to see research and innovation under Horizon 2020 strongly linked to the delivering the EU’s circular economy targets. In addition the Communication refers to the Commission’s plans to develop guidelines on Green Public Procurement (GPP) in order to move forward on indicative targets for GPP to be applied in up to 50% of all public tendering procedures, which were set to be reached by 2010. Despite earlier plans to set out a policy framework for the sustainable use of phosphorus the Communication demonstrates only lukewarm intentions from the Commission.

However the Commission has decided to postpone plans on sustainable food consumption with no references to the consumption policy in the final documents. Sources indicate that the chapter will be published before the end of the summer.
TP ORGANICS STAKEHOLDER FORUM: ONLINE RESEARCH CONSULTATION & NEW PUBLICATION

The annual TP Organics Stakeholder Forum took place on 1 July in the Representation of Tuscany Region in Brussels. This year the forum was dedicated to the revision of TP Organics’ Strategic Research Agenda to updated research and innovation goals for organic through 2020.

This event was the first opportunity for members and stakeholders to provide feedback on the draft contributions prepared by the expert team. At the forum, an online public consultation was launched to get a broader input from stakeholders. Anyone interested in influencing EU research policy on organic food and farming can participate in the consultation by filling in one or more of the four theme-related surveys available online until 1 September 2014:

- Theme 1: Empowerment of Rural Areas and Strengthening Innovation
- Theme 2: Eco-Functional Intensification: the Ecological Challenge of Farming
- Theme 3: Food for Health and Human Wellbeing
- Innovation strategies to overcome challenges in organic rules

The Stakeholder Forum also featured launch of a new publication by TP Organics: Action Plan for Innovation and Learning. It analyses what opportunities current EU policy instruments (Horizon 2020, EIP-AGRI, Erasmus+, ERA-Nets) provide for innovation in organic and agroecological farming. The Action Plan calls upon organic researchers, farmers and businesses to organise themselves in order to take part in the various funding schemes. The numerous examples of innovation given in the publication can serve as inspiration for stakeholders.

Download the Action Plan for Innovation and Learning or order free hard copies (min. 3, max. 9) by writing to info [at] tporganics.eu

IFOAM EU ASKS COMMISSION TO REINSTATE COMMITMENT TO STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

On the occasion of the meeting of the High Level Steering Board on 30 June, IFOAM EU together with 10 other NGOs and research institutes sent DG AGRI a letter to express concern about the way the EIP-AGRI Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) is used.

Last year, the Commission appointed a High Level Steering Board specifically to develop a Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP). The SIP managed to fairly successfully balance the interests of conventional agriculture and alternative approaches, such as organic farming and agroecology. IFOAM EU and the other signatories of the letter believe that the public money used to fund expert meetings and the time of the High Level Steering Board members, in addition to the expertise shared with the Commission, are highly valuable. Therefore, in this letter the green coalition requests that contribution of the High Level Steering Board be actively taken up in the SIP, and used as a starting point to set priorities for Horizon 2020 agricultural research as well as rural development programmes.
NEW COMMISSION CALL FOR EXPERT FOCUS GROUPS

The European Commission has launched a call for experts (farmers, advisers, scientists and other relevant actors) to explore practical innovative solutions to problems and to share experience gained from relevant innovative projects through three new EIP-AGRI focus groups:

**Optimising profitability of crop production through Ecological Focus Areas**
How can EFAs, more specifically landscape features and buffer strips and their management, contribute to the profitability of crop production?

**Innovative Short Food Supply Chain management**
How to stimulate growth of short food supply chains in Europe, both in terms of numbers of producers involved and volumes traded, to increase farm income?

**IPM practices for soil-borne diseases suppression in vegetables and arable crops**
How to suppress soil-borne diseases (fungi and nematodes) in vegetables and arable crops and how to enhance cross-fertilisation between different crops and agricultural systems?

The groups will discuss research results and propose further research. The point is to focus on practical knowledge, dissemination to the sector and developing project ideas for operational groups.

The three new focus groups will begin their work in November–December 2014. They are expected to work for 12–18 months and will meet face-to-face twice a year. Deadline for application is 8 September.

The terms of reference are online. Apply for focus groups here.

TP ORGANICS RESPONDS TO STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION ON HORIZON 2020

In June, the Commission organised a Stakeholder Consultation on the Horizon 2020 Strategic Programme on Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture for 2016/2017. This Strategic Programme will analyse the trends and challenges of Europe’s food & farming sector and will serve as basis for the Horizon 2020 Work Programme containing the concrete calls for research projects.

TP Organics stated that eco-functional intensification should be developed as a research and innovation area in order to tackle the challenges related to resource efficiency and ecosystem services. Research should help to improve nutrient cycling through new crop combinations, to close nutrient cycles at the farm and regional level, and to improve productivity at low nutrient levels. Other important aspects worth of investigation include protein crop productivity and the preservation and sustainable use of genetic resources. Research on food processing could foster the introduction of sustainable and benign processing techniques that preserve the quality, authenticity and nutritional value of products.

As regards consumption, food waste needs to be reduced throughout the food chain and dietary patterns need to be more climate-friendly. Social innovation is needed to develop short supply chains and new rural-urban partnerships.

TP Organics also asked for a dedicated research programme to help the organic sector overcome the challenges posed by the expected changes in the organic regulation. A research fund is needed that will help the sector to live up to the highest standards and develop the means to overcome current hurdles in organic production. This will increase consumer trust and boost the growth of the sector.
EUROPE-WIDE CONSULTATION: YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON ORGANICS

IFOAM EU has launched a Europe wide stakeholder consultation to create a common vision on Organic 2030 to guide us through the next years. Tell us your perspective on organic today and your wishes for the future. Do not miss this opportunity to contribute to our common vision. The online survey which is accessible until 21 August 2014.

For the ones who want to get involved even more in the visioning process, join our 2-day workshop in late autumn 2014. We will discuss and brainstorm about the key challenges and opportunities for organics in the years to come and develop possible scenarios for the further development of organics. Register yourself or suggest a candidate.

SUBMIT YOUR BEST ORGANIC FOOD SECURITY PRACTICES & WIN A TRIP TO EXPO MILANO 2015!

EXPO Milano 2015 has launched a call aimed at the recognition and promotion of “Best Sustainable Development Practices on Food Security” (BSDP). IFOAM EU, in cooperation with TP Organics, will award authors of the two best organic BSDPs:

- Reimbursement for travel expenses and three-day accommodation for visiting the EXPO Milano 2015
- Administrative and logistical assistance (visa issues, etc.)

All the BSDP on Food Security admitted to the competition will be published and promoted through Feeding Knowledge web platform and the top 15 will gain visibility in the Expo Milano 2015:

- Exhibition in Pavilion 0
- Dedicated workshops to transfer the experiences
- Possibility to provide dissemination and promotional materials
- Repository on Feeding Knowledge web platform

Submit your best practice by 15 September 2014 through and have a chance at the prize!

Best practices collection and recognition are supported by the Feeding Knowledge Program which aims to establish an international scientific network for research and innovation to promote and transfer knowledge on food security.
Implementing Innovative Ecological Solutions for Farmers and Rural Communities

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EUROPEAN INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP FOR AGRICULTURE
• Implementation by the Member States
• Examples of organic and agro-ecological innovation

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES
• Impact on farmers and rural communities
• Public goods and green job creation

ORGANIC REGULATION REVIEW
• Expected regulatory changes
• Influencing the outcome

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ORGANIC FARMING ASSOCIATIONS LEARN ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING AND COOPERATION UNDER THE NEW CAP

Understanding the prospects for supporting knowledge transfer and innovative approaches

Knowledge transfer and innovative approaches are a key part of the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2014–2020 in particular within new Rural Development Programmes (RDPs).

While organic farmers have helped to pioneer knowledge exchange and innovative production techniques, finding information about support opportunities for which they may be eligible is not always immediately or widely available. To make full use of these new opportunities, eight organisations working with organic farmers have come together to explore current best practice in the context of new policy frameworks and how relevant measures for capacity-building and cooperation can be applied in different Member States and regions.

These activities are part of an EU project called Closing Knowledge Gaps and Improving Skills & Competence for Sustainable Farming Enterprises (KSC4Farmers) which seeks to increase farming associations’ understanding of the opportunities available to support cooperative approaches for the development of organic production under new RDPs. The project also aims to facilitate greater knowledge exchange between farming associations. A final outcome of the project will be the production of a training manual for agricultural advisors, outlining opportunities for cooperation between farmers, farming associations and other stakeholders in new RDPs.

Discovering cooperative approaches undertaken by organic farmers in Belgium

Below is a summary of a recent meeting of the KSC4farmers project organised by Bioforum Vlaanderen held on 26 June. It gave project partners and other expert participants the chance to look at best examples of capacity-building taking place in the Belgian organic sector. Taking the form of an excursion and expert discussions, the participants visited different farms in the region of Flanders.

Social farming and horticulture production in Roeselare

The excursion began with a visit to De Lochting in Roeselare, a social farming project where organic field and greenhouse vegetables are grown. The farm supports up to 15–20 unemployed people from economically disadvantaged and socially deprived backgrounds and markets its produce to wholesalers (approx. 50%), supermarkets (approx. 30%), and as box schemes (20%). In addition to hearing about the various crops and varieties grown on the farm, participants took time to learn about some of the agronomic techniques applied including biological controls for pests and disease, as well as the farming composting system.

Family food and farming dairy enterprises in Keiem

This was followed by a visit to the ’t Vier Uiterstenhof dairy farm in Keiem run by farming family Philip Sinnaeve and Lien Debergh. Philip and Lien converted to organic farming in 2000 and collaborate with Lien’s family who have a cheese production enterprise ’t Dischhof selling almost 60% of their milk for raw milk cheese-making. Participants saw the grazing and housing system, including the farm’s robotic milking machines in action. They learned about the access to land problems facing many Flemish farmers as a result of the limited availability and the cost of land. After visiting the farm the participants then went to see how the

The EU project called Closing Knowledge Gaps and Improving Skills & Competence for Sustainable Farming Enterprises (KSC4Farmers) aims to develop of organic production under new RDPs.
cheese was produced and marketed at a purpose built cheese-making facility and shop nearby. A number of different cheeses are sold via multiple distribution channels including the farm shop, farmers’ markets, organic shops and specialised cheese shops.

**Small Berry production and collaborative branding in Beauvoorde**

Finally participants visited the Frambiosa y Besos fruit farm in Beauvoorde run by Wim Vandenberghhe. Wim, a small scale organic berry producer, specialises in number of different berries including blackcurrants, gooseberries and raspberries on his one hectare holding. Distributing almost 70% of his produce through direct sales, Wim also works with a small number of producers to process and market fruit products from jams to juice under the trademarked Bio Van bij Ons brand literally “Bio Produced by Us.”

**Replicating best practice in new RDPs**

Discussions during the meeting were set in the context of the ongoing implementation of new RDPs which are expected to come in force in 2015. Participants and project partners also took the time to review the initial findings of the project’s need assessments survey on cooperation and capacity approaches in the countries as well as relevant aspects of the latest state of play on CAP implementation in their countries and regions. KSC4farmers is a 2-year Leonardo da Vinci Partnership Project which is part of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union. The projects comprises 8 partners from across the EU working with organic farmers including the IFOAM EU, Irish Organic Farmers and Growers Association (IE), Biohuis (NL), Fédération nationale d’agriculture biologique (FR), Sociedad Española de Agricultura Ecológica (ES), Bioforum Vlaanderen (BE), IFOAM EU (BE), BIO AUSTRIA (AT) and Ekologiska Lantbrukarna (SE).
2 EVENTS

2.1 PREVIEW OF EVENTS

8TH EUROPEAN ORGANIC CONGRESS: 7 HOURS FOR DISCUSSION ABOUT NEW CAP, EIP-AGRI & ORGANIC REGULATION REVIEW

Register for the 8th European Organic Congress and join the European organic stakeholders in Bari to discuss Rural Development Programmes under the new CAP, the agricultural European Innovation Partnership and the Organic Regulation review. Find more details in the programme.

The congress will encourage active involvement of the participants – around 7 hours of total time is dedicated to open discussions. A great opportunity for you to provide input which will be used for organic advocacy work of IFOAM EU in Brussels!

Use the opportunity to listen to speeches of and to pose questions to high-level speakers such as:
• Maurizio Martina, Italian Minister of Agriculture
• Paolo De Castro, European Parliament Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development
• Marc Duponcel, European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development
• Risto Artjoki, State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland
• Emilio Gatto, General Director for Food Quality Promotion, Italian Ministry of Agriculture

The conference also includes networking opportunities at a special dinner at the organic farm Masseria Chinunno featuring local vegetarian food and dairy delicacies and a cooking workshop led by local chefs.

The last day of the 8th European Organic Congress is reserved for an excursion organised by a local action group GAL Terre di Murgia and includes:
• A visit to an organic farm
• Optional do-it-yourself activities (such as pasta making and milking cows)
• Lunch and dinner

We also highly recommend taking the opportunity for further relaxation in Italy and prolonging the stay for the Organic Weekend.

You can find the online registration and the programme on the congress website.
3rd ORGANIC PROCESSING CONFERENCE
17–18 November, Paris, France
Registration open – 20% early bird discount until 1 September

Participate in discussions with organic food and processing experts and political representatives from the EU institutions as well as from national and regional processors bodies.

The 3rd Organic Processing Conference will focus on the Commission proposal for a new organic regulation and especially the proposals that will affect organic processors like the management of environmental performance and import and controls. Participants will have the opportunity to exchange best practices on food waste, avoiding contaminants in organic products, careful processing or organic additives processing aids and flavour. These topics will be covered during the expert panel and followed up with six workshop sessions.

The following speakers have been confirmed:
- Cristina Rueda Catry – Deputy Head of Organic Farming Unit, DG Agriculture and Rural Development at the European Commission
- Gerald Herrmann – Director of Organic Services; former IFOAM President and Executive Director

Register now and benefit from a 20% early bird discount
2.2 REVIEW OF EVENTS

9TH ORGANIC MARKETING FORUM

The 9th Organic Marketing Forum, under the patronage of IFOAM EU, took place on 1–2 June in Warsaw and brought together organic professionals from 23 countries. The event was organized by EkoConnect, in cooperation with BioFach, Ekoland, Polska Ekologia, the Polish Advisory Centre, and the Organic Retailers Association (ORA).

IFOAM EU was represented by the Director Marco Schlüter and Fundraising Coordinator Joanna Wierzbicka. The forum consisted of an exhibition of organic products, a conference, workshops, and speed networking sessions. The exhibited products ranged from raw materials, through food products, to detergents. Main topics discussed this year were marketing strategies for organic business sector and situation of organic market in different countries, such as France, Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Caucasus countries.

IFOAM EU held a workshop to launch a new project aimed at enhancing the capacity of the new member countries in building organic sector. Seven participants from Poland, Latvia, Estonia, Bulgaria, and Czech Republic discussed about challenges for organic agriculture in their countries and raised ideas on how they can be addressed.

IFOAM EU TEAM BUILDING EXCURSION

IFOAM EU office was closed from 2–5 July, but only for a very good reason: a team building excursion. The team went to North Germany to gain some more ‘field experience’.

Organic farms and companies were visited. These places revealed the diversity of organic with many commonalities but also differences in views among organic stakeholders. One of these questions was about whether farmers need to experience their soil and plants with all senses or whether modern technical equipment can largely replace manpower.

The IFOAM EU team returned to the office full of impressions and inspirations and is very happy with renewed enthusiasm to represent such dynamic and knowledgeable members.
3 MAKING EUROPE MORE ORGANIC – SUPPORT IFOAM EU

IFOAM EU KEY SPONSORS 2014

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.

A DECADE OF ORGANIC ADVOCACY IN BRUSSELS

“This anniversary publication gives a voice to our people; each contribution gives a personal perspective on how IFOAM EU has played a part in developing and delivering a common vision for organic, influencing public and business policy as well as personal practice. They speak of how our ethos is expressed in our daily lives, how the ethics of our standards and codes of conduct brings food from our farmers and growers to our tables.”

Christopher Stopes
IFOAM EU President
4 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

6–9 September  SANA  
Bologna, Italy

10–12 September  8th European Organic Congress  
Bari, Italy

1–4 October  XI SEAE Congress  
Spanish Society for Organic Farming: Family Organic Farming  
Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain

3–5 October  Natura Food 2014  
Lodz, Poland

13–15 October  18th IFOAM Organic World Congress  
Istanbul, Turkey

11 November  Public seminar “From science to politics: Countering the climate challenge in European Regions – with organic farming”  
Brussels, Belgium

17–18 November  3rd IFOAM EU Organic Processing Conference  
Paris, France