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Organic regulation review discussed at a parallel thematic session of the 8th European Organic Congress by:

- Jan Plagge, IFOAM EU Board Member
- João Onofre, European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, Head of Organics Unit
- Martin Haußling, European Parliament, Member of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development
- Cristina Micheloni, TP Organics
- Giacomo Mocciaro, Italian Ministry of Agriculture
Dear readers,

After a few years of relative quietness, the debate on GMOs has been revived by the Commission when it announced that, for the first time since 1998, it would authorise a new GM maize for cultivation in the whole EU. Of course, Commissioner Dalli already authorised a GM potato with increased starch content in 2010. But it was withdrawn from the market by BASF only two years afterwards and the authorisation was eventually revoked by the EU court of justice in 2013.

The Commission does not seem to have learnt any lesson from this fiasco. It went ahead with the authorisation process of GM maize 1507 from Pioneer despite a resolution from the Parliament calling for its rejection, and in March there was a heated debate in the Council about the absurdity and lack of democracy of the rules used to allow GMOs in Europe. To the point that Mr Juncker, president-elect of the Commission, mentioned in his political guidelines “it is simply not right that under the current rules, the Commission is legally forced to authorise new organisms […] even though a clear majority of Member States is against”.

Moving ahead with this authorisation was a way for the Commission to force Member States to take a position on the so-called “opt out” proposal, which should empower Member States to ban the cultivation of GMOs on their ground. Eventually the Greek presidency managed last June to gather a majority on a text which is weak and will not provide a solid legal right to ban GMOs (see our analysis on page 7). Now the Parliament has four months to make a second reading and to possibly come to an agreement with the Council. In the coming weeks the organic sector needs to mobilise itself to convince MEPs and governments to give a solid legal basis to the bans and to include rules that protect the sector from contamination.

The cultivation of GMOs is a direct threat to organic farming. Contamination and measures to mitigate it would trigger massive costs for the sector and jeopardise its very existence and economic contribution to Europe. Few countries have legislation in place to protect organic farming from contamination by GMOs, and such measures are anyway not able to prevent contamination cases. The best way to prevent contamination is to ban GMO cultivation; in the meantime it is crucial that there are mandatory laws to prevent and mitigate contamination from GM fields, and liability regimes that put the economic burden of contamination on GMO producers.

On the basis of the current political situation and given the need for the organic sector to develop common strategies against GMOs, IFOAM EU has launched “Keeping GMOs out of organic food”, a three-year project which will study the socio-economic impacts of GMOs and develop best practices for the sector to avoid GMO contamination.

Mr. Barroso surely wanted to gain political legitimacy for GMO authorisations in the EU when introducing the legislative proposal on “opt-outs” and most of all to deflect attention from the most important debate: the absence of benefits of GMOs for EU agriculture and the loopholes of the risk assessment. The Commission should therefore not expect that this will end the debate. Because in the long-run, no “coexistence” is possible, and the EU has to choose: to industrial agriculture or farming that contributes to environment protection, ecosystem and soil restoration, landscapes and to a cohesive society.

Through their support and trust in organic food and farming, the vast majority of European citizens has already made a clear choice.

Sincerely,
Thomas Fertl
IFOAM EU Vice President
POLITICAL HOTSPOT – NEW EU COMMISSION AND PARLIAMENT: IMPACT ON ORGANIC

FIRST MEETING OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT COMMITTEE OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

First meeting of the new Parliament Committee of Agriculture and Rural Development

On 3–4 September 2014, the first meeting of the Committee on Agricultural and Rural Development of the European Parliament took place. Martin Häusling, German Green Member of the European Parliament (MEP) was designated by the Committee to be the rapporteur for the organic farming dossier and the organic regulation revision was discussed.

The DG Agriculture presented the state of play of the organic sector in Europe and the main points that the Commission wanted to address with this proposal such as:
- Administrative Burden
- Organic market growing faster than production
- Cases of fraud
- Lack of representation of small farms
- The absence of reciprocity in the international exchanges

The Commission summarised the Impact assessment and the main changes of the proposal (group certification, ends of the derogations, retailer certification and import), while the Committee welcomed the initiative of the Commission and underline that indeed, improvement of the organic regulation was needed.

IFOAM EU has already started a dialogue with rapporteur Häusling. Mr Häusling was a speaker at the 8th European Organic Congress in Bari and on 22 September he attended a lunch-debate – “Revision of the Organic Farming legislation – Which framework is needed for the organic farming sector?” – organised by IFOAM EU and the Minister for Federal and European Affairs of the State of Hessen, Lucia Puttrich.

PROSPECTIVE JUNCKER COMMISSION ANNOUNCED, MEPS TO APPROVE FULL COLLEGE

Prospective Commissioners to be part of the new College of Commissioners were announced by President-elect of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker on 10 September. Commissioners-designate of interest to the agri-food sector include:
- Phil Hogan (IE) – Agriculture and Rural Development
- Vytenis Andriukaitis (LT) – Health and Food Safety
- Karmenu Vella (MT) – Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
- Miguel Arias Cañete (ES) – Climate Action and Energy
- Cecilia Malmström (SE) – Trade

In October the Commissioners-designate will face questions from relevant committees in the European Parliament followed by a plenary vote by MEPs on the entire Juncker team. If the timing goes according to plan, the new College is expect to take up office on 1 November.
COMMISSION UNVEILS NEW CIVIL DIALOGUE GROUPS SYSTEM FOR STAKEHOLDERS

The Commission unveiled its new Civil Dialogue Groups (CDGs) on 18 July at a meeting of agri-food sector and civil society representatives.

The CDGs will replace the current advisory group system as the Commission’s forum for consulting stakeholders. The new CDGs cover a range of topics from organic farming and rural development to environment and climate change, as well as quality and promotion policies.

IFOAM EU has successfully obtained representation in all 13 groups, a significant increase from the four we had representation in before the change. Although the total number of groups have been reduced the number of IFOAM EU seats increased from 8 to 33. The change in system has increased IFOAM EU’s representation across a number of relevant CDGs.

The new system comes into immediate effect with meetings of the new CDGs beginning in September.

For more information please contact Angela Morell: angela.morell(at)ifoam-eu.org

NEW COMMISSION REPORT CONFIRMS GROWTH TRENDS IN EU ORGANIC FARMING

A new report by the European Commission shows a rapid rise in the number of farm holdings under organic management. In particular, the 12 most recent countries to accede to the EU (excluding Croatia) saw a 13% annual growth rate of organic land between 2002 and 2011. The study also shows that the percentage of young organic farmers (i.e. under the age of 55) is significantly higher (61.3%) compared to the conventional sector.

More recent data on organic farming based on 2012 figures for the EU-28 can be found in the book Organic in Europe: Prospects and Development published by IFOAM EU in association with the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture – FiBL – and the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies – CIHEAM-IAMB. This data shows the total EU agricultural land stood at almost 10 million hectares in 2012 representing 5.6% of the total agricultural area.

Order your copy of Organic in Europe: Prospects and Developments at the IFOAM Bookstore or visit our Organic in Europe webpage to find out more.
1 NEWS FROM IFOAM EU WORKING FIELDS

1.1 REGULATION

PUBLICATION OF TWO NEW IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS ON ORGANIC IMPORT AND ON LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION


The main changes introduced by this act regard:
- The extension of the recognition of equivalence of the Switzerland’s systems of production and control measures to the production of organic yeast
- The extension of the recognition of equivalence of the New-Zealand’s systems of production and control measures to the production of organic wine
- Annex III and IV listing third countries and control bodies recognised for the purpose of equivalence have been updated

In addition, on 31 July 2014, the European Commission adopted implementation regulation (EU) No 836/2014 which aims at postponing the end of some exceptional rules on organic livestock production.
- First, the possibility to bring into an organic livestock unit non-organic reared pullet for egg production of not more than 18 weeks is extended for three years. The deadline is now 31 December 2017
- Second, the exceptional possibility to use a maximum of 5% of non-organic protein feed for porcine and poultry species is postponed for the calendar years 2015, 2016 and 2017

A full list of EU Organic Regulations (including the consolidated versions) available on IFOAM EU website.

IFOAM EU MEETING ON ORGANIC VITICULTURE

On 28th and 29th of July 2014, a subgroup of the IFOAM EU Farmers Interest Group met in Breisach, Germany, to discuss about the future of crop protection in organic viticulture, in particular as regards downy mildew. This was done in view of the EU-wide orientation to reduce use of copper in agriculture and to explore new ways and products to effectively control the diseases in organic viticulture.

EGTOP REPORT ON AQUACULTURE

In July 2014, the second round of recommendations of the Exert Group for Technical Advice on Organic Production (EGTOP) on aquaculture production were published. The first recommendations were published at the beginning of 2014. The main topics examined by the EGTOP group were the stocking density, recirculation aquaculture system for on-growing, reproduction, specific rules for production of juveniles and their feed, evaluation of the substances for cleaning and disinfection and a proposal for regulation of cleaning and disinfection in Annex VII.
GMO “OPT OUT” PROPOSAL DEBATED IN THE PARLIAMENT

On 3 September, the members of the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety committee (ENVI committee) of the European Parliament met for an exchange of views on the so-called “opt out” proposal, which would grant Member States the right to ban GMOs on their territory.

The political agreement text reached by the Council last June is supposed to provide a legal basis for Member States to restrict or prohibit the cultivation of GMOs on their territory for socio-economic reasons, land use and town planning, environmental and agricultural policy objectives, and public policy issues. However, the Council proposal would only allow environmental policy objectives not included in the EFSA risk assessment to be taken into account. In practice, this would remove environmental grounds from the scope, as EFSA is supposed to assess all environmental impacts.

The Council text also obliges Member States to first ask biotech companies to exclude their territory from the scope of their application for GMO cultivation, before being allowed to enact a ban.

IFOAM EU and other NGOs demanded that the Council proposal be strengthened in a letter to ENVI committee members. Environmental grounds must be a real, legal option for Member States to ban cultivation and not legally moot as in the current Council text, as in practice the EFSA analyses may be lacking, especially in areas regarding the development of herbicide resistant weeds, negative effects of GMO cultivation on animals and plants. Bans should also be possible in cases where data on the impacts of GMOs in a specific natural environment are inadequate or insufficient. IFOAM EU also demands the inclusion of compulsory measures against GMO contamination (“coexistence” in EU jargon) providing a sound legal framework, including liability rules, to protect non-GM farmers, keep GMOs out of the supply chain and ensure that those growing GM crops bear all the costs of contamination.

The deadline for the second reading in the Parliament is tight as the vote on amendments in the ENVI Committee will be take place on 5 or 6 November. After the vote, difficult negotiations between the Parliament and the Council are expected in November and December. Whether they reach an agreement or not, the text will be voted on at the January 2015 plenary.

IFOAM EU is working at EU and national level, in association with our members and other stakeholders, to ensure that Member States get a real and solid right to ban GMOs. To join the efforts please contact Alejandro Gil at alejandro.gil@ifoam-eu.org

GMO-FREE PROJECT: CALL FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE ROUNDTABLE

• Identifying the current challenges and legal situation for GMO-free food production in the EU
• Providing practical guidance for operators in the organic value chain
• Advocating for policy frameworks that ensure rights to GMO free producers

These are the aims of the IFOAM EU’s new three-year project “Keeping GMOs out of Organic Food.”

To implement the project we are in the process of setting up a roundtable of 20–25 experts working on GMO-free food production, processing and trade and the prevention of GMO contamination. The GMO-free roundtable is the discussion platform of the project and will focus on developing common strategies and practical recommendations for prevention of GMO contamination and access to GMO free inputs for all the stages of the food production value chain.

The kick-off meeting of the roundtable will take place on December and it will focus on discussing the status quo of current contamination, major risks and also the critical control points and “bottle necks” faced on the different levels of the food chain to avoid GMO contamination.

Join the roundtable
Get involved in another way
STAKEHOLDERS GIVE INPUT, NEW COMMISSIONER TO DECIDE WAY FORWARD

After the European Parliament rejected the Commission’s proposal for a new regulation on the production and making available on the market of plant reproductive material in March this year, the European Commission is seeking solutions to prevent the proposal from ending up in the drawer.

Stakeholders were invited to a working group on plant propagating material and seed on 15 July, where Commission officials asked for constructive approaches to come to a better new legislation. IFOAM EU was represented by organic breeder Gebhard Rossmanith. Commission officials also asked for written input, which IFOAM EU provided based on internal consultation and the IFOAM EU position paper of May 2013.

This process is intricately linked to the formation of the new college of commissioners. Vytenis Andriukaitis, former Health Minister of Lithuania, has been designated Commissioner Health and Food Safety and will most probably decide if and how the Commission will present an amended proposal for the seed law. To find out what the new Commissioner thinks about the seed issue, follow the hearings of commissioners in the European Parliament which will take place between 29 September and 2 October and will be streamed live.

The exact time schedule will be online soon at http://www.elections2014.eu/

NEW STUDY ON NATIONAL SCHOOL FOOD SCHEMES

The Joint Research Centre published an EU-wide study on school food policies across the EU-28 Member States as well as Norway and in Switzerland on 16 July. The study focuses on mandatory standards and voluntary guidelines for schools ranging from the sourcing of organic and local food, menu choices and portion size to bans on vending machines and sugar-sweetened drinks on school premises.

The study is linked to the EU’s effort to reduce childhood obesity set out by the Commission in a White Paper on Strategy on Nutrition, Overweight, and Obesity-related health issues and the adoption of an EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity 2014–2020 by Member States (with the exception of the Netherlands and Sweden). The strategy is relevant to a number of EU food and agriculture policies such as the CAP Fruit and Milk Schemes and Food labelling as well as to research projects on food, nutrition and health.

In the context of the legislative review of the CAP Fruit and Milk Schemes IFOAM EU believes measures must be put in place to incentivise the use of organic produce in order to increase sustainable consumption and build awareness about the important contribution of organic farming to healthy and environmentally production. This can be achieved through:

- higher EU financing for organic produce and
- prioritising the provision of organic food in schools

COMMISSION RESPONDS TO EU-RUSSIAN TRADE EMBARGO WITH EMERGENCY MEASURES FOR AGRICULTURE

The European Commission has responded to the effects of the EU-Russian trade embargo with a number of CAP funded support measures for certain agricultural sectors including:

- Peaches and nectarine products (11 August – 32.7 million euro)
- Perishable fruit & vegetable products (18 August – 125 million euro)*
- Dairy products (28 August)

The Commission also intends to boost funding for promotional programmes to begin in 2015 by an additional 30 million euro on top of the annual 60 million already available under the programmes.

At time of press other emergency measures for peaches, nectarines and dairy products remain in place. Measures for dairy products include private storage aid (3–7 months) for butter, skimmed milk powder (SMP) and certain cheeses.

In the background of the announcement emergency measures Marianne Schönningsen, IFOAM EU Council member from Sweden, participated in an emergency meeting of the Commission’s Milk Civil Dialogue Group (previously advisory group) on 3 September to highlight the implications of the ban for organic producers.

*Measures for perishable fruit & vegetables were subsequently suspended on 11 September due a disproportionate number of claims which reached the funding level available to the Commission under relevant CAP legislation. The package – which included fund withdrawals, green harvesting and non-harvesting – will be revised.
CAP & RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

SUSTAINABLE CAP & EIP RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 8TH EUROPEAN ORGANIC CONGRESS

Between 10 and 12 September 2014, more than 150 people attended the 8th European Organic Congress. The Congress, held in Bari, Italy, focused on implementing innovative ecological solutions for farmers and rural communities. Participants shared their views on the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI), rural development and the organic regulation review. The speakers’ presentations and other congress materials are now available online.

Approval of new rural development programmes by the European Commission must ensure national and regional authorities demonstrate their commitment to make the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) a sustainable success. Prerequisites for the sustainability of the CAP include comprehensive support for organic farming and agro-ecological approaches in all new programmes to 2020 as it is already the case within the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI).

Organic farming is prioritised in the EIP-AGRI. Organic farmers are innovative by nature. They have always developed new practices on their farm and in a multi-disciplinary approach. Organic and other agro-ecological food and farming systems are at the cutting-edge of sustainable production and consumption.

At the 8th European Organic Congress, the following recommendations emerged:

- New sustainability targets have to demonstrate greater ambition compared to existing rural development programming. At least 30% of the rural development funds must be spent on advanced sustainability measures such as organic farming – with Member States and the Commission ensuring that support for organic and agro-ecological approaches is enhanced, not reduced in the new RDPs.
• Organic farming is the only EU-wide seal of sustainability which internalises all costs of production in contrast to industrialised agriculture. Therefore ring-fencing money for conversion to – and maintenance of – organic farming is critical for sector development

• Provide additional funds for agro-ecological approaches under both the new agri-environment schemes and other rural development measures. One example is the full utilisation of higher investment support rates for organic farmers to support improvements in organic value chains from processing to marketing. This can help to stimulate further development of organic food markets both regionally and globally

• Prioritise knowledge transfer and innovation in organic farming with special reference to the EIP-AGRI. Organic farmers are innovators and have always developed new, multidisciplinary practices enhancing sustainable production and consumption. A significant share of EIP-AGRI support should flow towards organic farming. It is now time for organic farmers, businesses and researchers to get organised and place organic and agro-ecological approaches at the heart of the new the EIP-AGRI

• Ensure continuity between support schemes in existing rural development programmes (RDPs) and new programmes. Proposals by some Member States and regions to suspend organic farming payments between 2015 and 2016 would have a detrimental impact on the development on organic farming and agro-ecological approaches

• Member States and regions need to showcase their ambitions for mainstreaming advanced sustainability in new RDPs. National and regional authorities must better link organic provisions under rural development programmes with targeted organic action plans

• It is not time for EU policymakers to begin to set out plans for a stepwise approach to increase their rural development budgets to 50% of the overall CAP budget by 2020. Of this budget, 50% should be dedicated to agro-ecological practices driven by organic farming

• The organic sector shares and supports the Commission’s aim for a sustainable growth of organic food and farming throughout Europe and acknowledges the need for further development of the Organic Regulation based on organic principles. However, regulation by itself will not solve all problems. Integrated support through rural development programmes, research and innovation policy and public awareness raising is needed with a strong link to targeted national and regional organic action plans

• Any proposal to replace the current organic regulation, must allow a sustainable and perennial development of organic farming in the EU, require credibility and liability and must follow the organic farming founding principles

IFOAM EU also wants to hear from you about the plans for new RDPs and EIP-AGRI provisions in your country or region. For further information, please contact Stephen Meredith (stephen.meredith[at]ifoam-eu.org) or Bram Moeskops (bram.moeskops[at]tporganics.eu).
Progress on CAP implementation including new Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) remains ongoing between Member States. A number of Partnership Agreements (PAs) prepared by national governments – setting out national spending priorities for EU structural funds 2014-2020 (including the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development – EAFRD) – have been approved by the European Commission since April 2014. An initial assessment of some PAs identifies organic farming (including conversion and maintenance payments) as important for environment delivery and green growth. The remaining PAs are expected to be adopted on rolling basis by the end of autumn.

Commission adopts further packages of CAP implementing rules

The Commission has adopted further packages of CAP implementing rules in July. This includes delegated and implementing acts relating to rural development, direct payments and cross compliance in July. Delegated acts must follow the standard procedure with a 2-month right of rejection available to the European Parliament and the AGRI Council.

Member States and regions submit draft RDPs

It is understood that 111 RDPs have been submitted to the European Commission for approval, with the official deadline for submission of draft RDPs passing on 22 July. The Commission is currently reviewing the drafts and will shortly issue so called letters of observation based on its initial assessment. RDPs are expected to be adopted on rolling basis by end of 2014 with the first new RDPs coming into effect on 1 Jan 2015. The Commission is also in the process of assessing Pillar 1 Schemes with the deadline for draft submissions passing on 1 August 2015.

Feedback on the new RDP in your country or regions needed

IFOAM EU will continue to monitor the process over the coming weeks and months. For updates please follow the thinkingCAP blog. We are also interested to hear from you about the different draft RDP provisions for organic farming and agro-ecological approaches being proposed in your country or region in order to develop an overview of support provisions under new RDPs. This information will be used to support member’s work on implementation. For more information please contact Stephen Meredith:

stephen.meredith[at]ifoam-eu.org

Member States adopt draft EU budget for 2015, agreement with Parliament by end of 2014

Member States have adopted a position on 2 September to introduce cuts of 1.3 million euro in commitments and 44.7 million euro in payments under Pillar 2 – rural development – under the EU’s draft budget for 2015 in the Council of the European Union. The Council position also foresees a reduction in Pillar 1 – direct payments and market measures of 48.5 million euro. The Council believes that these cuts are necessary to facilitate funds for emergency measures as part of the response to the Russian embargo on EU agricultural products and to avoid any shortage of funding. A final agreement is expected to be reached by the Council and Parliament before the end of the year.

Annual draft budgets are proposed by the Commission and adopted by Council and the European Parliament under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014–2020 which sets out the EU’s long-term political priorities and the maximum amounts that can be spent on each priority.
FREE ONLINE TRAINING: BIOGAS PRODUCTION ON ORGANIC FARMS

A free and open 3-month online training course devoted to “Biogas production on Organic Farms” will be held from 13/10/2014 to 26/01/2015. It will transmit crucial know-how on the technical, economic and environmental aspects of biogas production in organic farming.

Integrating biogas production in organic farming has the potential to enhance farm productivity and to contribute to productive crop rotation and closed nutrient cycles. The SUSTAINGAS project aims to inform organic farmers, biogas consultants, associations, green energy companies and interested consumers about the implementation of biogas plants in organic farming.

The webinars are offered in multiple languages and will start mid-October. Visit www.sustaingas.eu to register for the webinar series in your preferred language. During the first session, participants will meet in an online classroom, get to know the platform and the structure of the content. In the following months, students will enter the platform individually to study at their own pace and choose the content most relevant to them. Newcomers can learn the basics about biogas, and professionals can get practical advice on planning and implementation of biogas plants.

The SUSTAINGAS project is implemented within the framework of the Intelligent Energy – Europe programme.

Further information and webinar registration

CLIMATE CHANGE

SOLMACC FARMERS START CLIMATE-FRIENDLY PRACTICES

The 12 SOLMACC farms in Italy, Germany and Sweden are undergoing exciting transformation: following thorough farm assessment by FiBL and their national advisory teams, the farmers know how they can make their farms more climate friendly and are now starting out on the four-year endeavour: Soil has been sampled on all four farms and therefore the basis for comparison with 2018 has been secured. Each farmer will implement practices that are tailored to the practical context of his/her farm. The overview of the farms and their practices can be found on the SOLMACC website.

Subscribe to the SOLMACC newsletter if you want to follow on how the farms are doing in their climate-friendly transformation process.

Read the most recent newsletter
1.3 EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION POLICY/TP ORGANICS

HORIZON 2020: 123 MILLION EUROS FOR AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY

Last July, the European Commission published an updated version of the Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2014–2015. For 2015, it includes 14 different research calls of particular interest to agriculture and forestry with an overall budget of around €123 million.

Several calls explicitly address the organic sector, including:
- Management of genetic resources
- Sustainable food chains and public policies
- Sustainable use of agricultural waste

Call for Work Programme: Food security, sustainable agriculture

Call text for Work Programme: Climate Action

The overview of calls and deadlines available in the end of this document. Application forms and more information can be found on the Participant Portal.

Work Programme Societal Challenge 2 on Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry and the Bioeconomy contains most of the calls dedicated to agriculture and the food chain. More calls related to agriculture can be found in Work Programme Societal Challenge 5 on Climate action, Environment, Resource efficiency and Raw Materials.

Opportunities for demand-driven innovation

Seven of the Horizon 2020 calls support projects which target demand-driven innovation and a multi-actor approach to knowledge-exchange activities. Thematic networks, for example, are supported under the topic: Closing the research and innovation divide. In 2015, five thematic networks will be selected and funded at around €10 million, to contribute to the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability.

The European Commission has also launched Fast Track to Innovation (FTI). This is a new a pilot action to support innovative projects in any type of technological area, including agri-food, carried out by groups of three to five legal entities in three Member States. It has a yearly budget of €100 million. Fast Track to Innovation will operate for two years on the basis of a continuously open call from 6 January 2015 onwards. More information and application forms available on the Commission website.

For more information, contact: bram.moeskops[at]tporganics.eu

EIP-AGRI: UPDATED GUIDELINES FOR SETTING-UP OPERATIONAL GROUPS

Over the summer, the European Commission updated the guidelines for implementing the EIP-AGRI in Rural Development Programmes. These guidelines are mainly for the Managing Authorities responsible for the Rural Development Programmes in the Member States, but are also useful for all those who would like to set up an Operational Group and want to understand the concept better. Knowing how exactly the Operational Groups should be implemented will help you when trying to convince your national or regional authority to finance Operational Groups for organic farming.

In this new version you will find:
- A more comprehensive definition of what innovation means in the EIP-AGRI
- Improved guidelines on setting up Operational Groups
- Options for financing cross-border Operational Groups
- More information on the organisation of calls and selection of Operational Groups
- Introduction to additional measures for supporting innovation support services and innovation brokering
OVER 300 RESPONSES TO TP ORGANICS CONSULTATION

The consultation on the TP Organics Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda, which ran from 1 July to 1 September, was a big success. Over 300 responses were received.

Respondents were asked for their top research and innovation priorities until 2020. The top-scoring topics were about:

- Improving the use of ecological support functions, e.g. functional biodiversity
- Development of innovative and environmentally friendly technologies for organic processing
- Reconnecting consumers with producers

The consultation also showed the need for a dedicated research programme to help the organic sector overcome the challenges posed by the expected regulatory changes, such as the phasing out of exceptions on the use of non-organic seeds and the requirement to use local organic feed.

The outcome of the consultation is now being analysed by TP Organics Steering Committee and the new Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda will be launched in December.

EXPO 2015 DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING BEST PRACTICES EXTENDED

EXPO Milano 2015 has extended the deadline to submit “Best Sustainable Development Practices on Food Security” (BSDP) until 31 October 2014.

Send an email to info[at]tporganics.eu if you would like us to help you to complete the form.

IFOAM EU, in cooperation with TP Organics and IFOAM Global, will award two organic best practices by offering:

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

The Best Practice collection and recognition is 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.

All the submitted Best Practices will be published and promoted through the Feeding Knowledge web platform. The top 15 best practices will get increased visibility in the EXPO Milano 2015. This is your chance to increase visibility of organic farming at the EXPO.

ORGANICDATANETWORK: MANUAL FOR BETTER INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Within the framework of the OrganicDataNetwork project, a workshop for organic stakeholders was organised at the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (CIHEAM-IAMB) in Valenzano/Bari, Italy on 10 and 11 July 2014.

The primary aim of the workshop was to improve the “Code of Practice” manual which will be useful for data collectors and to discuss how information exchange between data collectors could continue after project. Furthermore, a training session on the OrganicDataNetwork database was held. Around 30 representatives from project partners and organic stakeholders participated and 20 countries were represented.

The project is now coming to the last stage and the consortium is engaged in finalising the Code of Practice for the initiation and maintenance of good organic market data collection and publication procedures (OrMaCode), which will be presented at the IFOAM World Congress from 13–15 October 2014 in Istanbul.

(Author: Karin Heinze, for more information visit Organic-Market.info)
2 IFOAM EU DEVELOPMENTS

YOUR ORGANIC VISION 2030: INPUT FROM 20 COUNTRIES RECEIVED

“In 2030 it must be visible that the organic project works for the entire agricultural and food sector. Public investment and political rules will then change the entire system towards organic farming and food”

That’s one of the many visions for organic food and farming received in response to the survey. During a six-week period this summer organic minded stakeholders were consulted on their thoughts and hopes for the organic food and farming sector.

40 people from 20 different countries responded. The highest participation came from the UK with 7 respondents, followed by the Netherlands (5) and Germany (4). All input received will be taken up in a final vision for the sector and that will set the direction for IFOAM EU work priorities and strategies.

Thank you very much to all participants. Results coming soon.

More information on the IFOAM EU Organic vision 2030 available here.

IFOAM EU FARMERS DISCUSS KEY REGULATION AND CAP CHALLENGES

A meeting of the IFOAM EU Farmers Interest Group took place on 26–27 July in Brussels. Farming representatives discussed how the new CAP and the Organic Regulation review can contribute to tackling key challenges facing organic production now and to 2030. Key rural development issues were further analysed and assessed.

The IFOAM EU Farmer Interest Group (FIG) is an internal specialist group which seeks to create better connections between organic farmers and increase their involvement in the policy process. It provides members with regular updates about issues relevant for them within the EU policy framework and facilitates exchange between farmers in different farming regions in the EU.

The next FIG meeting will take place in Villena, Spain on 20–21 November. For information or to get involved please contact Stephen Meredith: stephen.meredith[at]ifoam-eu.org

Organic vision for 2030 was also being shaped in a workshop at the 8th European Organic Congress © John Portelli
NEW COLLEAGUES

**Eric Gall**
*Policy Manager*

Eric joined IFOAM EU in September as Policy Manager, after five years as an assistant to Corinne Lepage in the European Parliament (EP). MEP Lepage was the EP rapporteur on the GMO opt out proposal and on biofuels. In addition to these dossiers, Eric also followed many others in the Environment Committee, including the international negotiations on climate change. His experience includes six years at Greenpeace, in France then in Brussels, where he led the work against the release of GMOs into the environment. He was also director of an NGO working on waste reduction in Paris and has worked with Fondation Sciences Citoyennes on a NGO-led EU Research project aimed at improving the participation of civil society in research projects and policy. There he published a paper comparing research efforts on organic farming in different EU countries, and had the chance to work with farmer seed networks. After years fighting GMOs, Eric is happy to contribute to the development of organic farming at IFOAM EU, with whom he already has a history of cooperation.

**Eva Berckmans**
*Communications Assistant*

Eva joined the IFOAM EU team in August and will be supporting the communications team. After finishing an MSc in Environmental Sciences and an MSc in International Relations and Diplomacy, she participated in environmental projects in Norway and Belgium. She is also an avid volunteer and has always been interested in environmental and social issues. The way our food is produced, distributed and perceived is one of her specific interests. She says: “IFOAM EU is the perfect place to gain an in-depth understanding of the food and agricultural sector and to contribute to making positive change.”
3 EVENTS

3.1 PREVIEW OF EVENTS

3RD ORGANIC PROCESSING CONFERENCE: AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS NEW REGULATORY CHALLENGES
17–18 November (Paris, France)

Register for the 3rd Organic Processing Conference to discuss sustainability, quality, integrity and new regulation.

The European Parliament and the European Council are currently discussing the EU Commission proposal for a new EU organic regulation. This conference provides the perfect opportunity to learn how this could impact your business.

During six different workshop sessions you can give your input on the future challenges in organic food processing, focusing on:
- Environmental performance requirements
- Contaminant threshold limits
- Import and control requirements
- Organic processing techniques
- Use of additives, aids and flavours

Do not miss out the chance to hear from and network with organic food and processing experts and policymakers from Ecocert, Fazer Mills & Mixes, the European Commission, the French and Italian Ministries of Agriculture and the European Parliament.

Consult the programme and register to join us in Paris

This event is organised by:

In cooperation with Aoel, BioForum, Bioext, Organic Finland and Soil Association

IFOAM ORGANIC WORLD CONGRESS
13–15 October (Istanbul, Turkey)

The IFOAM Organic World Congress is organised every 3 years in a different country. The aim of the congress and surrounding activities (pre-conference, IFOAM General Assembly, side-events and organic exhibition) is to share experiences, innovations, knowledge about the organic world with a special attention on the organizing country. The Congress provides an extraordinary momentum and inspiration for all stakeholders from around the world that are proud to be part. It is THE leading event for the development of the organic sector worldwide. IFOAM EU will be there, join us.

TP Organics at Organic World Congress

It is important for TP Organics that its activities are in line with what the global organic movement thinks about the future of organic research. Therefore TP Organics will take part in the workshop of the Technology and Innovation Platform of IFOAM (TIPI) which will be held on 12 October, prior to the Organic World Congress, in Istanbul. TP Organics will seek feedback from the participants about the Strategic Research Agenda and present its latest publication, the Action Plan for Innovation and Learning. The rest of the workshop will be dedicated to the TIPI Vision and Research Agenda. Find the full programme here.
NORDIC ORGANIC FOOD FAIR
26–27 October (Malmö, Sweden)

After such an amazing launch in 2013, the Nordic Organic Food Fair, the Nordic expo for organic food and drink is delighted to be returning to Malmö on 26–27 October. The second edition of the show has already doubled in size and running alongside Natural Products Scandinavia. The show is aimed at business buyers of organic food and will offer a vibrant showcase of delicacies and ingredients from hundreds of organic food and drink suppliers.

IFOAM EU is delighted to be speaking for the first time at the Nordic Organic Food Fair and Natural Products Scandinavia across the two days at The Natural Theatre and The Food & Drink Theatre. Covering a range of topics including: A new organic regulation: what it means for you and Keeping GMOs out of the supply chain.

Fantastic, inspiring, busy, and vibrant – that's the verdict from last year's visitors at The Nordic Organic Food Fair and Natural Products Scandinavia. 2014 promises more of the same, when it returns to Malmö, Sweden, on 26-27 October. For more information, and to register for a free trade ticket, please visit the website and quote priority code: NOFUK214

COUNTERING CLIMATE CHANGE WITH ORGANIC AGRICULTURE
11 November, 10:00-13:00
(Committee of the Regions, Brussels, Belgium)

In 2014 the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reaffirmed the pending threat of Climate Change on our food and farming systems – showing that a 1°C rise in global temperatures will have a devastating impact on food production and crop yields.

• How can the forthcoming UNFCCC negotiations in Lima (2014) and Paris (2105) begin to fully embrace the agricultural sector as a solution for countering climate change?
• In what ways are regions globally already implementing climate-friendly farming practices?
• How can organic agriculture help to drive reductions in carbon emissions and improve climate resilience?
• What policy tools and investments are still needed to support climate action by the agri-food sector?

To address these questions IFOAM EU and RTOACC bring together leading scientists, policymakers and civil society groups to discuss the latest state of science, developments in the UNFCCC negotiations and policy tools necessary to support the development of organic farming and uptake agro-ecological approaches in the fight against climate change.

Register for the Seminar

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4 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
GREEN ORGANICS

Your Partner
In Organic Potatoes,
Vegetables and Fruits

Imports & exports of fresh and industrial organic potatoes, vegetables and fruits. Custom designed and reliable services for supplying and marketing your organic products.
5 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

3–5 October  
**Natura food**  
Lodz, Poland

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

26–27 October  
**Nordic Organic Food Fair**  
Malmö, Sweden

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

20–21 November  
**IFOAM EU Farmer Interest Group meeting**  
Vilena, Spain

This newsletter exists to inform IFOAM EU members about the work of the IFOAM EU Group and its liaison and coordination office in Brussels. IFOAM EU is the European Regional Group of the worldwide umbrella organisation IFOAM and is responsible for all matters related to organic farming with a Europe-wide scope.  
[www.ifoam-eu.org](http://www.ifoam-eu.org)

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Please send any comments or contributions to the newsletter to communication [at] ifoam-eu.org. For further information contact your national board member or the office in Brussels.

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