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The IFOAM EU Farmers Group discussed the IFOAM EU position on CAP post-2020, the capacity building activities of the group and the organic regulation negotiations at the Farmers Group meeting that took place in Munich, Germany on 1–2 December.
WELCOME NOTE

Dear friends,

A well-filled 2016 has flown by, it’s time for a recap. The key word for 2016 is change! At the global and the European level referenda and elections have had a seismic impact. The future of many policies is very uncertain including the continuation of free trade agreement negotiations between the USA and the EU and the USA’s implementation of the newly ratified Paris Climate Agreement. Within Europe, democratic processes continue to shape the future of the European Union, most notably the referendum held in the UK on 23 June where 51.9% of the votes cast – only 37% of the electorate – voted in favour of a ‘Brexit’.

I’m very happy that in these turbulent times IFOAM EU is a strong and flourishing organisation devoting its huge energy and expertise to making Europe more organic. At our 8th General Assembly in Amsterdam representatives of 28 countries and more than 110 members elected a new Board & Council and our distinguished IFOAM EU director of 13 years Marco Schlüter stepped down and Eduardo Cuoco succeeded him. We are well-equipped to face an uncertain future with strong leadership.

For the organic movement, however, the ongoing organic regulation negotiations could change much. IFOAM EU has worked intensively and to good effect in the negotiations. Read more in the political hot spot in this issue.

In other areas affecting the organic movement, IFOAM EU continues to be actively engaged in how organic food and farming can help deliver the objectives of key EU policy areas such as climate change, the Common Agriculture Policy and the controversial discussion on GMOs and new genetic engineering techniques.

In, we urged EU policy-makers to ensure that agriculture plays its part in emission reduction in the ongoing climate change negotiations to reduce greenhouse gas emission among different European sectors. We have explained how public money must deliver public goods in a reformed CAP that ensures healthy farms, healthy people and a healthy planet. The Cork 2.0 Declaration on Rural Development: A Better Life in Rural Areas, ratified by over 300 stakeholders from across the EU-28, clearly stated the need for greater investment in environmental public goods.

In our continued fight to keep Europe GMO-free we urged the European Commission to issue its legal interpretation so new genetic engineering techniques are classified as GMOs, and we succeeded in conveying our message to keep Europe GMO-free to the European Parliament as it voted to oppose the authorisation proposal for cultivation and for import and use in food and feed of five GMOs in October 2016. Moreover, IFOAM EU and its members called on their national authorities to ensure the European Commission’s legal interpretation – clarifying that plants & animals obtained from essentially biological processes (more generally known as conventional breeding) are excluded from patentability – will be supported before the European Patent Office.

IFOAM EU also continued to support research and innovation dedicated to organic food and farming in the EU. Not only did we launch a new platform for farmers to find organic solutions to close this welcome note by asking you to help us generate a positive change in our food and farming system: through IFOAM EU-led workshops in the framework of the Vision 2030 process many of you suggested ways in which the food & farming sector, civil society & policy makers can bring forward the changes we need. I’d like to invite you to take the survey to let us know what is missing and/or to share your successful initiatives. Based on your feedback we are developing a roadmap for all who are shaping the agri-food systems we want to see in Europe and beyond. We will launch the roadmap at the 11th European Organic Congress in 2017. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Here’s to a year of positive change in 2017!

Christopher Stopes
IFOAM EU President
POLITICAL HOTSPOT

ORGANIC REGULATION UPDATE

A political debate on the new organic regulation among EU agriculture Ministers took place at the EU Council in Brussels on 12 December.

The Slovak Presidency worked hard towards having the dossier agreed by the end of 2016. However, the opinions on many crucial points are still far apart among the three negotiating EU institutions – the Council, the Parliament and the Commission – and among the 28 Member States. Therefore, the Presidency presented a ‘progress report’ and handed the dossier over to the coming Maltese Presidency.

40 out of 45 articles have been scrutinised during the 14 trilogues, but a clear agreement is still missing on many parts. During the Council meeting, a majority of EU agriculture Ministers expressed concerns about the content of the text which is currently on the table. Concerns about areas that were considered closed were raised again, e.g., on the need of mandatory annual inspections and on the necessity of having a fairer import regime.

The most controversial and divisive topics of the dossier are the presence of non-allowed substances in organic products and the connection between organic crops and the soil. At the meeting, a number of Ministers followed up the statement of the EU Parliament Rapporteur Martin Häusling – who called for a period of reflection on the whole process. Häusling added that a check is needed “whether it could be possible to improve the current regulation by bringing it in line with the Lisbon Treaty and inserting needed improvements.”

Should the negotiations continue in January, another six-month debate can be expected. If, after this, the negotiating parties should come to an agreement, a new regulation would be adopted in June 2017, and it would take another 12-18 months to develop all the implementing rules. This means that a complete package cannot be expected before 2018 and the entry into force of the new regulation is likely to start earliest in 2019.

It’s important to note that in the context of Commission President Jean-Claude Junker’s “Better regulation” policy, dating back to December 2014, Vice-President Timmermans said that if there was no agreement within six months on the review of the organic regulation, he would withdraw the proposal. Twenty-four months later there is still no end in sight.

While these discussions are taking place in Brussels, the sector all over Europe is moving on and both the market share and the share of organically managed land continue to grow at an impressive pace. The year-on-year growth for organic in the EU is 6-7%, far beyond any food & drink market segment. The negotiating parties should act in the best interest of this growing sector and take stock of what is actually an improvement over the current regulation, which should be used as the basis for a new start.

IFOAM EU cordially invites you to join Policy Day at Biofach 2017, where you can discuss the possible changes that the sector will be facing with EU policy makers and organic sector representatives.
1 NEWS FROM IFOAM EU WORKING FIELDS

1.1 REGULATION

ARE YOU AN EXPERT IN ORGANIC COSMETICS AND ORGANIC TEXTILE? APPLY TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE NEW IFOAM EU TASK FORCES!

Cosmetics and textiles have gained an increasing share of the organic market in the past years, yet as opposed to organic food and drinks, they are not covered by specific EU regulations. IFOAM EU has set up two new task forces on non-food products – cosmetics and textiles – to ensure they receive the same level of protection as organic food and ensure that the risk of greenwashing, including unsubstantiated organic claims, is minimised and consumer expectations are met. IFOAM EU is looking for experts to join us.

Applications for the task force on cosmetics and the task force on textile will be accepted until Friday 13 January.

Please read the terms of reference for the cosmetics and textiles task forces. The IFOAM EU Board will decide on the final composition of the task force. For more information, please contact emanuele.busacca [@] ifoam-eu.org.

EXPERT GROUP FOR TECHNICAL ADVICE ON ORGANIC PRODUCTION (EGTOP) PUBLISHES ITS CONCLUSIONS ON THE USE OF PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS

On 26 October 2016, the Third Report on Plant Production Products produced by the Expert Group for Technical Advice on Organic Production (EGTOP) was published.

Many substances were evaluated: sodium hydrogen carbonate, salix cortex, chitosan hydrochloride, COS-OGA, garlic extract and diammonium phosphate as an attractant in traps all got the green light. On the other hand, the group sees the need to re-evaluate some currently allowed substances: azadirachtin, pyrethrins, deltamethrin and lambdacyhalothrin, and lime sulphur.

EGTOP recommendations are not binding, but the Commission will consider them when updating the organic legislation.

Read the full EGTOP Report on Plant protection products (III). The previous reports on Plant protection products (Part I & Part II) were published in October 2011 and April 2014.

In addition, the group prepared an overview of all the substances which are currently authorised as basic substances under the horizontal legislation on pesticides, e.g. lecithins, sucrose, fructose, vinegar, whey, etc.

Read the IFOAM EU position on Plant Health Care in Organic Farming
UPDATE ON FOOD AND VETERINARY OFFICE REPORTS

The Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) of the European Commission published new audit reports on the organic control systems of Member States and third countries. As a reminder: the FVO audits focus on EU Member States, third countries recognised as ‘equivalent’, or control bodies performing controls in third countries.

Audits were carried out in Sweden (September 2015) and Costa Rica (February 2016) to evaluate the control system for organic production and labelling of organic products in these countries. Audits were performed in Canada (September-October 2015) and India (April 2015) to evaluate the application of organic production rules and the effectiveness of the control system for organic production.

Finland (April 2016) and Spain (March 2016) were also subject to an audit to evaluate the controls for pesticides residues in organic production.

Following the controls that were performed in EU and non-EU countries in 2012-2014, the Commission already published two overview reports on EU Member States and “equivalent” third countries, as well as a third overview report on control bodies operating in three third countries (China, Turkey and Vietnam).

NEW IMPLEMENTING REGULATION

A new implementing regulation has been published. Regulation (EU) No 2016/2259 updates Annexes III and IV of Regulation (EC) No 1235/2008:

- Annex III: list of ‘equivalent’ Third Countries
- Annex IV: list of ‘equivalent’ Control Bodies / Authorities operating in Third Countries

An overview of all organic regulations is available on the IFOAM EU website.

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1.2 POLICY

› CLIMATE CHANGE

DEMONSTRATING THE CONTRIBUTION OF ORGANIC FARMING TO COMBATTING CLIMATE CHANGE – NEW SOLMACC NEWSLETTER

The SOLMACC project’s sixth newsletter has been released. In this newsletter you’ll learn more about:

• Optimised crop rotation, one of the project’s climate-friendly practices that is being applied by the participating farmers
• The SOLMACC project presentation at the seminar “How can the CAP drive climate change mitigation and adaptation in the agriculture sector?”
• The five Open Field Day at SOLMACC demonstration farms in Germany, Italy and Sweden

› CAP UPDATE

EU COMMISSION PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR NEW COMMUNICATION ON CAP IN 2017

President of the European Commission Jean Claude Juncker has unveiled plans to start work on the future of the CAP post-2020 in 2017. Speaking at the 2016 Agricultural Outlook Conference held in Brussels between 6 and 7 December, President Juncker talked about the need for a simpler and more modern CAP that provides transparency, predictability and flexibility in a market orientated way, whilst ensuring a safety net for farmers. At the conference Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan highlighted crisis tools to address market volatility, access to credit and the reduction of administrative burdens for young farmers, investments in new technologies and the provision of public goods by farmers as key issues for the next policy review.

Over the past 6 months the discussions around the next CAP reform have been largely dominated by calls for mainstream risk management measures in the policy as a means of alleviating farmers’ exposure to market volatility. IFOAM EU rejected the introduction of such a tool when the last CAP was negotiated, because it can incentivize risk taking, benefit insurance companies, and undermine investments in more sustainable approaches. Instead IFOAM EU is calling for a fundamental overhaul of the current CAP, that puts sustainability at the heart of the policy and better incentivises and rewards farmers who are delivering public goods such as jobs, biodiversity and soil fertility. For further information on IFOAM EU’s new Vision for public goods under the CAP post-2020 please contact Stephen.Meredith [@] ifoam-eu.org

To inform the process, the Commission will launch a public consultation on the CAP post-2020 in early 2017. Legislative proposals are expected to follow in early 2018.
A few months ago, the European Commission proposed the authorization of five new GMOs, including three for cultivation. In October, the European Parliament objected to these authorizations in a non-binding resolution. Member States were supposed to vote on the five files at the beginning of November, but votes were postponed to 17 January.

IFOAM EU urges Member States to vote against these authorizations. Every new GMO authorization is a threat to the organic sector and its ability to remain GM-free at an acceptable cost. National bans will not be sufficient to protect the organic and GM-free sector if GMOs are broadly authorized for cultivation at the European level. Member States should be consistent with their national bans and voting against new authorizations of GMOs for cultivation at EU level is key to ensuring their national bans are effective.

The Greens in the European Parliament launched a twitter campaign to give citizens the opportunity to directly ask the government to vote against any new authorization.

The European Commission published a proposal to update the environmental risk assessment of genetically modified organisms. This is the first time since the adoption of Directive 2001/18 that the European Commission updates its annexes on risk assessment, even if this was an old request from Members States and from the Parliament.

IFOAM EU welcomes the necessary update of GMOs risk assessment but underlines some problems in the first draft of the European Commission, notably the necessity to:

- Strengthen the analysis of long-term effects in the environmental risk assessment
- Improve the coherence between the risk assessment for GMOs and agro-chemicals with taking into consideration the cumulative effects from the use of multiple agro-chemicals and resistance traits of GM plants

IFOAM EU and other NGOs sent feedback to the consultation organized by the European Commission, which closed on 8 December.

Organic food is by definition GM-free and the ability of the organic sector to produce and supply high quality food at reasonable cost is under threat from the risk of GMO contamination.

In order to identify the current socio-economic challenges for GM-free production in the EU, IFOAM EU started the project “Keeping GMOs out of food” in 2014. The goals of this project are to provide practical recommendations and to coordinate advocacy work for the organic sector to remain GM-free, but also to find common solutions and strategies with the conventional GM-free production.

After a few months break due to sick leave, IFOAM EU is pleased to announce that many activities are planned in 2017. In April 2017, one workshop on new genetic engineering techniques and one roundtable on organic and GM free seeds will be held. Other topics will be discussed in coming roundtables and workshop in 2017 and 2018. Using the outcomes of these discussions, IFOAM EU will publish practical guidelines for avoiding GMO contamination in the food chain and present the results of the project during at an event with European stakeholders mid-2018.

Pauline Verrière, the new IFOAM EU Policy Coordinator on GMOs issues, is responsible for the “Keeping GMO out of food” project. Meanwhile, you can contact her for further information on pauline.verriere [@] ifoam-eu.org.
PLANTS OBTAINED FROM CONVENTIONAL NON-GM BREEDING SHOULD NOT BE PATENTABLE.

Can a tomato with specific characteristics be patented, even if it was obtained through conventional breeding? Directive 98/44 on the legal protection of biotechnological inventions excludes the patenting of “plants and animal varieties” and “essentially biological processes for the production of plants or animals”. But, in practice, the European Patent Office (EPO) has been granting more and more patents on life in the last 15 years.

Legal uncertainties remained until the decision of the Enlarged Board of Appeal of EPO, in March 2015, which clearly decided that products obtained from conventional breeding could be patented. It stated that if the link between a “native” trait and its function in a plant (for example, which part of the DNA of a tomato codes for the resistance of a specific virus) was discovered – no matter the process used to obtain the plant – then patents can be granted. As a result, any other plant (any other tomato) with the same native trait (with the same virus resistance) will be covered by the patent.

This interpretation by the EPO was highly criticized.

Pushed by the European Parliament and many NGOs, including IFOAM EU, the European Commission adopted on 8 November a legal notice about the interpretation of Directive 98/44: the notice confirms that the intention of the EU legislator was to exclude products obtained by essentially biological processes from being patented. In other words, conventional breeding should not be patentable. Indeed, originally two different kinds of intellectual property were adopted to protect biotechnology on one hand (Directive 98/44), and conventional breeding on the other hand (plant breeders’ right). The practice of the EPO reduced drastically borders between the different intellectual properties with according patent on conventional breeding. European Parliament and many NGOs, including IFOAM EU, the European Commission adopted on 8 November a legal notice about the interpretation of Directive 98/44: the notice confirms that the intention of the EU legislator was to exclude products obtained by essentially biological processes from being patented. In other words, conventional breeding should not be patentable. Indeed, originally two different kinds of intellectual property were adopted to protect biotechnology on one hand (Directive 98/44), and conventional breeding on the other hand (plant breeders’ right). The practice of the EPO reduced drastically borders between the different intellectual properties with according patent on conventional breeding.

IFOAM EU supports this interpretation of Directive 98/44: seeds and genetic traits that can be found in nature and obtained through conventional breeding cannot be patented. This kind of patents fosters further market concentration in the seed sector and hinders competition and innovation. Today, only five companies control 75% of the seeds sold throughout the world and own most of the patents. Patents on seeds reduce choice and increase prices for farmers and consumers.

The interpretation of the European Commission of Directive 98/44 is an important step to ban patents on seeds and native traits, but it is only the first one, because it will not have any direct impact on the European Patent Office practice. Directive 98/44 was initially adopted for the European Union, but the European Patent Office incorporated it in its own regulation. But European Members States can now rely on the European Commission interpretation. It is now the duty of governments, as members of the European Patent Organization, to make sure that patent regulation is correctly implemented and that the prohibition of the patentability of products obtained by essentially biological processes is enforced by the EPO. IFOAM EU therefore appeals to its members to urge their government to support the legal interpretation of the European Commission at the European Patent Office.

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FARM, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

MAKE EUROPE RECOGNIZE SOIL AS A COMMON GOOD

Sign and share the People4Soil European citizen’s initiative

The aim of the People4Soil initiative is to have soil recognised as a common good by putting pressure on the European institutions to adopt specific legislation on soil protection. At the moment, soil is not subject to a coherent set of rules in the Union: the proposal for a Soil Framework Directive was withdrawn in May 2014 after a minority in the Council blocked it for eight years. Existing EU policies in other areas are not sufficient to ensure an adequate level of protection for all soils in Europe. Europe should recognize soil as a common good that is essential for our lives and must take on the sustainable management of soil.

Following recognition as a European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI), People4Soil is now working to collect 1 million signatures. When 1 million citizens have signed, People4Soil can and will exercise the civil right to recommend EU legislation via the European Citizen’s Initiative.

The Cork 2.0 Declaration seeks to follow the spirt and builds on the first Cork Declaration on Rural Development signed in 1996. The new Declaration is seen to have unofficially kicked-off the debate on the next CAP reform. At the end of September, Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan indicated his intentions to publish policy options which could effectively frame future design of the CAP post-2020 by the summer of 2017.

Take action now!

People4Soil is a free and open network of European NGOs, research institutes, farmers’ associations and environmental groups that is concerned about the increasing degradation of soils both in the EU and at global level.
EIP-AGRI UPDATE

CITIES & FOOD WORKSHOP: REPORT AVAILABLE

In September, an EIP-AGRI workshop took place that looked at approaches that promote easy access to fresh, safe and healthy food in cities, that benefit local producers and that contribute to local economic development. IFOAM EU actively took part in the workshop, which included break-out sessions on public procurement and access of urban and semi-urban producers to regional food systems. IFOAM EU stressed the importance of incentives and rewards for farmers for the environmental and socio-economic benefits, which support sustainable food systems. The final report of the workshop – including some organic initiatives – is now available online.

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION ON THE INTERIM EVALUATION OF HORIZON 2020

The European Commission has launched a public stakeholder consultation which will feed into the interim evaluation of Horizon 2020, one of the largest research and innovation schemes worldwide for 2014 to 2020 with a budget of nearly €77 billion.

This interim evaluation aims to improve Horizon 2020, and will also help prepare the ground for the next EU research and innovation programme. Contributions from researchers, entrepreneurs, innovators and all types of organisations that have participated in Horizon 2020 are very welcome. The deadline for the consultation is 15 January 2017. A summary of the results of the consultation will be published by the Commission by mid-2017.
TP ORGANICS PRIORITY TOPICS FOR HORIZON 2020 WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2018/2020

TP Organics has published a new paper outlining 12 priority topics for the Horizon 2020 Work Programme for 2018/2020. The paper specifically calls for projects for a flagship programme for the transition of Europe’s food systems and for projects that address specific challenges faced by the organic sector.

Flagship programme

In order to achieve food & nutrition security and sustainable agriculture, policies from the local to the global level need to be redesigned, new farming systems based on ecological approaches need to be developed, new supply chains need to be set up. Agricultural research and education need to change.

To make this happen, TP Organics is calling for a flagship research & innovation programme to enable a transition of Europe’s food systems. Such a programme should, among others, foster exchange between the organic and conventional sector.

Research and innovation for the organic sector

As there is a distinct market for organic food which has to comply with specific EU regulations, the research and innovation challenges of the organic sector are often not shared by other food and farming sectors. Horizon 2020 should provide for these challenges too, by dedicating specific budget to their resolution.

NEW TP ORGANICS STEERING COMMITTEE APPOINTED

TP Organics members appointed a new steering committee on 5 December. The new members of the steering committee are: Marian Blom from Bionext, Jiří Lehejček from the Czech Technology Platform for Organic Agriculture, Urs Niggli from FiBL, Marco Schlüter from Öko Obstbau Norddeutschland, and Karin Ulmer from ACT Alliance. As a member of the IFOAM EU board, Jiří will represent IFOAM EU in TP Organics. The steering committee will monitor the work of the TP Organics secretariat and provide guidance for the implementation of the TP Organics mission: advocate for and obtain greater investment in research and innovation for organic, low-input and agroecological food production, with the aim of contributing to the transition to sustainable food and farming systems.
2 IFOAM EU DEVELOPMENTS

SAYING GOODBYE...

Laura Ullmann

Laura started working at IFOAM EU in 2012. She quickly carved out her position within IFOAM EU and became the driving force behind many positive changes. Her firm belief that organic is the right way to a fairer food and farming system, as well as her professional and personal dedication to a socially & environmentally just and sustainable food system made her the perfect fit for the position of Communications and Business Relations Manager.

Laura tremendously improved the quality of IFOAM EU’s communication. Her decision to bid IFOAM EU farewell and continue fighting for a greener world is a loss to the organic movement, but we’re sure she’ll continue making Europe more organic. We would like to thank Laura for her tireless work, patience, and positive attitude and wish her all the best for the future!

ORGANIC PROCESSORS’ MEET IN RIGA

13–14 October, Riga, Latvia

On 13–14 October 2016, IFOAM EU Interest Group for Processors (IGOP) met in Riga to discuss ongoing technical and regulatory challenges processors face in their daily work.

This quarterly meeting is the occasion for organic processing and trade associations from across Europe to report and exchange on national developments. Participants were also given an update on the ongoing revision of the organic regulation. Specific topics of interest included the availability of ingredients in their organic form, the use of processing techniques, or the implementation of the current organic regulation’s provisions.

The next IGOP meeting will take place in Paris, France on 2–3 February 2016.

IFOAM EU ROUNDTABLE AND KICK-OFF MEETING OF THE CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAM FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

15 November 2016, Prague, Czech Republic

The organic movement in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) has been developing over past decades, however there is a lot to be done to further strengthen its organizational and advocacy capacity. In order to facilitate this, IFOAM EU has started a capacity-building program for the CEE organic movement.

The program started with a kick-off of the permanent roundtable on 15 November 2016 in Prague. It brought together 15 experts with solid experience in representing organic movement in their countries and at EU level. Experts identified the means to further develop their advocacy capacity and sustainability of their organisations. Among the key priorities identified were the need to learn best practices from the countries where the organic sector functions efficiently, communicate effectively with policy-makers and citizens, and investment in know-how both at farm and organisation level. The experts also discussed the need for closer cooperation between CEE countries themselves. The group will continue to meet in 2017.
IFOAM EU SEED EXPERT GROUP

29 November, Brussels, Belgium

The IFOAM EU seed expert group had its annual meeting on 29 November 2016. The meeting was attended by 11 participants from 7 countries and the main topics of discussion were:

- Patents on seeds
- New genetic engineering techniques
- Plant genetic resources, how their preservation can be funded and the measures that should be taken to protect them
- The issue of seeds in the organic regulation.

The outcomes of the meeting will be fed into the office’s work and will be used to shape IFOAM EU’s future work on seeds.

IFOAM EU FARMERS GROUP

1–2 December, Münich, Germany

The latest Farmers Group meeting took place in Münich, Germany on 1–2 December. The main topics discussed at the meeting were the IFOAM EU position on CAP post-2020 and the capacity building activities of the group. Participants also expressed their concerns regarding the latest state of play in the organic regulation negotiations. The outcome of the discussion was a joint statement signed by 18 farming organisations calling for a rejection of the proposal.

The meeting also included two farm visits. One to a Naturland demonstration farm whose main occupations are seed multiplication, arable farming and animal husbandry. The second visit was to a 60 hectare Bioland farm with 20 milking cows, exclusively fed on hay, that produce milk for their cheese, and other dairy products, pigs and laying hens.

CONSULTATION: TRANSFORMING FOOD & FARMING – MAKING IT HAPPEN

Our food & farming systems need a profound transformation. How can we make it happen? Through IFOAM EU-led workshops in the framework of the Vision 2030 process many of you suggested ways in which the food & farming sector, civil society & policy makers can bring forward the changes we need.

Based on your suggestions, IFOAM EU is developing a roadmap for actors to start – or continue! – shaping the agri-food systems we want to see in Europe and beyond. Take the survey to let us know what is missing and/or to share your successful initiatives before 16 January 2017.

Your response will help us align the actions and showcase relevant practices or initiatives to inspire more concrete actions adapted to national or local levels. Feel free to share the survey widely in your networks.

The final roadmap will be launched at the 11th European Organic Congress in 2017. Stay tuned for more details! For any questions regarding the document or the survey, please write to Yulia.Barabanova [@] ifoam-eu.org
3 EVENTS

3.1 REVIEW OF EVENTS

SOLMACC: HOW CAN THE CAP DRIVE CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION IN AGRICULTURE

9 November 2016, Brussels, Belgium

Policy makers, representatives of European regions and NGO representatives met to discuss the benefits of organic, and how climate-friendly farming can be incentivized and supported by the CAP and rural development programmes (RDPs). About 50 people attended the IFOAM EU organised event held at the Committee of the Regions, supported by the German region of Nordrhein-Westfalen. It was a part of the SOLMACC project that aims at demonstrating that by applying optimised farming practices organic farming can be climate-friendly.

The seminar started with a presentation from Dr. Andreas Gattinger (FiBL, partner in the SOLMACC project) who presented first results regarding the climate effects of the farming practices implemented in SOLMACC. They indicate that greenhouse gas emissions from farming could be reduced up to 30% by converting from conventional to organic farming systems within the EU. Additionally, some of the SOLMACC climate-friendly farming practices show a great potential to reduce such emissions by up to 15% more on top of that.

Other speakers included Martin Hannen from the Ministry for Climate Protection, Environment, Agriculture, Conservation and Consumer Protection of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia and Carlo Giupponi, Director, Venice Centre for Climate Studies, “Ca’ Foscari University of Venice” who presented regional approaches to climate change and a scenario analysis for future RDPs. Simon Kay from the EU Directorate-General for Climate gave a presentation on how the agriculture sector is handled in the European Commission proposals on climate change. Sandra Naumann (Ecologic Institute) and Clunie Keenleyside (IEEP) presented ideas on the role rural development plans can play as well as on “climate proofing the CAP”.

Visit the SOLMACC website to find all the presentations from the event, learn more about the project or read the latest SOLMACC newsletter.

SOLMACC is implemented by IFOAM EU, AIAB, Bioland, Ekologiska Lantbrukarna and FiBL. The project is funded under the LIFE financial instrument of the European Union. The sole responsibility for the content lies with the author and the communication reflects only the author’s view. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.
**NORDIC ORGANIC SECTOR LEADERS MEET AT THE NORDIC ORGANIC FOOD FAIR / NATURAL PRODUCTS SCANDINAVIA**

16–17 November, Malmö, Sweden

IFOAM EU is proud to support the Nordic Organic Food Fair and Natural Products Scandinavia, the Nordic region’s only dedicated international trade shows for organic food and beverage. Members of the key Nordic organic associations met, in the company of IFOAM EU and the show organisers (Diversified Communications), to discuss core issues for the Nordic and European organic sectors.

Held in Malmö, Sweden on 16-17 November 2016 for its fourth edition, the Nordic Organic Food Fair successfully sourced 1000’s of exciting new products, facilitated meetings between suppliers and topping up participants’ market knowledge from leading industry speakers. It’s the largest fair for the region and is growing every year. The Nordic Organic Food Fair is an essential industry event for trade buyers who are looking to source the very best in organic food and drink.

**COP22**

7–18 November, Marrakech, Morocco

This November, the world gathered in Marrakesh for the 22nd session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC, the climate change convention, to follow up on the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Expectations for this ‘COP of Action’ were high in many aspects, including those regarding agriculture.

IFOAM – Organics International, as a member of the Farmers’ Constituency, felt it was time to freshen up the talks of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, building on the promising outcomes of the workshops held for the last two years on topics such as technologies to enhance productivity in a sustainable manner, adaptation measures, early warning systems and risk and vulnerability of agricultural systems. A work program on agriculture and food security would provide a sustained space for open dialogue, where countries could consider how to implement their own agriculture pledges, whether on adaptation, mitigation or both. This new programme could also develop guidance to ensure that food security and farmers’ rights, including safe access to land, are protected in the face of climate change or new risky technologies. It could be a space where all aspects of food security - including social, environmental, gender, biodiversity and food production - could be addressed and guidelines for finance to support the right types of agriculture could be developed.

Unfortunately, countries have not lived up to these expectations. The main points they could not agree on were whether or not mitigation should be part of the discussions and the differentiation in commitments between developed and developing countries. Now, work has been further delayed until next year. Nevertheless, IFOAM – Organics International and IFOAM EU will keep pushing for a work program on agriculture and food security which addresses mitigation in those areas with the greatest potential to deliver the 1.5°C goal, i.e. industrial livestock, intensive agriculture, food waste and retail and consumption patterns, targeting countries with the highest per capita emissions.

No progress was made on finance either, even though funding for adaptation is what Africa and the developing world as a whole need most urgently.

Some of the promising initiatives in Marrakech include the Climate Vulnerability Forum’s pledge for 100% renewable energy, eliminating harmful subsidies and revising nationally determined contributions (NDCs) before 2020, the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative, and continued work on the 4p1000 Initiative.

IFOAM – Organics International welcomes the timeline agreed on in Marrakech to develop a robust rulebook to implement the Paris Agreement by 2018. However, if governments are serious about achieving the goals set in Paris, countries have to do more and faster. 2016 is the hottest year on record, at 1.2°C warmer than preindustrial levels. Extreme weather events are
increasingly frequent and smallholder farmers who are the most vulnerable are already suffering from devastating impacts of climate change. To ensure the 1.5°C target is reached in the best way, parties need to be proactive in reducing their emissions before looking at offsets and must prioritize emission reductions before 2020, instead of delaying on the assumption that they can compensate later with negative emissions. If done wrong, climate action in the land sector could have a massive negative impact on food security, the capacity to adapt, development potential, gender equality and the livelihoods of communities dependent on small-scale agriculture, as well as on biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, with an increased risk of land-grabbing and rises in food prices.

ENABLING CROP BIODIVERSITY ON THE MARKET, DIVERSIFOOD PROJECT

22–23 November, Helsinki, Finland

Crop biodiversity was the key topic of a workshop focused on Nordic and Baltic countries. IFOAM EU was invited to present the position of the organic sector regarding the existing seed legislation. There is a clear need for a new seed legislation to allow more crop biodiversity on the market, which is crucial for organic farmers. The discussions were fruitful and constructive. Participants discussed the obstacles they face and worked towards coming up with solutions through the exchange of information.

Read IFOAM EU’s position Towards more crop diversity – adapting market rules for future food security, biodiversity and food culture and the workshop presentations. The project was organised in the context of the DIVERSIFOOD project by Arche Noah and the Finnish organic sector.

FAO SYMPOSIUM ON AGROECOLOGY

23–25 November, Budapest, Hungary

180 participants from 41 countries gathered to discuss how agroecology can help agriculture address environmental, social and food security challenges, at the Regional Symposium on Agroecology for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems in Europe and Central Asia.

IFOAM EU highlighted the crucial importance of the international FAO process on agroecology, started in 2014. The closing document of the Symposium includes 37 recommendations and recognises that “organic agriculture is largely rooted in agroecological approaches, both in principles and actual practices, and most of the organic farmers respond to an ecological mission as part of their social undertaking”. It recommends “that agroecology and organic farming are considered in their synergies and co-evolution”.

The FAO also launched a new Agroecology Knowledge Hub

The Symposium was co-organized by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary with financial support from the French Government.

Listen to the recording of IFOAM – Organics International’s side event at COP22 on how agroecological approaches such as organic agriculture can contribute to a reduction of emissions, adaptation, preservation of genetic diversity, and improved public health and nutritional outcomes.
SME ORGANICS: STAKEHOLDERS AND POLICYMAKERS LEARN ABOUT ORGANIC ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT IN SPAIN

30 November – 1 December, Navarra, Spain

Project partners and regional stakeholders travelled to Navarra, in the North of Spain for the second interregional Field Visit of the SME ORGANICS project. The visit was hosted by the Government of Navarra and its partners. On Day 1 project partners had the opportunity to exchange on their progress to date in the development of their regional organic plan. In plenary sessions project partners and their respective stakeholder representatives learned about the policy environment for organic sector and about practical SME best practice initiatives by organic farmers and consumer groups in the Navarra region. This was followed by discussions and exchange, facilitated by Stephen Meredith, IFOAM EU Deputy Policy Manager and Nic Lampkin, Executive Director of the Organic Research Centre. Participants also had a chance to visit organic SMEs in the region including a fruit and vegetable processor, a fruit and vegetable distributor and a winery. Discussions and exchange continued on Day 2 through a series of plenary and break-out sessions also facilitated by the IFOAM EU team. The next field visit is set to take place in the Puglia region in February 2017.

SME ORGANICS seeks to improve policies and programmes under the EU’s Investment for Growth and Jobs goal in order to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of the SMEs in the organic sector of the participating regions. The project aims both at enhancing entrepreneurship but also at supporting existing SMEs in improving their performance. Learn more about SME Organics.

DEMETER WORKSHOP ON ORGANIC PLANT BREEDING

2 December, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

The ‘Traders, Retailers and Consumers: What is their role in Organic Plant Breeding?’ workshop was well attended by representatives from retail companies, organic seed multiplication/breeding companies and initiatives, breeders and researchers. The discussions focused on exchanging knowledge about best practice models in the European countries as well as on the ways to inform and involve consumers in organic plant breeding. The Swiss label ‘Bioverita,’ aimed at promoting products obtained through organically bred varieties, was also presented. It triggered a debate on whether new labels are the most appropriate way to develop consumer awareness on organic seeds, or whether information and promotion material given to consumers in the shops would be more relevant.

Participants to the workshop ‘Traders, Retailers and Consumers: What is their role in Organic Plant Breeding?’ organised by the Demeter International EU Liaison office, in the context of the ‘Promoting Organic Plant Breeding in Europe’ project and in cooperation with Estafette Odin, a Dutch organic retailer company, engaged in the development of organic breeding.
DG ENVI’S SOIL STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE

5 December, Brussels, Belgium

The European Commission organised a ‘Soil stakeholders’ conference’ as a contribution to the World Soil Day 2016, with the aim of raising awareness on the importance of soils and the ecosystem services that they deliver, as well as discussing challenges and further policy developments with stakeholders. The outcomes of the inventory and gap analysis of soil-related legislation in the EU and Member States were presented.

After a minority of Member States blocked an EU Soil Directive in the EU Council for eight years, the Commission withdrew it in May 2014. Nevertheless, the Commission is still mandated to take action to protect European soils.

Speaking on a panel, IFOAM EU Policy Manager Eric Gall highlighted the benefits of organic and agroecology practices for soil health, soil biodiversity and fertility. A 2012 global meta-analysis also found that organic farms store the equivalent of 2018.5 Kgs CO2 per hectare per year in soils – 3.5 metric tonnes more carbon per hectare on average than non-organic farms. But one-quarter of European soils suffer from erosion, and 45% show low levels of organic matter, which result in poor nutrient balances, reduced drainage and water retention capacities, contributing to lower crop yields. This is largely due to intensive farming practices.

Gall also said that we cannot rely on the current CAP to protect soils adequately. CAP greening has had little impact and available agro-environmental measures in the rural development programmes – which represent only 7.2% of the CAP budget – are not targeted to soil in most Member States. As well, the measures that do exist are not necessarily taken up by farmers. Even though soil is always listed as a priority in strategic and operational objectives, other issues are most often higher on the agenda in policy packages, such as water quality, biodiversity, air quality and climate change. Few measures targeted towards soil preservation exist.

IFOAM EU therefore calls on the Commission to develop much needed EU legislation to protect soils.

SOIL CARBON SEQUESTRATION IN LAND USE, LAND USE CHANGE AND FORESTRY (LULUCF) AND ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

7 December, Brussels, Belgium

IFOAM EU held an event on the potential of soil carbon sequestration (SCS) and how organic farming can be portrayed as a role model for this practice. The event took place at the European Parliament and was hosted by MEP Paul Brannen, S&D (UK), shadow rapporteur on the LULUCF proposal in the AGRI committee.

The three speakers presented the benefits of soil carbon sequestration for the soil and farmers and discussed how SCS can be used as a tool for mitigation of GHG emissions.

Adrian Mueller from FiBL presented the findings of a study on the potential of organic farming to mitigate emissions, on which IFOAM EU is also active. Liz Bowles from Soil Association gave insight into the farmers’ perspective on implementing climate friendly practices and highlighted that it works in the farmers’ favour as they get healthier soils with more soil organic matter. Gerry Lawson, European Agroforestry Federation presented the benefits of agroforestry on farmland and how this practice can significantly enhance the carbon that can be sequestered. Paul Brannen underlined the importance of mitigating emissions in the agricultural sector and ensuring that agriculture will have its fair share in the new EU Climate and energy package 2030. He stressed that the flexibility offered by the Commission proposal to the agriculture sector should not undermine the ambition and environmental integrity of EU targets for 2030.
ORGANIC INNOVATION DAYS

6–7 December 2016, Brussels, Belgium

The Organic Innovation Days – organised by TP Organics – attracted great interest from researchers, farmers’ associations, companies and policy makers. The first day of the event was dedicated to innovations in and beyond the organic sector. The winners of the organic innovations award for 2016 were:

- **AssureWel** for “innovation for animal health and welfare in organic production systems”
- A **new, innovative cereal sowing system for weed control** for “increasing productivity and quality in organic arable farming”
- **Check Organic and the FederBio Integrity Platform** for “increasing transparency in the organic value chain”

In the opening panel, Simona Caselli, Minister of Agriculture for the Emilia Romagna Region, called for more training and advice for farmers converting to organic agriculture. She said converting to organic agriculture means changing the way farmers manage their farms, which requires knowledge. This means that knowledge exchange for the organic sector and innovative projects, such as those presented at the Organic Innovation Days, need support from policy makers from the regional up to EU level.

The first day of the event was supported by the Walloon Agricultural Research Centre, the Mediterranean Organic Agriculture Network (MOAN) and the Region of Emilia Romagna.

On 7 December, a brokerage event was organized for the **new CORE Organic call**. The event served as an opportunity for researchers to broaden their network and find potential partners to prepare proposals.
4 MAKING EUROPE MORE ORGANIC – SUPPORT IFOAM EU

IFOAM EU KEY SUPPORTERS 2016

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.

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## 5 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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<td>Policy day at Biofach</td>
<td>Nuremberg, Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 February</td>
<td>Science day at Biofach</td>
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<td>2–3 April 2017</td>
<td>Natural &amp; Organic Products Europe</td>
<td>London, UK</td>
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<td>22–24 October 2017</td>
<td>Natexpo</td>
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<tr>
<td>9–11 November 2017</td>
<td>19th Organic World Congress</td>
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**IFOAM ORGANIC LEADERSHIP COURSE (OLC) EUROPE 2017**

First residential session: 20–28 May 2017, Croatia  
10 webinars: May 2017 – February 2018  
Second residential session: 8 –13 February 2018, Germany

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