IFOAM EU NEWSLETTER

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Carolin Grieshop, Director of the Kompetenzzentrum Ökolandbau Niedersachsen GmbH (KÖN), Hans Bartelme, member of the Naturland Board of Directors, Marco Schütler, IFOAM EU Director, and Sebastian Mittermaier, Naturland Consultant on Agricultural Policy at the seminar “Organic opportunities for sustainable rural development 2020” organised by Naturland during the International Green Week in Berlin, 2016.
Dear friends,

The European organic food and farming sector has a position on “new plant breeding techniques”, ahead of the legal interpretation of the European Commission (expected in March 2016) on whether these are, or are not, considered to be genetic engineering. This position was developed with our members according to IFOAM EU democratic processes.

The issue of new genetic engineering techniques is a critical topic for the organic sector. GMOs and products produced from or by GMOs are prohibited in organic production standards. These techniques must be subject to an adequate risk assessment and to the mandatory traceability and labelling requirements that apply to other GMOs (Regulation 1829/2003 and Regulation 1830/2003). Otherwise there are likely to be important repercussions on our fast growing sector.

IFOAM EU, along with many scientists, consider that the nature and potential risks of the techniques examined in our position paper are similar to those risks posed by GMOs currently on the market. We, along with environmental NGOs and members of the scientific community, believe that these techniques fall within the EU definition of genetic engineering. If the Commission concludes that some of these techniques should be exempted from regulation there will be no way of knowing where or when these living organisms are released into the environment and the food chain. Public opinion and consumers would be concerned by the unknown presence of such “hidden GMOs” in organic products, and they would be opposed to the denial of the free choice that would be the consequence of the lack of labelling and traceability that existing regulation of GMOs provides.

Beyond technical and legal arguments, it must be acknowledged by the Commission that it is a political decision as to whether these techniques should be subject to a risk assessment. The European Commission is subject to intense lobbying by research institutes and companies that have an economic interest in the deregulation of these techniques, those who would escape regulation will benefit from a clear competitive advantage. The precautionary principle, enshrined in EU Treaties, also demands that new techniques to engineer living organisms be at least subject to a broad risk assessment and to a societal debate. More importantly, the approach that is taken is linked to one vision of the future of food and farming in Europe, and of how research can best help make this vision a reality. Our position proposes that these techniques do not form part of our organic vision for the future of food and farming.

The organic sector welcomes innovation and believes it is essential to improve productivity and resolve existing and upcoming challenges arising from the impact of food and farming on human health, our environment, and food security. The European Commission has acknowledged that there is a need to develop innovation in organic plant breeding, this would be severely hampered by deregulation of these new genetic engineering techniques.

Given the impact that the deregulation of breeding techniques not compatible with the principles of organic farming would have on the organic sector, it is important for IFOAM EU to be clear on our position and stimulate widespread debate now.

But the timing of policy-making, democratic processes and careful consideration of the impact of new technologies does not match the pace at which such technologies are developed and marketed. Precaution and debate are even more important when such new techniques concern living organisms, which cannot be easily recalled once released into the environment, and which could shape the future of our food and farming systems. So it is clear that IFOAM EU position and the European Commission’s “legal interpretation” are just further steps of a long debate within society, and within the organic sector itself.

Like for transgenesis and insecticide producing GM crops in the 1990’s, some scientists argue that some of these techniques could be used in organic farming. It is a fair debate. At the international level, IFOAM - Organics International is working on a motion to be debated at the next Congress in 2017. IFOAM EU is also committed to organising further internal debates on the topic this year. We must share all the arguments and discuss the different perspectives, the organic sector must speak confidently with a strong and united voice on this crucial topic.

In the short term, deregulating some or all of these genetic engineering techniques would be an unacceptable way to pre-empt debate, it would render choice impossible. The Commission must learn from the mishandled GMO debate 20 years ago.

Sincerely,
Christopher Stopes
IFOAM EU President
POLITICAL HOTSPOT

TIME TO PUT AN END TO PATENTS AND CORPORATE CONTROL OVER GENETIC RESOURCES

The long-standing issue of patents on life is back on the political agenda in Brussels, as the Dutch Presidency announced that the topic will be discussed at the Competitiveness Council on 29 February 2016. The Netherlands had already initiated a discussion in the Agriculture Council on 13 July 2015, following the controversial decision of the European Patent Office (EPO) Enlarged Board of Appeal, on 25 March 2015, that although essential biological processes such as crossing could not be patented, the resulting products could be covered by a patent.

The extension of strong intellectual property rights (IPR) to living beings is one of the defining issues of our times, and has been a driver for the taking over of the seed sector by the biotech industry. IPR were initially conceived as a public policy instrument, aimed at balancing the interests of an inventor with the interests of society at large. They can take different forms and need to be adapted to the sector they are supposed to regulate. Since the UPOV Convention, adopted in 1961, intellectual property for plant varieties have been maintained by Plant Variety Rights (PVRs). Although PVRs have evolved to resemble patents as UPOV convention has been reviewed over time, they still allow a breeder to use a protected variety to create a new one, without asking permission nor giving royalties to the owner of the PVR.

In contrast, allowing patents claims over seeds and genes block the flow of genetic resources and ultimately hinders innovation. The legal monopolies granted by patents lead to a monopolisation of genetic resources in the hands of patent owners and to a major shift in who captures the added value in the food production chain. Some experts believe that convincing governments to accept the application of IPR on living organisms was the main point of the introduction of GMOs in 1990’s. They were also pushed at the WTO through the TRIPs agreement adopted in 1995. Directive 1998/44 on “the protection of biotechnological inventions”, controversially adopted in 1998, went even further than WTO requirements and opened the door for the IP system getting out of hand.

Although the European Patent Convention from 1973 states that essentially biological processes are excluded from patentability, the European Patent Office has granted more and more patents de facto covering several plant varieties, and not necessarily linked to genetic engineering. The EPO is not an EU institution, there is no independent legal supervision of its decisions, and it directly benefits from the patent system having turned from an instrument for society, into an instrument for private companies.

According to the No Patents on Seeds coalition, around 1,400 patent applications on conventional breeding are pending at the EPO (on wheat, carrots, potatoes, maize, melon, pepper, rice, spinach, etc.), filed by companies like Bayer, Dupont/Pioneer, Monsanto or Syngenta. Around 180 have been granted since 2000.

The extension of the patent system to living organisms, initiated in the USA, has accompanied a rapid concentration in the seed sector, and it has a huge influence on breeding and research priorities. It is estimated that now 5 companies control 75% of the seed market. Patents on seeds, often linked to biopiracy, with the unjust monopoly rights they grant over a natural resource of public interest, are corporate control over the food chain at its highest.

In their latest report, Christoph Then and Ruth Tippe, leading experts on biopiracy, write: “There are already several examples that show how plants and animals are turned into a so-called invention of industry: Trivial technical steps such as analyzing natural genetic conditions, measuring compounds (like oil or protein), crossing-in native traits which already exist in landraces or wild relatives or just by describing general characteristics can render plants and animals a so-called inventions monopolised by patents. Many of the patents and patent applications are based on biopiracy, privatizing biodiversity stemming from the countries of
the south. In most cases, these patents cover the whole value chain from breeding to harvest of food and feed production."

Despite numerous scandals over the years and calls by civil society and part of the seeds sector, the Commission has so far always refused to re-open Directive 1998/44 and to clarify the legal situation.

These concerns over patents on life are shared by the European Parliament. A new resolution (2015/2981(RSP)), following one from 2012, was adopted on 17 December, carried by Dutch Liberal MEP Jan Huitema. The resolution supports a full breeders exemption and calls on the Commission, "as a matter of urgency, to clarify the scope and interpretation of Directive 98/44/EC".

A legal interpretation by the Commission is indeed urgently needed, and would be a step in the right direction, but it can only be a first step towards a revision of the legislation. A recognition of the breeders’ exemption would be good for seed companies, but would not protect farmers from IPR claims over the plants and animals they save or breed. According to IFOAM EU, all breeding processes and breeding material, plants, animals, genetic resources, native traits and food derived thereof should be clearly excluded from patentability in the European legislation. And European governments, represented at the EPO Administrative Council, should take action at the EPO itself to reverse their biased legal interpretation of the Patent Convention.

Patents on life are an issue of great importance for the organic sector, for both philosophical and practical reasons. It will be difficult to transform the agri-food system as long as it is backed by an unbalanced IPR system that gears research towards unneeded technologies whose main benefit is precisely to be covered by a patent and to ensure a steady flow of revenues to the biotech companies owning them.

The renewed political concerns and the initiative of the Dutch Presidency are largely due to the action of IFOAM EU member Bionext, which has been running a successful public opinion campaign against patents on life in the Netherlands since 2013. Having an impact on policy requires coordinated work by IFOAM EU together with all our members at European and national levels. That is why Bionext is offering their expertise and campaign material to IFOAM EU members. A political briefing and picture are available on the IFOAM EU extranet and can be used to raise public awareness and for advocacy work towards national government and MEPs. Sharing our experience and resources will be important to achieving the right political outcome at the EU level in the coming weeks.

Regarding patent laws, the Presidency is keen for Member States to address the concerns over the interpretation by the European Patent Office of the legal framework on the patentability of plant genetic resources and breeders’ rights. Other priorities include stricter rules to combat antimicrobial resistance and food waste, measures to address climate change, and the latest market developments with special reference to the dairy and pork sectors. The first meeting of the AGRI Council under the Dutch EU Presidency is scheduled for 15 February, where the Commission is set to present a long-term strategy for EU farm research. The next informal AGRI Council is expected to take place on 30–31 May in Amsterdam.
1 NEWS FROM IFOAM EU WORKING FIELDS

1.1 REGULATION

REGULATION UPDATE

In January 2016 the Dutch Presidency of the Council took over the role of steering the Member States through the trilogue negotiations with the Parliament and the Commission on the organic dossier.

During the first two trilogue meetings – held under the Luxembourgish Presidency – not much progress was made and the key issues remain unresolved. The Commission’s initial proposal to establish a decertification threshold for non-authorised substances and the intention to move the organic control system into the food safety regulation are still far from being resolved. This is despite the other two EU institutions quite clearly demanding a reversal of these two Commission proposals: as with the organic sector, the Council and Parliament have rejected the idea of having a decertification threshold and have proposed to keep the organic control system in the organic regulation.

On import, the three institutions are a bit closer but still discussing how much flexibility there should be in allowing the EU rules to adapt to different global conditions. The Council and Parliament are also much closer to the sector position in this case, and have clearly stated that “regional differences in ecological balance, climate and local conditions, as well as specific production practices” should be taken into account.

IFOAM EU continues to follow the process closely and is in continuous contact with the three EU institutions and Member States, in order to obtain a regulation that supports the development of the sector both in terms of principles and growth.

NEW NOVEL FOOD REGULATION: IMPACT FOR THE ORGANIC SECTOR

At the close of 2015, a new Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 on Novel Food was adopted. The aim is to bring innovative food to the market while maintaining a high level of food safety. The new regulation strives to improve the efficiency of the authorisation procedure and to remove unnecessary barriers to trade.

On the one hand, there are risks – e.g. the regulation covers food containing engineered material – but on the other hand there is clarification that insects (whole animals and parts of) are included in the scope of the new legislation. Time is needed to better understand the impact this new regulation will have on the market, generally and for organic.

Novel food is food that has not been consumed in the EU to any significant degree before 1997, when the first novel food regulation entered into force. Since 1997 around 90 novel foods have been authorised.
COMMISSION NOTICE ON AQUACULTURE PUBLISHED

According to IFOAM EU, the best adapted approach to organic juveniles in aquaculture is that they should be used when available, and a database indicating the availability of organic juveniles should be created. This should replace the current “minimum-percentage” approach.

However the Commission intends to simply extend the current provision restricting the use of non-organic aquaculture juveniles to no more than 50% until the end of 2016.

The Commission proposal does not match the sector approach, which is also backed by many EU Member States, by the European Parliament and by the Expert Group for Technical Advice on Organic Production (EGTOP).

Commission notice

IFOAM EU letter on the use of non-organic juveniles in organic aquaculture

CIVIL DIALOGUE GROUP ON ORGANIC FARMING

On 16 December 2015 the Civil Dialogue Group on Organic Farming took place in Brussels. Mr Christopher Stopes, IFOAM EU President, was elected as chair of the group.

The Commission updated the group on:
• The state of play of the review of the organic farming legislation
• The implementation of the organic action plan, for which progress on the measures was presented
• The Horizon 2020 calls on organic farming
• The activities of the Expert Group for Technical Advice on Organic Production (EGTOP)
• The inclusion of organic imports in the TRACES system.

Civil dialogue groups are intended to facilitate the discussions between the Commission and stakeholders.

Presentations are available online

NEW IMPLEMENTING RULE ON IMPORT PUBLISHED

A new implementing Regulation, (EU) No 2015/2345, updating the lists of Annexes III and IV of Regulation (EC) No 1235/2008, has been published. Annexes III and IV respectively list the third countries recognised as ‘equivalent’ and the Control Bodies authorised to operate in equivalence in third countries.

A list of all the organic regulations (including the consolidated versions) is available on the IFOAM EU website.

OVERVIEW REPORTS OF THE FOOD AND VETERINARY OFFICE

In 2012 the Commission Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) started auditing the organic control systems inside and outside the EU. So far, the audits focused on the EU Member States and third countries recognised as ‘equivalent’. In 2014 the FVO started auditing control bodies operating in non-equivalent third countries.

Two overview reports on the FVO office’s supervising activities are available:
• Organic production in EU Member States 2012–2014
• Organic production in Third Countries 2012–2014
1.2 POLICY

SEED

NEW PLANT BREEDING TECHNIQUES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED GMOS: NEW IFOAM EU POSITION PAPER

IFOAM EU has published a position paper on new genetic engineering techniques, ahead of the legal interpretation of the European Commission, expected by March 2016. There are no legal or technical reasons to bypass the GMO legislation and exempting these new breeding techniques from risk assessment and other legal requirements that apply to GMOs, and there could be severe economic consequences if the European Commission does not regulate these techniques.

They bear similar potential risks as the GMOs currently on the market and therefore should not be used in organic farming nor released into the environment, even less be exempt from risk assessment and traceability requirements.

Key officials at the relevant Commission directorates – DG SANTE, DG AGRI and DG ENVI – have been contacted by IFOAM EU and informed of the European organic sector’s position.

GMOs

EU CITIZENS’ REPRESENTATIVES REJECT GMOs FOR FOOD AND FEED

In the last three months, the European Parliament objected to the authorisation of four different glyphosate-tolerant GM crops – glyphosate is a herbicide that has been declared probably carcinogenic by the World Health Organisation. The approval of these crops has followed the EU procedure which allows the Commission to authorise a GMO if there is not a qualified majority of countries against the authorisation. The European Parliament vote is not binding.

The European Parliament opposed the authorisation of a glyphosate-tolerant GM maize variety at the December 2015 vote in plenary in Strasbourg. In January 2016 the Environment Committee of the Parliament objected to the authorisation of three glyphosate tolerant GM soybean varieties. Moreover, in the December 2015 resolution, the Parliament also included a clear call for the Commission to suspend all approvals until the GMO authorisation process has been reformed.

This initiative from the European Parliament highlights the need to review the current authorisation system, in which the Commission’s decision-making power greatly exceeds the powers of the Member States and the Parliament, and which does not ensure proper risk assessment.

IFOAM EU calls for a comprehensive review of the current GMO authorisation process. Until the authorisation system is reviewed, the Commission will continue to disregard Member States and citizens’ concerns, and GMO approvals will face the same controversies.

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**CAP**

**COMMISSION LAUNCHES STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATION ON GREENING**

The 12-week public consultation launched in December 2015 comes after one year of the new greening measures and will run until 8 March 2016. The consultation is part of the Commission’s CAP simplification process. IFOAM EU will provide input into the consultation process. For more information please contact Stephen Meredith.

**ORGANIC FARMING SUPPORT TARGETS 10 MILLION HECTARES**

With the last of 118 national and regional Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) approved in December 2015, European Commission figures project that over 10m hectares of farmland will be supported through the programmes’ organic production conversion and maintenance payments. In terms of total spending, organic farming (Measure 11) will account for 6.4% of EU public expenditure for RDPs to 2020 (including EU and national co-financing).

However, with the most recent published figures showing that about 10.2m hectares of land were managed organically in 2013, the new projections suggest that more ambitious efforts could still be made by Member States to stimulate the growth of organic food and farming. This is especially true for farming conversion as there is a large deficit in the supply of Europe-grown organic produce to the market. In this respect Member States can opt to transfer up to 15% of their Pillar 1 budget to Pillar 2 in order to increase the funding available for their RDPs. Member States can review their current decisions in 2017 for the years 2018 and 2019. Member States can also make an annual modification to their RDP which must be in line with the overall strategy of their RDP. Strategies can be modified three times during the overall period to 2020. Further information on the latest spending under European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) for the period 2014–2020 can be found the Commission’s website.

**COMMISSION PUBLISHES COMMUNICATION ON EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS CONTRIBUTION TO JOBS AND GROWTH**

The Commission has published a Communication on the contribution of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) – such as European Agriculture and Rural Development Fund (EAFRD), which co-finances EU Rural Development Programmes – to the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Commission’s priorities and in particular its priority for jobs, growth and investment. The new Communication also reflects the outcomes of the negotiations with all the Member States on Partnership Agreements and national and regional operational programmes (such as RDPs) as well as the key challenges per country.

Partnership agreements are individual country agreements between Member States and the Commission, linked to the implementation of the new Rural Development Programmes. They set out national strategic goals and investment priorities for utilizing ESIF to 2020.
REVISION OF GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT CRITERIA FOR FOOD AND CATERING SERVICES INTENSIFIES

The European Commission has invited stakeholders to take part in the revision process of the EU's green public procurement (GPP) criteria for Food and Catering services. The EU’s current GPP criteria date from 2008 and are voluntary guidelines to facilitate the inclusion of green requirements in public tender documents at Member State level. The voluntary guidelines are part of the EU public contracting rules which are regulated under the Public Procurement Directive 2014/24/EU for public works, supply and service contracts. The revision process is particularly relevant to the organic sector, since Action 5 of the EU Organic Plan (2014) commits the Commission to develop specific information material that would exemplify the use of organic farming requirements in public procurement as part of the GPP criteria revision. The revision process is expected to be finalized by the end of 2016. For further information or if you are interested to take part in the process with IFOAM EU please contact Stephen Meredith.

DECISIVE ACTION ON EU BIODIVERSITY 2020 TARGETS NEEDED

Agriculture plays a key role in biodiversity and action on climate change. Following the adoption of Council conclusions by Environmental Ministers on the European Commission’s mid-term review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020 in December, IFOAM EU has called on the EU institutions and Member States to take clear and decisive action to improve agriculture’s environmental performance.

The Commission’s report shows that the agricultural sector has not made major progress in delivering on the EU’s biodiversity commitments to 2020. IFOAM EU has publicly reiterated the fact that more efforts are needed to protect and enhance biodiversity and agrobiodiversity, which in turn are needed to ensure farm resilience and our long-term food security. In a press statement following the adoption of the Council Conclusions, IFOAM EU welcomed Member States’ clear message that the Common Agricultural Policy can play a key role in meeting the Union’s biodiversity objectives and our long-term food security. However, we also reminded Ministers that business as usual cannot continue. To meet the 2020 targets, recognition must be followed by concrete actions including more ambitious and smarter implementation of CAP instruments.

Agroecology and organic can nourish the world – IFOAM EU report
EU LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

On 27–28 January 2016, the European Commission will organise a high-level event to present and discuss its long-term strategy for agricultural research and innovation. The strategy will guide the implementation of the remaining three years of Horizon 2020 (2018–2020), as well as research and innovation activities after 2020. The strategy has two priority areas:

- Creating value from land: Sustainable Primary Production
- Enhancing rural innovation: modernising rural territories and policies.

The strategy document contains a chapter on "Integrated ecological approaches" which acknowledges the specific research needs of the organic sector. At the conference, TP Organics will highlight that investing in organic research and innovation means much more than supporting the development of a small, but promising sector. It means designing more resilient production systems and value chains for the benefit of the entirety of agriculture, food supply chains and indeed society.

More information about the conference.
2 IFOAM EU DEVELOPMENTS

IFOAM EU COUNCIL MEETS IN BRUSSELS

2–3 December, Brussels. 28 member countries out of the total 31 were present at the IFOAM EU Council meeting. The IFOAM EU Board and staff also attended the meeting during which a workshop session took place about the new IFOAM EU strategy, based on the recently developed Vision 2030: Transforming Food & Farming. Furthermore, the Council members were updated on the organic regulation revision process and actions, COP 21, and GMOs and new breeding techniques.

Moreover, the next General Assembly (GA) was announced. The GA will take place on 4 April 2016 in Amsterdam and there will be elections for the IFOAM EU Board.

ORGANIC PROCESSORS MEETING

Tradin Organic hosted the most recent meeting of the Organic Processors Interest Group at its offices in Amsterdam on 13–14 January.

The group discussed the review of the organic regulation and the possible changes to Annex VIII of Regulation (EC) No 889/2008. Other topics such as careful processing and the Commission plans on Ecolabel and Product Environmental Footprint were also on the agenda.

Finally the group started organising the 4th Organic Processing Conference which will take place towards the end of 2016.

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR IFOAM EU MEMBERS

General Assembly to take place on 4 April 2016

IFOAM EU members can find all preparatory documents on the IFOAM EU Extranet for Members.

Send an email to Josefine Johansson Zuazu for more information about the General Assembly.

Are you an IFOAM EU member and are you encountering difficulties logging into the IFOAM EU Extranet for Members?

Send an email to the communications team.
SAYING GOODBYE TO OUR COLLEAGUES…

Angela Morell Perez
We are bidding farewell to our colleague Angela Morell Perez, Operations and Events Manager, who arrived in IFOAM EU in 2008 as a trainee and immediately distinguished herself with her great dedication and commitment to the organic sector. Angela regularly received increased responsibility at IFOAM EU, and throughout the past 7 years she has been a key person to go to for our Board, Council, members and colleagues.

Angela played an important role in positioning the European Organic Congress as a leading event for the sector. She also greatly contributed to facilitating the communication among IFOAM EU members, to managing a growing office and in helping new colleagues feel like part of the IFOAM EU office family.

Luckily, Angela will remain in the sector and will keep working hard to promote organic food and farming. We congratulate her on being appointed to work for Ecovalia in Spain, we wish her all the best in her professional development and look forward to collaborating for a long time still.

Kathleen Delage
We are also bidding goodbye to Kathleen, who spent more than two years with us as a Regulation Assistant. Her background in law and sustainable agriculture and her experience in the organic sector were of fundamental importance for her role.

We would like to thank her for her tireless work, for her full commitment to the revision process of the organic regulation and for the excellent organisation of the 3rd Organic Processing Conference. Kathleen’s true team spirit and genuine interest in the sector greatly contributed to the efficiency of her work. We wish Kathleen the very best in her ongoing professional development.
10th EUROPEAN ORGANIC CONGRESS
4–6 APRIL 2016
THE NETHERLANDS

Transforming food and farming through organic

› Explore how organic production and consumption can pave the way for agri-food systems
› Discuss ways to profile organic as a leading solution
› Analyse new EU rules & policies to maximise their benefits

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REGISTER NOW!
OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE: IFOAM EU AT BIOFACH

10–13 February, 2016
Nuremberg, Germany at Hall 1 (1-447)

Take part in discussions and give input on key topics such as the EU organic regulation, opportunities under the new CAP, the role of the organic sector in the fight against climate change and more. Share your opinion with sector representatives and learn more about organic food and farming in the EU!

Wednesday, 10 February

EU Policy Day, organised by IFOAM EU in cooperation with BioFach
16:30–18:00, Hall St. Petersburg, NCC Ost
In March 2014 the European Commission published its legislative proposal for a new organic regulation. The next step in this process is the ‘trilogue’ negotiations between the three EU institutions to agree on a final legal text, presumably at the beginning of 2016.

Taking into consideration the three institutions' proposals, trilogue outcomes on certain regulation areas can be already foreseen and discussion can be kicked off.

The policy day will bring together EU policy-makers and the organic sector to discuss the changes that the sector may have to face when the new organic regulation is adopted.

Thursday, 11 February

Is the new CAP capable of supporting sustainable farming or just continuing business as usual?
12:00–12:45, Room Oslo, NCC Ost
As part of the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2014/2020, new policy instruments and regional and national Rural Development Programmes are coming into effect in 2015 and 2016. How can these policies help to make European more organic? Presentation of the findings of a study conducted by FiBL for IFOAM EU.

Friday, 12 February

The EU import regulation: the new approach!
10:00–11:30, Room Prag, NCC Ost
Introduction to the new/intended EU import rules and discussion on the expected impact on the international organic trade. Certain aspects such as the compliance/ equivalency approaches and organic trade agreements will be deepened in the discussions between experts.
Organised by IFOAM EU and FiBL.

Strategies to develop the organic value chain in Europe
12:00–12:45, Room Prag, NCC Ost
IFOAM EU developed a shared vision for the organic movement in Europe to fill the Organic 3.0 concept with life. One of the central aspects of this shared vision is the commitment to find tools for ensuring fairness, transparency and integrity across the value chain.

Risk-based assessments: developing performance tools within an adequate legislative framework
12:00–12:45, Room Istanbul, Ncc Ost
The joint IFOAM EU and EOCC’s workshop will discuss ways to ensure organic integrity and a performant model for risk based approaches for inspection and certification, clarifying the responsibilities of the different stakeholders of the sector, discussing possible paths for upcoming implementing and delegated acts in order to make the voice of the organic stakeholders heard in the decision process.

After the Paris Climate Conference COP 21: How will the organic sector contribute to the fight against climate change?
13:00–13:45, Room Prag, NCC Ost
This workshop will briefly present the policy context and what science says on the benefits of organic production and will then discuss how the organic sector can contribute to the efforts against climate change.

Science Day: Research and innovation for organic food companies
09:30–17:30, Room Oslo, NCC Ost
More about Science Day on page 11 of this newsletter
3.2 REVIEW OF EVENTS

SEMINAR: “ORGANIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT 2020”

15 January 2016, Berlin, Germany. The organic sector in Europe shows huge potential to grow and develop sustainable farming systems if the CAP and EU rural development programmes are effectively used by Member States, according to EU and German stakeholders who participated at a seminar on “Organic Opportunities for Sustainable Rural Development 2020” at the International Green Week.

The seminar sought to analyse the gap between organic demand and supply and how we can use the support available under CAP to close this gap in the context of current organic production and market trends in the EU-28 and Germany.

The seminar was an important moment to highlight the huge potential for further development and growth of the organic sector and the importance of EU public policy support, such as the CAP Rural Development Programmes, to advance the sector and to close the gap between demand and supply.

The seminar saw the participation of more than 30 people representing rural actors and journalists including Agra Europe, leading German agriculture and farming magazines.

The latest production and market trends in Europe will be presented at BioFach 2016

This event was organised by Naturland in association with IFOAM EU and is part of the “Boosting Organic: making the CAP effective” project co-funded by the European Commission – Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development.
BIOBEURS

20–21 January, Zwolle, the Netherlands

BioBeurs is the most important Dutch organic trade fair, where actors from across the value chain come together to do business, exchange thoughts and get inspired. This year’s edition saw significant growth in the number of participants.

For IFOAM EU it is very important to be present at such events. Speaking directly with those producing the food we eat is a great source of stimulation and motivation to the IFOAM EU team. Is also a great way to stay in contact with the companies supporting us.

WE ARE FED UP: 23,000 MARCH IN BERLIN

16 January 2016, Berlin, Germany. Over 23,000 people marched under the banner ‘We Are Fed Up!’ The march, organised by a broad coalition of organisations including members of IFOAM EU, Friends of the Earth Germany, and other allies working on issues from farming, to beekeeping, nature, animal rights, development and consumer interests, called for organic farming, animal welfare, fair trade and an end to industrial agriculture. IFOAM EU was also represented at the march.

The march also targeted the EU-US and EU-Canada international trade negotiations, and the threat they pose to small-scale sustainable farming and consumer protection in Europe. This is the sixth year in a row that protests demanding a fundamental agricultural overhaul have taken place in the German capital during the ‘International Green Week’ – the world’s largest agricultural fair. There is a need for better, safer and more sustainable food and farming.

Source: Friends of the Earth Europe
IFOAM EU KEY SUPPORTERS 2015

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

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5 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

10–13 February  BioFach  
Nürnberg, Germany

15–17 February  17th International Conference on Organic Fruit Growing  
Hohenheim, Germany

4–6 April  10th European Organic Congress  
Amsterdam & Driebergen, The Netherlands

6–7 April  B.I.O. N’ Days  
Valence, France

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

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

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