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On 9–10 June IFOAM EU farmers from 13 different countries met in Sofia, Bulgaria.
WELCOME NOTE

Dear friends,

I open this IFOAM EU newsletter by thanking all of you for re-electing me at the 8th IFOAM EU General Assembly in Amsterdam on 4 April. I’m very happy to continue in my role as board member and President of the IFOAM EU board in this period of change – change in IFOAM EU itself and change in Europe.

I would like to welcome our new board members, express thanks to those continuing members and say thank you to those that have left. We are lucky to have retained some members from the previous board, during these times of change at IFOAM EU this continuity has helped. The transition of directors has been successfully completed – as you know Marco Schlüter officially stepped down on 8th April with the appointment of Eduardo Cuoco as Director.

Of course these internal changes are overshadowed by the results of 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’. This is a transformative result of a referendum that should never have happened and will have far-reaching consequences for the UK and its relationship to neighbouring Member States, as well as the UK’s wildlife, environment and organic farming sector. I am deeply ashamed to be English (oh to be in Scotland!), I am sorry for the harm we have done. I will continue to serve IFOAM EU as president and I must emphasise that UK IFOAM EU members and stakeholders continue to be an important part of our European family.

We must not forget that EU membership has directly and significantly improved the UK’s environment, protection for wildlife, and the status of pollinators. Conversely, the UK has been one of the main proponents for ambitious EU policies on climate change. What will the future bring for the environment and biodiversity of the UK? The outcry from members of our National Farmers Union in favour of the re-authorisation of glyphosate does not bode well – Europe may be better without Britain?

The Brexit is having immediate effects on farmers and exports: the British pound is losing ground compared to the euro, making trade with EU Members States more expensive. As the UK currently gets about 30% of its food from the EU this will reduce its competitiveness. A drop in the price of cattle, milk and grain is to be expected by the summer meaning less income for all farmers in the UK.

However, for the Europe that remains, Brexit does give the opportunity to demand a new and the reform of policy. The organic sector would like to see a European Union that is based on policies that properly take into account the interests of EU citizens. From our perspective perhaps the Brexit shake-up will lead to more constructive approach on the EU organic regulation, one that capitalises on the growing demand for organic food among EU citizens. Perhaps it can also enable us to strengthen the push for a better greening of CAP with public goods delivered for public money.

What will the effect of the Brexit be on organic farming rules and subsidy schemes in the UK? As a non-member of the EU still trading with different EU Member States, the (dis)United Kingdom will still have to comply with EU organic standards and will continue to be bound by the EU organic regulation. Regarding the CAP, the future of basic payment and rural development schemes – currently in place until 2020 – will depend on the relationship the UK manages to negotiate for itself post-Brexit. But all this must wait until (or if?) article 50 is invoked. In the meantime, the UK “would remain a full member of the EU with all the rights and obligations” and farmers will “continue to have full access to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) support schemes and to the EU internal market”, according to Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan.

As an inclusive European organisation with members from the EU, EFTA and beyond, IFOAM EU is disappointed with the results of the Brexit vote. We believe that a common approach to policy and regulation would best support the necessary transformation of the food and farming system based on the organic principles of health, fairness, care and ecology. We will continue to work closely with our members throughout Europe, including the UK, as a united organic movement, to develop organic and contribute to delivering solutions to today’s societal challenges that know no borders.

Sincerely,
Christopher Stopes
IFOAM EU President

1 Letter from Phil Hogan to National Farmers’ Union (NFU) president Meurig Raymond on 30 June.
POLITICAL HOTSPOT: ORGANIC REGULATION UPDATE

The so-called trilogue negotiations between the EU Commission, Parliament and Council are still ongoing. Despite much effort on the part of the Dutch Presidency, no final agreement was reached at the end of its term on 30 June. The Slovak Republic took over, and is now the sixth Presidency in a row to work on the organic dossier.

Feedback from the outgoing Dutch Presidency
At the last EU AGRIFISH Council meeting before the handover, 27–28 June 2016, the Dutch Agriculture Minister Martijn van Dam presented the state of play to his peers: the proposed regulation has been thoroughly analysed and the negotiations on its scope, objectives and principles have been “concluded”.

The results of the negotiations were not made public but during his address Van Dam outlined a provisional agreement between the Presidency and Parliament negotiators on the most important areas: import, control system and non-authorised products and substances. The Dutch Minister reminded that “nothing is agreed until everything is agreed” but emphasized that this provisional agreement does not include a maximum threshold or action limit that could trigger automatic decertification. On controls, annual physical inspection of the operator would be the general rule, however low risk operators can be exempted with the maximum period between two inspections for all operators set at 24 months. On a related note, the negotiations on the horizontal legislation on official controls for food and feed have been concluded, and the specific control rules for organic will remain in the organic regulation. Finally, work on specific production rules is still ongoing.

Analysis
IFOAM EU is glad to see that on the critical areas, such as the control system and non-authorised products and substances, the agreement between the Dutch Presidency and the EU Parliament reflects the demands of the organic sector. This shows recognition that the polluter pays principle must not be turned upside down and that organic farmers must not be held responsible for unpreventable contamination.

Although progress is being made and negotiations are going in the right direction, the speed of the negotiations is very slow, with key topics such as specific production rules and their place in the regulation still to be discussed. At the end of 2014 the new EU Commission reviewed all the pending legislative proposals, including the organic one. The organic proposal was neither withdrawn or confirmed, but it was said that it would be withdrawn if no agreement was reached within the six following months. After 18 months the organic dossier is still under discussion and the end does not seem to be near. In the meantime, organic operators must continue running their business not knowing what the rules will be in the near future.

Since 2012, IFOAM EU has been continuously involved in the review process, and continues to propose solutions to the three EU institutions.

The next AGRIFISH Council meetings will be led by the Slovak Presidency and are planned for 18 July, 11–13 September and 10–11 October. On 4 July IFOAM EU issued a press release welcoming the Slovak Presidency.
1 NEWS FROM IFOAM EU WORKING FIELDS

1.1 REGULATION

NEW IMPLEMENTING REGULATION

A new implementing regulation has been published. Regulation (EU) No 2016/910 amends Annex IV of Regulation (EC) No 1235/2008 and extends the duration of the recognition of some control bodies operating in third countries as “equivalent” from 30 June 2016 to 30 June 2018.

NEW FOOD AND VETERINARY OFFICE REPORTS

The Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) of the European Commission audits EU Member States, as well as third countries recognised as “equivalent”, and control bodies performing controls in third countries. New audit reports on the organic control systems of Member States and Third Countries have recently been published by it.

Audits were carried out in Bulgaria (November 2015) and Lithuania (September 2015) to evaluate the control system for organic production and labelling of organic products. An audit was performed in Israel (November 2015) to evaluate progress on the follow-up actions requested after the previous audit on the application of organic production rules and on the effectiveness of the control system. Poland was also subject to an audit to evaluate the controls for pesticides residues in organic production (June 2015).

Previous reports include overviews of EU Member States and “equivalent” third countries, as well as control bodies operating in three third countries (China, Turkey and Vietnam).

The IFOAM EU website offers an overview of all the organic regulations.

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1.2 POLICY

CAP

LUKEWARM RESPONSE TO COMMON FOOD AND FARMING POLICY PROPOSAL

The Dutch EU Presidency discussion paper on the post-2020 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and transitioning the CAP towards a Common Food and Farming Policy – *Food of the future: the future of food* – was discussed at an informal meeting of the Council of Agriculture Ministers organised by the Dutch EU Presidency on 30–31 May.

The paper includes suggestions and questions related to extending the scope of the CAP to a Common Agriculture & Food Policy, and shifting a substantial part of available funds to innovation & information technology, broadening greening to include climate goals, improving the position of farmers in the supply chain and supporting developing countries with market development.

The agriculture ministers received the paper with limited enthusiasm. On the other hand, they agreed that there should be more investment in innovation, research and development, with funding coming from sources other than the CAP. The ministers were also of the mind that greening measures should be reinforced to justify the CAP budget, however they stressed that more analysis of the current farm policy rules was needed before changes were made, and that subsidiarity and simplification are needed to address the current complexity of implementation.

FRANCE SETS OUT ITS FIRST IDEAS FOR THE NEXT CAP REFORM

French Agriculture Minister, Stéphane Le Foll, used the Informal Council as an opportunity to put forward France’s first ideas for the CAP post-2020. This included proposals that:

- Soil cover should become a fourth mandatory greening measure
- Coupled aid should be extended beyond vulnerable sectors for innovative practices, e.g. agroecology & precision agriculture
- The crisis reserve should be scrapped & part of farmers’ EU aid should be ring-fenced to create a savings account for support in difficult times
- Agri-environment practices and organic farming should get greater support under Pillar 2 (Rural Development Programmes) and the environmental component should focus more target and results orientated contracts.
IFOAM EU STUDY RAISES QUESTIONS AS TO WHETHER CAP CAN DELIVER PUBLIC MONEY FOR PUBLIC GOODS

Findings from a new study commissioned by IFOAM EU question whether the current CAP can really deliver on the principle of “public money for public goods”. The study, led by the Institute of Organic Agriculture – FiBL, found that whilst the introduction of a greening component under Pillar 1 direct payments is a step in the right direction, the reform lacks clear signals that would guide and direct investments towards sustainable agriculture. Assessing the Pillar 1 greening criteria, the study points to limitations of only on individual farm practices rather than practices as part of an overall system. The limitations of the greening component are also constrained by lack of ambition in implementation by Member States. Organic farms are defined as ‘green by definition’ under the greening component and therefore automatically eligible for this payment.

Moving to Pillar 2 Rural Development Programmes, the study finds that although sustainable farming systems, such as organic, can be a cost effective means for agriculture to deliver on environmental outcomes, prioritisation given to supporting organic under Measure 11 of the RDPs – the measure that provides for organic conversion and maintenance payments – varies significantly from country to country. Nevertheless, many Member States have increased the level of payments in the new programming period, with the majority having higher conversion than maintenance payments for organic production under RDPs). However, the projected figures for future conversions suggests that there is limited ambition amongst the majority of Member States to significantly grow the area of land under organic production to 2020.

The study concludes that greater efforts are needed to instil a core strategy for linking the principle of public money for public goods throughout the CAP and European agriculture. Investment in organic farming and farming practices can play a major role in transitioning to more sustainable agri-food systems and should be included in this strategy.

For further information about the study, its conclusions and recommendations please contact Stephen Meredith.

Comparison of EAFRD projected organic farmland area under Measure 11 (2014–2020) and the total organic farmland area in 2014 by Member State

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.
IFOAM EU has developed a series of #OrganicDelivers infographics to highlight the many benefits of organics including job creation, lower energy use, more productive soil, increased biodiversity and cleaner air and water. The infographics reflect the latest trends across Europe, which shows that the organic market grew at rate of 7.4% in 2014 with retail sales valued at €24 billion despite the fact that organic farmland in the EU only grew by just 1.1% and the number of producers actually fell by 0.2%. A reformed CAP based on the principle of “public money for public goods” would help organic supply keep up with demand and deliver on EU goals. These infographics aim to spread awareness on the matter.

This study and infographics are part of the Boosting organic: making the CAP effective project, an action co-financed by the European Commission, Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development.

The infographics are available on Twitter and Facebook in English, French, German, Italian, Polish and Spanish. Do share using #OrganicDelivers!
EUROPEAN COMMISSION REPORTS GREENING HAS POTENTIAL, BUT TRUE IMPACT TOO EARLY TO CALL

Review of greening after one year is a Commission Staff Working Document (SWD) reviewing the first year of the implementation of the Pillar 1 greening component. It was published at the end of June and the report suggests that although true impact is hard to assess after only one year of implementation, greening has the potential to support practices beneficial to the environment and climate on a large share of EU farmland. However, the report acknowledges that the ambition of specific greening requirements, in particular for fulfilling the Ecological Focus Areas requirement, varies significantly from Member State to Member State.

A 2015 study by the Institute for European Environmental Policy on the greening choices of 9 Member States and their environmental potential concluded that due to the area thresholds and a range of exemptions (especially regarding ecological focus areas and crop diversification) the amount of arable land and the number of farms actually affected was quite low in many countries.

The Commission review states that once the modified implementing rules are adopted based on this assessment, it will launch new studies on the administrative burden and the costs of managing the CAP in 2017. Results of these studies are expected by the end of 2018.

IFOAM EU is actively following the CAP implementation and forthcoming review and reform process. For more information, contact Stephen Meredith.

GMOs

PARLIAMENT AMENDS MEP’S REPORT ON NEW GMOs

A member of the European Conservatives and Reformists Group, MEP Anthea Mc Intyre (UK) issued a report on her initiative – Technological solutions for sustainable agriculture – which called for deregulation and promotion of new genetic engineering techniques, so-called “new breeding techniques”.

IFOAM EU wrote to MEPs to urge them to vote against the parts of the report promoting new GM technologies and to remind them that the Commission should urgently clarify that these new technologies meet the EU definition of a GMO and should be regulated as such.

At a plenary session on 7 June, the European Parliament amended the report by deleting the paragraphs promoting new genetic engineering techniques.

At the same session the Parliament also objected to the authorisation of a GM carnation and a GM maize variety for import, and issued a resolution strongly criticising the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa public-private partnership for its promotion of GMOs.

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GLYPHOSATE: TEMPORARY ‘TECHNICAL EXTENSION’

The authorisation for glyphosate, the active substance in Monsanto’s herbicide Roundup and one of the most used pesticides in Europe, was set to expire on 30 June. The Commission had initially proposed a new authorisation for a period of 15 years. But a study from the UN’s World Health Organisation and mass outcry by NGOs and citizens created a world of controversy and opposition, which lead to a number of Member States signalling their intention to abstain (Germany, Italy, Portugal, Austria, Luxembourg, Greece, Bulgaria) or to vote against (France, Malta).

In the end, on 29 June, the European Commission eventually renewed the authorisation of glyphosate for 18 months. The Commission hit out against Member States for “failing to take their responsibilities” and used the upcoming European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) evaluation of glyphosates as a justification for the prolongation.

FFE

INTERNATIONAL PANEL OF EXPERTS ON SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS CALLS FOR SHIFT TO DIVERSIFIED AGROECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

The International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food) brings together expert voices representing different disciplines and different types of knowledge, to inform the policy debate on how to reform food systems across the world. It is co-chaired by Olivier de Schutter, former UN Rapporteur for the right to food.

Their first thematic report – From Uniformity to Diversity: A paradigm shift from industrial agriculture to diversified agroecological systems – emphasizes the importance of shifting agriculture away from input-intensive crop monocultures and industrial-scale feedlots. Rather, a solution should be sought to diversify agriculture and reorientate it towards ecologically sound practices. This would help to keep carbon in the ground, support biodiversity, rebuild soil fertility, sustain yields over time and also provide a basis for secure farm livelihoods.

The data examined shows that this kind of agriculture can perform particularly well under environmental stress and can compete with industrial agriculture in terms of total outputs. The report demonstrates the potential of diversified agroecological farming to succeed in the areas such as food security, protection of environment, nutritional adequacy and social equity. Therefore, political incentives should be transferred to these systems in order to shift the centre of gravity in food systems.
MEPs CALL FOR ACTION ON UNFAIR TRADING PRACTICES IN THE AGRI-FOOD SECTOR

In June the European Parliament adopted a resolution outlining proposals to tackle unfair trading practices in the food supply chain. MEPs demand an environment in which fair and transparent trade relations among food producers, suppliers and distributors is made possible. MEPs say the proposed actions could aid farmers obtain fair earnings and provide wider choice for consumers, whilst preventing overproduction and food waste.

According to the resolution, sectors such as dairy, fruit and vegetables are considered to be the most threatened in the supply chain due to their weak position against the large-scale retailers. Furthermore, if such practices continue, the long term viability of farms and the provision of these products in the EU will become uncertain. In order to ensure that European farmers and consumers have the opportunity to benefit from fair selling and buying conditions, MEPs stressed the need for a legislative framework at EU level to tackle unfair trading practices.

REGIONS INVEST IN ORGANIC FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Organic food and farming have grown beyond a niche, but there are discrepancies across Europe in terms of its overall development. SME ORGANICS, a new European cooperation project funded by the Interreg Europe programme, presents opportunities for regional stakeholders to address these gaps and bottlenecks. Within the project, 8 participating regions will share experience on specific measures to support the competitiveness of SMEs in the organic sector and will develop regional organic action plans.

A new report recently published by IFOAM EU entitled Organic Action Plans: A Stakeholder Guide shows that there were plans in place in 17 of 31 countries studied in EU-28 and EFTA at the end of 2015. Amongst these countries, 5 have regional action plans and 12 countries have plans organised on a national basis.

Although some action plans are still under development or up for renewal, the numbers demonstrate that there are still many countries with high potential to develop organic through the creation and implementation of organic action plans at both national and regional level.

Further information

SME ORGANICS seeks to improve policies and programmes under the 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 the existing SMEs in improving their performance in order to enforce the growth capacity of the entire organic regional sector in regional, national and international markets.

Participants at the SME ORGANICS kick-off meeting met at the Spanish Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels on 18–19 May.
LET IT BEES: CAMPAIGNING FOR AN EU BAN OF NEONICOTINOIDS

An urgent problem facing Europe is the large-scale death of bees and bee populations. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), bees pollinate 70% of the main crops for consumption. According to the European Commission, pollination by bees contributes at least 22 billion euros to the European agriculture industry every year.

After the expiration of the temporary ban on neonicotinoid use at the end of 2015, we are now at a critical point and it is imperative that both the public and policy makers are aware of the dangers of these chemicals, especially to the bee population.

This is why a team from Bulgarian Organic Products Association (BOPA) and the Foundation for Environment and Agriculture (FEA) is organizing a European campaign to educate and draw attention to the dangers of using neonicotinoids. With help from associations from many European countries, as well as experts and scientists, this team is developing an expert-level information package, campaigning material, a social campaign and a central website. Meetings are being organized with European Union institutions, academic circles and NGOs. Conferences and discussions will be held to engage all parties and a webinar will introduce an overview of the issue and lessons learnt during the project.

Support the campaign by liking the Facebook page and sharing it on social media using #BanTheNeonics and #SaveTheBees

His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco and Petko Simeonov, President of the Bulgarian Organic Beekeeping Organisation, support the ‘Let it Bees’ campaign at the conference ‘Bees caring for Europeans. Europeans caring for bees’, held in the European Parliament during the European week of bees.
1.3 EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION POLICY / TP ORGANICS

NEW TP ORGANICS POSITION PAPER: RESEARCH & INNOVATION FOR OUR FUTURE FOOD SYSTEMS

Key areas of research in the food system and value chain from the perspective of the organic sector are outlined in a new position paper from TP Organics.

In addition to identifying individual research areas, the position paper proposes the set-up of a flagship programme to promote a transformation of the food system. This flagship programme should tackle the factors currently preventing the food system from becoming more sustainable.

This paper will form the basis of TP Organics’ advocacy on the European Food Research Area and Horizon 2020 in the coming years. Please share the paper in your networks.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON HORIZON 2020 WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2018–2020 OPENS

DG Research & Innovation is running a public consultation on the Horizon 2020 ‘Food Security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine and maritime and inland water research and the bioeconomy’ Work Programme for 2018-2020. The purpose of the online consultation is to collect views and opinions on the strategy, scope, objectives, and expected impact of the Work Programme.

Contributions to the present consultation will feed into the preparation of the next “Societal Challenge 2 Work Programme 2018–2020”. The Commission expects the content of Work Programme 2018-2020 to be developed during the fourth quarter of 2016 and first semester 2017, with adoption and publication of calls for proposals occurring in autumn 2017.

IFOAM EU will contribute to TP Organics’ response to the public consultation.

The consultation is open until 28 August 2016.
IFOAM EU FARMERS GROUP MEETS

The latest Farmers Group meeting took place in Sofia, Bulgaria on 9–10 June. The main topics discussed at the meeting were the strategy for the CAP post-2020 and capacity building. There were also elections of the Steering Committee with a mandate to serve for 2 years. The new chair is Laurent Moinet, FNAB (FR); and the other members are Jan Plagge, Bioland (DE); Kees van Zelderen, Biohuis (NL); Aina Maria Calafat Rogers, SEAE (ES); Kurt Sannen, Bioforum Flanders (BE); and Thomas Fertl, BioAustria (AT), who is also the group’s rapporteur to the IFOAM EU Board.

The meeting also included an excursion to a farm cultivating mainly tomatoes and cucumbers, to a rose oil distillery and to a bee farm owned by a local monastery that aims to promote organic agriculture in the region.

IFOAM EU PROCESSORS GROUP MEETS

At the latest meeting in Bologna, Italy on 6–4 June, organic processing experts from nine countries discussed the new organic regulation and the potential impact on the processing, trading and retail, and exchanged on technical issues including careful processing of food, the use of natural flavours, organic yeast, organic lecithin and the ion exchange practice. An update was presented on the ongoing EU discussions on Product and Organisation Environmental Footprints (PEF/OEF) and the EcoLabel.

AssoBio, the Italian Association of Organic Processors and Retailers, and FederBio, the Italian Federation of Organic & Biodynamic Farming, hosted the meeting.

NEW COLLEAGUES

Mathilde Séchet

It is with great enthusiasm that Mathilde joined the IFOAM EU Regulation Unit in June. After working for a conventional food association for a bit more than a year, she welcomes the opportunity to work for the organic movement as she believes that advocacy work must be combined with one’s ethics and she is convinced that organic is the right answer to many environmental and social concerns.

Mathilde holds a Masters in European law (La Sorbonne) and an Advanced Masters in European Politics and Policies (University of Leuven). She is looking forward to gaining a deeper understanding of sustainable agriculture, animal welfare and food production processes. Mathilde is originally from France, but Brussels has been her home for more than 4 years now.
Kata Gócs
Kata is from Hungary and has a bachelor’s degree in nature conservation. Next year she will finish her master’s in environmental agricultural engineering at the University of Szent Istvan in Gödöllő. She has volunteered for Danube-Ipoly National Park for several years now. Before joining FOAM EU she worked for a company which deals with project management mostly in the field of agriculture.

At IFOAM EU, she would like to obtain professional work experience, improve her language skills and learn about how the organic sector is working in Europe. In the future, Kata would like to apply the knowledge gained during this European Volunteer Service year to develop the organic sector in Hungary.

Tonći Ukas
Throughout his studies and professional experience, Tonći has always been interested in sustainable development of rural areas and care for the environment. He is from Croatia, studied horticulture in Zagreb. He also has an Erasmus Mundus Master’s in “Food Identity,” a 2 year specialized programme held in France, UK, Italy and Spain that deals with all aspects of geographical indications. After his studies, Tonći worked at the Croatian certification body for organic agriculture and geographical indications for one year.

At the IFOAM EU policy unit his aim is to expand his understanding of the European vision for organic agriculture and other sustainability issues related to EU agriculture.

Tereza Maarova
Tereza joined the Projects Unit at IFOAM EU in June. She was previously developing human rights projects for organisations based in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa region and coordinating the operations of an education leadership programme in Slovakia. Her goal now is to enhance her project management skills, while learning more about organic agriculture, so as to contribute to sustainable development.

Tereza holds a master’s in development and emergency practice from Oxford Brookes University. She also studied architecture at the undergraduate level where she focused on participatory approaches to green design and post-disaster reconstruction. Her interests range from climate change adaptation to rights-based and community-led strategies. She has diverse experiences within these themes in Europe, the USA, Colombia, Tunisia, Singapore and Cambodia. She is also currently writing op-eds on climate and environmental policy for the Politheor European Policy Network.
OFFER FOR IFOAM EU MEMBERS: 3 MONTHS FREE ACCESS TO ALL ARTICLES ON ORGANIC-MARKET.INFO

organic-market.info – the online magazine for the international organic market – was a media partner at the 10th European Organic Congress in the Netherlands and have produced video coverage and reports of the event, as well as interviews.

organic-market.info is now offering IFOAM EU members* free access to this coverage and 3 months free access to all articles on www.organic-market.info.

To get the free access:
• Go to: http://organic-market.info/ifoam-eu
• Sign up using the form
• You will receive a username, password and link to the European Organic Congress coverage

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Make full use of this opportunity and check out organic-market.info – we look forward to your interest in us and we hope you’ll find your free access very rewarding!

* Applies to IFOAM EU members who are not already subscribed to organic-market.info
3 EVENTS

3.1 REVIEW OF EVENTS

WHO PAYS FOR SEEDS?

25 May, Brussels, Belgium

Organic plant breeding and its potential for development were the key points at the recent Who pays for seeds conference organised by Demeter in cooperation with IFOAM EU and held at European Economic and Social Committee with the support of Dilyana Slavova, President of the Section of External Relations of the European Economic and Social Committee.

Johannes Wirz, author of the Who pays for seeds study, spoke about how organic plant breeding is currently financed and emphasized that currently the majority of funding comes from foundations. Green German MEP Maria Heubuch spoke of the current seed laws, the resulting consolidation of the market and its impact. She highlighted the need for more research funding and the need to end patents on plants, which is supported by the Parliament. The factors preventing the development of the organic plant breeding sector – the existing legislation and the lack of financing – were further discussed by Andreas Biesantz, Head of the Demeter EU Liaison Office.

The seed legislation, its impact on organic seed use and the development of the organic plant breeding sector are important for IFOAM EU and the organic movement. Therefore, IFOAM EU is continuing to advocate for a new seed legislation and for sufficient EU research funding.

For an overview of the main ideas, please read our new brochure

SUSTAINABLE FOOD SUMMIT

9–10 June, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Sustainable ingredients, food waste and marketing developments were featured in the 8th European edition of the Sustainable Foods Summit in Amsterdam. Like previous editions, the summit brought together leading organisations involved in eco-labels and sustainability in the food industry.

The programme was rich and featured discussions on the implications of COP21 on the European food industry, developments in sustainable seafood and livestock production, food losses, consumers’ incentives to undertake sustainable purchases and responsible consumption.

Following COP21, food companies and retailers are facing growing pressure to reduce greenhouse gases; the food industry is responsible for a quarter of all such emissions, with most coming from livestock products.

Leading pasta company Barilla presented what practical steps can be taken to reduce emissions from wheat production. The company Seamore presented their successful initiative to market pasta made out of seaweed, and the health benefits associated. A consultant to the salmon aquaculture industry explained how the realisation that a reputation problem for one of the producers would inevitably turn into a problem for the whole industry, led them to cooperate to improve the sustainability of their operations and to engage in transparency towards consumers because.

Elisabeth Laville from French consultant Utopies highlighted that, as consumers’ demand for transparency is getting stronger, it was not enough for companies to claim to be sustainable on one range of products, or on a single ingredient, and that they should not be afraid of transparency and should communicate to consumers on how they plan to improve the sustainability of their whole business.

Since 2009, the Sustainable Foods Summit has been discussing leading issues the food industry faces concerning sustainability and eco-labels, such as Organic, Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance, etc. The aim of the Sustainable Foods Summit is to explore new horizons for eco-labels and sustainability in the food industry by discussing key industry issues.
DEMONSTRATION OF CLIMATE-FRIENDLY FARMING PRACTICES
24 June, Gut Krauscha, Neißeaue, Germany

A SOLMACC project field day gave visitors the opportunity to learn about climate-friendly farming practices on the Gut Krauscha farm in Neißeaue, Germany. There were presentations of the first results of the climate mitigation and adaptation practices implemented at Gut Krauscha, as well as field visits during which the climate-friendly practice of composting was explained and discussed with the participants.

“We have been thinking about how to improve our nutrient cycles for more than four years,” Hans-Joachim Mautschke, the farmer at Gut Krauscha, said. That is why he decided to participate in the SOLMACC project and implement climate-friendly practices including composting.

The Common Agricultural Policy and the importance of climate-friendly farming in the EU and worldwide was presented by Green MEP Martin Häusling.

Visit the SOLMACC website to learn more about the project and the participating farms or read the latest SOLMACC newsletter.

MEETING ON NEW GMOs
27 June, Brussels, Belgium

The Civil Society Forum of the SYNENERGENE project on Responsible Research and Innovation in Synthetic Biology gathered national biosafety experts, representatives from DG Research and DG Environment and NGOs, including IFOAM EU, who explored the EU decision-making process with regard to the international negotiations on biosafety in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Substances such flavourings produced via synthetic biology are already on the market, and even sometimes marketed as “natural”, but are not currently regulated.
HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE AGRISPIN CROSS-VISIT IN ITALY

21–24 June, Cilento region, Italy

In Italy, an innovative partnership between organic farmers, local governments, catering and hospitality industries have led to the creation of bio-districts – regional networks that promote short supply chains, preserve local traditions and resources, and support rural development. In June 2016 the Agrispin project team explored how this partnership works in the Cilento region, the home place of the very first bio-district.

At the visit to the Felice Maio farm the participants learned how organic farming, agri-tourism, traditional cuisine and eco-trekking can be combined to preserve the cultural heritage of the region and contribute to rural development. Tenuta Vannulo, an innovative organic buffalo farm, showcased technical innovation and an entrepreneurial approach that led to the development of a successful “0 km” business encompassing mozzarella & yoghurt production, handcrafted leather accessories and a museum of rural life.

At the final symposium, the Agrispin team and local actors, including the mayor of Cilento, exchanged their impressions and observations on how to develop the bio-district concept further. The final report from the visiting team will be available soon on the Agrispin website.

Read more about the visits

Participants to the Agrispin project met in Cilento to explore how the Bio-district works in practice.

Agrispin partners interview Antonio Palmieri, the innovator behind Tenuta Vannula organic buffalo farm.

Salvatore Basile, the president of international network of Eco-Regions, explains how the first bio-district emerged in Cilento.
4 MAKING EUROPE MORE ORGANIC – SUPPORT IFOAM EU

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• Fighting the expansion of GMO use in Europe and protecting organic farmers and producers from contamination

You can help MAKE EUROPE MORE ORGANIC

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### 5 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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<td>La terre est notre métier</td>
<td>Retiers, France</td>
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<td>29 September</td>
<td>Innovative Farmers Day</td>
<td>Sheepdrove Organic Farm, United Kingdom</td>
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<td>12 October</td>
<td>European Food Research Area</td>
<td>The SQUARE, Brussels</td>
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<td>October</td>
<td>IFOAM EU seed experts meeting</td>
<td>To be decided</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>IFOAM EU Farmers meeting</td>
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<td>22–24 October</td>
<td>Natexpo</td>
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