

International Federation  
of Organic Agriculture Movements  
EU Regional Group

Janez Potočnik  
Commissioner for Environment  
European Commission  
Brussels

Brussels, 18 June 2014

### **Organic food in green public procurement can drive EU sustainable consumption policy**

Dear Mr Potočnik,

Ahead of the launch of the European Commission's Communication on Sustainable Food and following discussions at Green Week 2014 IFOAM EU wishes to highlight the need for the EU to make solid investments in the delivery of sustainable consumption and production outcomes to 2020. In particular the new EU Organic Action Plan<sup>1</sup> can be used as a source of inspiration for embedding green public procurement (GPP) actions and recommendations in the Commission's development of sustainable consumption policy.

Both EU policymakers and international experts acknowledge the critical contribution that the purchasing power of national and regional authorities in food makes to the development of sustainable consumption and production. These authorities can play a crucial role in helping to expand agro-ecological approaches and organic farming.<sup>2</sup> Across the EU there are already a number of examples in Member States and regions where efforts are being made to increase the use of organic food in public procurement contracts.<sup>3</sup> These examples show the huge potential for the further development of agro-ecological approaches, which can increase the sustainability of farming and improve EU citizens experience and understanding of healthy eating. At the same time policy measures and interventions, backed by sufficient financial means, at national and regional level, are critical to help establish and stimulate high quality organic school meals systems.

To this end we call on the Commission to ensure that GPP is at the heart of the upcoming Communication on Sustainable Food and to make sure that the new Organic Action Plan is used to promote a real circular economy and resource efficiency agenda. This should include:

- Prioritisation of GPP, including organic food sourcing, in the Commission's forthcoming Communication on Sustainable Food Consumption to support the development of production and organic supply chains in Member States and regions on a progressive basis to 2020 (**Actions 3 and 5**)
- Encouragement of Member States to set targets for public canteens to commit to offering at least one organic meal under the revision of the EU's GPP criteria for Food and Catering Services in 2015 (**Action 5**). The use of organic food during the Commission's Green Week is a

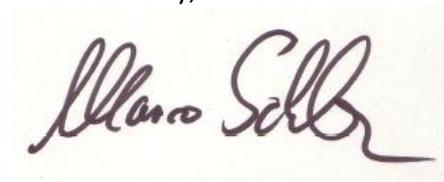
welcome step in the right direction, but the EU institutions must be bolder and lead by example by increasing the share of organic food in all of their procurement policies.

- Support for the development of organic food supply chains through new rural development programmes and EU information and promotional programmes as well as the forthcoming revision of the CAP Fruit and Milk schemes (**recommendations accompanying Actions 1 and 2**).
- Advancement of the development of sustainable food solutions, including GPP, under Horizon 2020, the ERA-Net and/or Joint Programming instruments and the European Innovation Partnership for Agriculture (**Actions 6 and 7**).

Finally we also enclose hard copies of two publications that may be of interest to you. The first on [Organic in Europe](#) provides a snapshot of EU public policy and implementation as well as the latest trends in organic farming market development across Europe and the second on [best practice examples of innovation agriculture](#) including examples of GPP initiatives.

We trust you will carefully consider our recommendations and help to implement all relevant actions and recommendations, and making full use of the spirit of the new Action Plan to support organics as a leading model for sustainable food solutions across the EU.

Yours sincerely,



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Director IFOAM EU

Cc: Janez Potočnik, Commissioner for Environment  
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<sup>1</sup> European Commission. 2014. Action Plan for the future of Organic Production in the European Union.

<sup>2</sup> De Schutter, O., 2014. The Power of Procurement: Public Purchasing in the Service of Realizing the Right to Food. Briefing Note 8. New York: United Nations. Available at: [http://www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/otherdocuments/20140514\\_procurement\\_en.pdf](http://www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/otherdocuments/20140514_procurement_en.pdf); European Commission. (2012). GPP, Green Public Procurement: a collection of good practices. European Commission

<sup>3</sup> For example Ambitious targets are set out under Denmark's national Organic Action Plan for all public canteens to procure 60% of organic food by 2020. In Italy organic food sourcing is prioritised in several regional school food programmes. In 2010 there about 1m dishes school dishes with organic ingredients with organic food account for about 40% of the school food consumption. See Løes, A. et al., 2011. *Innovative Public Organic food Procurement for Youth (iPOPY) - Final report*. Tingvoll: Bioforsk Organic Food and Farming. Available at: [https://djfextranet.agrsci.dk/sites/coreorganic\\_ipopy/public/Documents/iPOPY\\_final%20report.pdf](https://djfextranet.agrsci.dk/sites/coreorganic_ipopy/public/Documents/iPOPY_final%20report.pdf)