

PRESS RELEASE

EU Organic Regulation must support sector development, not hamper its growth

Nuremberg, Germany, 11 February 2015 – On the opening day of the world’s leading organic fair, EU policymakers and organic stakeholders met to discuss the future of the organic regulation at the EU Policy Day organised by IFOAM EU & BioFach. The message from the organic movement was clear: Organic is the only sustainable food and farming concept regulated at EU level and despite ongoing financial crisis still shows continuous growths in Europe. The organic regulation must therefore support the dynamic development of the sector and not threaten its growth.

Policy makers echoed sector demand to find constructive solutions: The new European Agriculture Commissioner, Phil Hogan, promised a fresh look and a new, solutions-oriented approach in his keynote address to the opening ceremony. Key EU policymakers repeated their commitment to listen to the sector’s needs. European Parliament rapporteur, Green MEP Martin Häusling, stated: “We don’t want a complete revision of the EU organic regulation, but a reform that will work in practice. This is our ambition in the Parliament.” Armands Krauze, Parliamentary Secretary of Ministry of Agriculture and Latvian Member of Parliament, restated the importance of a growing organic sector in Europe because it contributes to the delivery of the goals of the Latvian Council Presidency - sustainability, competitiveness and growth.

“However, we must remember that it’s not only about deciding on the political questions. We also must ensure that in the end there is a technically sound regulation that also simplifies the daily life for operators. At the moment, it seems that EU institutions underestimate the time needed to ensure this. IFOAM EU has offered its expertise to help get this right. But it is not possible to achieve this by June 2015,” said Sabine Eigenschink, IFOAM EU Vice President.

Per Kølster, Chairman of Organic Denmark said “the quality of the final proposal is of critical importance and this must not be compromised in the interests of speed.” He also emphasised that the sector must look to the future and think how standards could reach higher to take account of new issues and new concerns.

“It is good that the Commission has acknowledged the problems with their proposal” stated Christopher Stopes, IFOAM EU President, “There are IFOAM EU solutions on the table. We take up the offer from the EU institutions to deliver concrete solutions and are eager to continue the work with them on the practical way forward.”

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IFOAM EU represents more than 160 member organizations in the EU-28, the EU accession countries and EFTA. Member organizations span the entire organic food chain and beyond: from farmers and processors organisations, retailers, certifiers, consultants, traders and researchers to environmental and consumer advocacy bodies.