Newsletter No 55, May 2012
International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements EU Group - IFOAM EU Group
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Welcome note

Dear friends,

organic farming started as a grassroots movement, as a kind of agreement between farmers and consumers. Today, in the XXI century, the organic market is on a totally different level: specialised organic shops, organic supermarkets and internet shopping, products from all continents, available all year round. With this globalising trend, it is a real pleasure to also meet personally from time to time: The “Organic Marketing Forum - International Meeting on Processing and Marketing of Organic Products and Raw Materials” in Warsaw this month provided such a networking possibility. For seven years already, traders and producers can meet each other in the context of this Forum. With 350 organic producers, traders, importers and farmers from 26 countries it was the biggest organic marketing event in Central and Eastern Europe. The IFOAM EU Group once again held the patronage of the event.

One of the workshops at the Organic Marketing Forum (OMF) was organised by the IFOAM EU Group and discussed the environmental performance of organic processing. Consumers expect organic to be sustainable in all aspects, also in storage, distribution and processing. IFOAM EU’s internal processor sector group has suggested a progressive model to reach this target by monitoring one’s environmental performance and annual successive improvements. In the hot discussion among the workshop participants it was pointed out that in the “East” the real reason for saving energy and water was economic, rather than environmental reasons as in the “West”. Economy and ecology should not be seen as contradiction, though. In an organic market, ecology and economy have to go together. By exchanging our views, as in the OMF, we can reach solutions acceptable to us all.

There are already excellent examples of the development of organic production and trade between Eastern and Western companies: the Polish company BioConcept Gardenia and the Dutch company Ariza together promote the traditional production of berry fruits by small family farms in the Lower Carpathian district with the products sold successfully in Europe and USA. The same certification system in the EU’s 27 Member States enables free trade of organic products without barriers. We are also only a few days away from the biggest opening of organic markets in the world: on 01st June 2012 the agreement between the EU and USA will come into force. We are looking forward to the results of the changes this will have on the global organic market and expect to see its impact in the richness of tasty organic products available in the organic shop around the corner.

Personally, as a consumer, I would be glad to be able to buy the delicious Moldovan organic herbal cheese “Queen” in Poland, which received the “Best of Organic” award by visitors to the OMF. This will depend on the development of practical solutions by the certification system and on the decisions of the European Commission on imports from third countries. I encourage all colleagues from countries with emerging markets to follow the best practice examples from these countries where the organic markets are well established for years. Let’s grow euro-leaves all over Europe and all over the world.

Yours Dorota Metera,
IFOAM EU Vice president
1. NEWS FROM IFOAM EU WORKING FIELDS

1.1. Organic Regulation

**Expert group meeting on controls and imports**

One of IFOAM EU Group’s priorities in 2012 is to work out positions on the twin issues of controls and importing. In this context, an expert workshop was held on 3rd May 2012 in Brussels involving 15 experts in the areas of farming, certification, trading, standards setting and research.

The experts were invited to give their views on possible ways that the regulation could be developed to improve controls in light of the recent fraud cases, and to ensure that controls on imported products maintain similar high standards.

In terms of fraud prevention, the group discussed the possibility of using electronic certificate systems and making them available to Control Bodies (CBs) and the public. This would involve storing data on operators and their products and volumes and ensuring that certifiers and operators check this database before purchasing organic ingredients. The wide variety of options available under risk-based inspections to enable concentration of controls on the riskiest sectors of organic production and trade were also discussed.

The sub-group working on imports recommended requesting the publication of the standards used by CBs and states approved under the equivalence assessments, and for improved consistency in the ways that CBs and states outside the EU are assessed for their controls.

The findings will be worked into clear recommendations for change by the IFOAM EU Group’s task force on Import and Control and presented to the Commission at the Advisory Group on Organic Farming (AGOF) meeting in June.

**New regulation dossier now available in 4 languages!**

The IFOAM EU Group dossier on the organic regulation: *European Organic Regulations (EC) 834/2007, 889/2008 and 1235/2008 - An evaluation of the first three years - Looking for further development* is now available in **English, German, Italian and Spanish**.

The dossier provides detailed insight into the organic regulation and contributes to the recently-launched debate on the future of the organic regulation.

IFOAM EU Group letter on Annexes I, II and XII of Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 to the European Commission


While the IFOAM EU Group supports most of the proposed changes to annex I and II, more details are needed on biogas digestates and believes the inclusion of sapropel in annex I should not be allowed.

Furthermore, the IFOAM EU Group supports the need to improve organic certificates to solve problems of interpretation in some Member States on the differences between organic in-conversion and non-organic products.

In the letter, the IFOAM EU Group also requests that attention should be given to the ORGIN (Organic Input Evaluation) project. The transparent criteria in the project documents produced should be used to evaluate the acceptability of new inputs in EU organic production by EGTOP and Member States.

Updated position on poultry production and rearing

IFOAM EU Group has published its updated position on poultry production and rearing in May 2012. This contributes to the Commission’s intention to develop detailed EU rules on poultry production.

New approach to electronic certificate for organic production

An initiative for electronic certification called bioC is now available online, where organic producers can register and be listed. The initiative aims to provide a complete register of certified organic enterprises in Germany, and extend to the rest of Europe in the medium term. Enterprises, which are listed at bioC (www.bioc.info) can gather information on their suppliers at this platform and will be informed if a certain supplier is no longer listed at bioC. bioC was initiated by nine German and Austrian control bodies, BÖLW, FiBL Germany and bioC-inventor Ulrich Fischer. It is a good example of innovative approaches of information exchange on certification and the use of “electronic certificates”.

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Commission report on Organic Regulation highlights achievements and future opportunities

On 11th May 2012 the European Commission published its report to the Council on the application of the Organic Regulation (EC) No 834/2007. This Commission report focuses on the simplification and scope of the regulation, managing imports and controls, approaches towards GMOs and co-existence, as well as the functioning of the internal market. It opens the debate among stakeholders on the further development of the EU organic regulation.

The Commission report is the first in a series of steps evaluating the regulation, and will be the subject of discussion in the Commission, the Council, the European Parliament and among all organic stakeholders. This review will be supported by an evaluation to be completed by independent experts and may be concluded with specific legal proposals to amend Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 at the end of 2013.

The first occasion for a debate with stakeholders will be the Advisory Group on Organic Farming (AGOF) on 12th June 2012 in Brussels.

Have a look at the Commission report, also in other languages, as well as the IFOAM EU Press release on the report.
**GREENING THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY**
**IFOAM EU GROUP CALLING FOR A FAIR, SMARTER AND GREENER CAP**

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**IFOAM EU calls for a more open transparency legislative process on the CAP**

The IFOAM EU Group and a number of health, consumer, environmental and development NGOs sent an *open letter* to the President of the European Parliament Martin Schultz on 08th May, calling for more open and transparent decision-making in the European Parliament in the CAP legislative process. The letter added that a more inclusive process is needed that includes all MEPs and sets clear and strict deadlines for reports, the debate of amendments, as well as sufficient time for debates and discussions in plenary. In addition, the open letter was sent to the leaders of all political groups and the chairs of parliamentary committees. The letter was also distributed to all MEPs.

The IFOAM EU Group office is currently meeting with several MEPs and officials from the Member States’ permanent representations in Brussels in order to raise awareness about the role organic farming can and should play within the new CAP framework.

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**Experts discuss the multiple benefits of sustainable cropping systems at IFOAM EU conference**

Policy-makers need a more temporal approach (crop rotation) to cropping systems rather than the spatial approach (crop diversification), as envisaged under the current proposals according to Christine Watson of the Scottish Agricultural College. Speaking at an IFOAM EU conference on Crop Rotation and Legume Cultivation, organised in partnership with Friends of the Earth Europe and the Pesticide Action Network in the European Parliament on the 29th May, Watson challenged policy-makers to place long-term benefits rather than short-term gains at the heart of farm policy. The event hosted by Socialist MEP Karin Kadenbach and Green MEP Martin Häusling brought together agricultural scientists, farmers and other stakeholders to address the role of sustainable cropping systems as a means to lift the environmental performance and economic resilience of farming.
IFOAM EU launches “Good Food March” to Brussels
IFOAM EU in partnership with other farming groups and civil society organisations has launched a call for farmers, citizens and young people across Europe to take part in the “Good Food March” to Brussels to demand a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) that responds to the needs of all farmers and society. A number of events, actions and protests will take place during the march, culminating in a Good Food Brunch and CAP conference organised by Slow Food Europe and ARC 2020 on 19th September. Further information can be found here.

ARC 2020 rejects Council attempts by Member States to water down greening
ARC 2020 has come out strongly against the attempts by Member States to water down the greening component proposed under the CAP legislative proposals. In a press release published on 02nd May, ARC slammed the Council’s ambush on greening declaring that “a reform without greening would have no meaning!” Arguing that an à la carte approach to EU agricultural policy would weaken the common principles and create further distortions across Member States, ARC 2020 called on national governments to work constructively to develop the Commission proposals to ensure the long-term ecological, social and economic viability of European farming and rural communities.

European Parliament calls for an environmentally and socio-economically sound CAP
Draft Opinions prepared for the Environment Committee (COMENVI) in the European Parliament have called for stronger greening measures under the first pillar and a more targeted ecologically-sound and socio-economically oriented measures, including the development of organic food and farming in order to lift the environmental performance of European agriculture and respond proactively to the needs and livelihoods of farming and rural communities. The draft opinions on Direct Payments and Rural Development prepared by Danish Socialist MEP Daniel Jørgensen and Austrian Socialist MEP Karin Kadenbach were presented to COMENVI on 07th May. Amendments tabled on 16th May will be considered in June before the Opinions are voted on by the Committee.

COMAGRI drafts reports to be published in June
The draft reports from the Agriculture Committee (COMAGRI) on direct payments, rural development, the single CMO and horizontal measures will be presented to COMAGRI on 18th and 19th June.
Rapporteur outlines his intentions on CAP reform

Publicly, the Portuguese MEP Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos, who is the rapporteur on direct payments and rural development dossiers, has stated that Member States should have the ability to tailor green measures to their national and regional circumstances and that the greening component should not be linked to basic payments, with farmers who fail to comply with greening still receiving basic payments. In the case of crop diversification, Mr Capoulas Santos has argued that the proposed measure should be based on 2 crops rather than 3 and that farms above 20ha should be required to fulfil ecological focus area requirements. He added that the emphasis should also be on the development of ecological corridors. The rapporteur has also outlined support for the capping of direct aid and greater flexibility between the direct payment and rural development funding, which would include the transfer of the already diminishing rural development budget to the first pillar.

Commission proposes new definitions and further flexibility for greening

The European Commission has acknowledged the likelihood that farmers taking part in agri-environmental schemes or participating in environmental certification schemes could be considered as meeting part of the greening requirements. In a leaked concept paper on greening prepared on the eve of 14th and 15th May, the Commission outlined that such considerations could only apply to farmers where the entire farm was under such a scheme, the scope of environmental ambition of such a scheme goes beyond the greening component and the agri-environment or climate measures practised are equivalent to the proposed greening measures.

Elsewhere, environmental NGOs including Birdlife International welcomed a proposal in the paper to review the definition of permanent grassland to include areas of farmland which contain non-herbaceous plants such as trees, shrubs and vines. The paper also suggested that hectareage requirements for crop diversification could be increased from 3ha to between 3 and 10ha, while farms of less than 50ha, which have a significant proportion of their land covered by permanent or temporary grassland could be exempt from crop diversification entirely.
Farm Ministers call for watering down of the greening component

Following proposals by a number of Member States (the so-called Stockholm Group) to water down the greening component, many farm ministers remained firm in calling for a more flexible approach to greening at the AGRI-FISH Council on 14th and 15th May. At the meeting, almost half of farm ministers called for an à la carte approach to greening by enabling Member States to choose from a menu of greening measures which reflect their regional or national circumstances. Others pushed for greater flexibility and subsidiarity in the design and implementation of measures under the first pillar, while some delegations argued that greening could be better achieved through more targeted, multiannual measures under the second pillar. There was also robust opposition from a number of Member States to reduce the basic direct payment for farmers who failed to meet their greening requirements, while many Member States outlined a strong preference for farmers who take part in agri-environmental measures under rural development, or are predominantly grassland based, situated on Natura sites, or have integrated production systems to be considered as “green by definition” and to automatically receive greening payments.

EU Farm Commissioner rejects demands to throw the baby out with the bathwater

Addressing the Council session, Commissioner Cioloş argued that the principle of flexibility should not be used to water down the concept of greening. He rejected specific calls from Ministers for greater flexibility, arguing that a more uniform system was required. Referring to the Commission concept paper on greening, he acknowledged, however, that such a system could take into account and recognise equivalent measures that farmers are applying through agri-environmental schemes under the second pillar as part of their fulfilment of greening.

Environmental NGOs come out strong against direction of Council discussions

Elsewhere, environmental NGOs including the European Environmental Bureau, Birdlife International and WWF have come out strongly against the proposals put forward by farm ministers in Brussels.

Development of debate on CAP ahead of Farm Council in June

Reports suggest that the Commissioner is keen to work with the Council’s working groups and committees over the coming weeks in order for delegations to be able to agree on a greening provision at the next Council meeting in June. Farm ministers are scheduled to meet on 18th and 19th June to debate the proposals for the reform of the rural development framework. The Council meeting will also see tabling of a CAP reform progress report by the Danish Presidency ahead of new Cypriot Presidency in July.
Committee of the Regions calls for fairer distribution and greater flexibility under the new CAP

Members of the Committee of the Regions have called for a fairer distribution of direct aid, but greater greening flexibility for Member States under the new CAP in their Opinion on the legislative proposals adopted on 04th May. While the Opinion stresses that direct payments should be capped at 200,000 euro rather than 300,000 euro, with reductions starting from 100,000 euro rather than 150,000 euro, members rejected a harmonised approach to the greening, agreeing instead that regions should have more power to decide which greening measures are more appropriate for their circumstances and to set the threshold for agricultural land under ecological focus. Elsewhere, the Opinion argues that a “protein plan” should be developed by the Commission to increase domestic protein crops for animal feed, reduce nitrogen fertilisers and improve soil fertility.

Il Buono Bio – CAP event in Italy

“Il Buono Bio, la PAC che Vogliamo” (the good organic, the CAP we want) was the title of the event held in Italy as part of the IFOAM EU CAP INFO Project.

On 26th April the IFOAM EU Group together with AIAB (Italian Association for Organic Farming) organised an event in Rome to present a brochure explaining to consumers and farmers why the CAP matters to them. Following the presentation, on April 27th, a half-day conference was organised in Rome in order to discuss the topics of the new CAP 2014-2020 and the rural development plan. The conference, organised with the support of the European Community – DG Agriculture and Rural Development, involved more than hundred participants, including consumers, producers, regional producer organisations, environmental organisations, labour unions, trade unions and civil society organisations.

IFOAM EU videoclip on CAP

IFOAM EU Group has produced a videoclip on the reform of the CAP. The five-minute movie features organic stakeholders from various countries speaking about the pressing problems of mainstream agriculture, the solutions that organic farming has to offer and the demands of the IFOAM EU Group with regard to the CAP reform. The production of this movie has been made possible by the financial support of the European Community, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development.

The movie is available online and has been distributed widely. Feel free to use it for your own work on organic food and farming or on the CAP.
Public consultation on animal cloning for food production

The European Commission has designed a questionnaire for EU citizens interested in participating on the discussion about new rules for animal cloning in food production in the EU which will remain open until 3rd September 2012.

This consultation is the continuation of the debate on animal cloning in Europe after the European Parliament and Council could not find a compromise on the previous Commission proposal for Novel Food. The IFOAM EU Group calls for a ban on the cloning of animals for food production, and on the import and sale of imported food products from cloned animals and their offspring, as well as the import of semen and embryos of cloned animals. See IFOAM EU’s official position in its previous letters.

European Innovation Partnership on Water

On 10th of May, the European Commission released its communication on the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on Water. This new EIP is one of the five already initiated by the Commission as part of its Europe 2020 strategy. As regards agriculture, this new EIP complements the EIP on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability that was launched in February. The EIP on Water contains three work packages, of which the one on Rural Water Management is the most important for the agricultural sector. The work package will address the interface between water management (quality and quantity) at the farm level and the allocation of water resources to agriculture at the catchment and water body level, and the permissible pressures on water quality.

The IFOAM EU Group welcomes the Commission’s Communication on the EIP on Water as an opportunity to improve knowledge for sustainable water management also in agriculture and food systems, but calls for more participatory and system approaches such as organic farming to improve the sustainability of water use. IFOAM EU regrets that the communication puts a lot of emphasis on the market of water-related innovations, while the people that should adopt the innovation are missing. Given the importance of agricultural practices for water quality and quantity, it is essential that farmers receive adequate information and training regarding the sustainable use of water resources. Important lessons can be learnt from organic farming that has already proven its potential for innovation to prevent water pollution and to cope with drought or excessive rainfall.
**Rio+20 Earth Summit in June**
Since the first Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 the world has been facing new challenges such as climate change, loss of biodiversity, the depletion of natural resources and food security.

**Rio+20 and organic farming:** The European Parliament in its **resolution** on Rio+20 emphasises that “there is an urgent need to promote small-scale sustainable, organic agriculture in the context of poverty eradication, recognising that appropriate low-impact, multifunctional farming systems employing traditional seed stands already exist and should be promoted”. However, the **Rio+20 zero draft** does not mention organic food and farming. Therefore, IFOAM calls for an explicit link between food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture.

The Council of Environmental Ministers emphasised in its **conclusions of October 2011** that Rio+20 should promote global cooperative action in key sectors such as water and food and agriculture.

For the EU soil policy, Rio+20 might offer a chance to bring some fresh impetus for an appropriate legal framework to implement the “zero net rate of land degradation” target, with the EU soil directive still in a **Council deadlock at present**. In this regard, the latest report of the **SOILSERVICE project** (April 2012), points out yet again that soil degradation is widespread in the EU: “The SOILSERVICE project has quantified the negative impacts of the intensive arable cropping systems on soil ecosystem services due to loss of soil organic matter and soil biodiversity”.

**Seed diversity in need of help**
A broad coalition of over 240 civil society organisations and enterprises from 40 countries around the world urged European leaders to reverse the disastrous decline in biodiversity in Europe in a letter and a press release sent on 24th May. In their Open Letter to the Members of the European Parliament and 7 European Commissioners, the NGOs argue that the present review of the legislation on the marketing of Seed and Propagating Material (S&PM) represents a unique opportunity to make the long overdue move towards a sustainable European seed policy that contributes to the protection and improvement of biodiversity and the environment, that takes into account consumers’ interest in diversity of food and in the availability of healthy food, and that responds to needs of small-scale farmers and gardeners for locally-adapted seeds.

For more information, see **www.seedforall.org** and the corresponding **Press release** in English, French and German.
HORIZON 2020 Roundtable for a more sustainable and fairer knowledge society

The Horizon 2020 NGO alliance, of which the IFOAM EU Group is an essential part, invites members of the European Parliament (EP) and representatives from the European Commission (EC), research institutes and NGOs to discuss their demands for a strong involvement of civil society in research programmes. Currently, proposals for the new European framework programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon 2020, still focus primarily on the interests of big industrial players. With our society facing immense ecological, social and economic challenges, the time for “business as usual” is over, and new inclusive and participatory approaches are needed.

The roundtable will take place on 7th June from 12.00 to 15.00 hrs in the European Parliament in Brussels.

Registration is compulsory by June 5, 12.00.

The full programme of the roundtable as well as the registration details can be found on the website of TP Organics.

Update on Horizon 2020

TP Organics is still participating in the discussion on Horizon 2020 in order to give a voice to the organic sector and to ensure a better future for organic agriculture. After having achieved the extremely important goal of having two speakers at the Hearing of the ITRE Committee on Horizon 2020, TP Organics also finalised its amendments on the legislative proposal of Horizon 2020. Therefore, as next step, at the end of May, the staff of TP Organics will undertake a new round of lobby meetings at the European Parliament with the rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs of Horizon 2020 in order to promote the vision and the ideas of the platform. The deadline to present the amendments to the ITRE Committee has been set for 6th June.

Further information on the work of TP Organics can be found on the TP Organics website.
IFOAM EU takes part in Agro-Ecological Innovation: from best practice exchange to policy frameworks

The EU has put innovation at the heart of its policies, but the focus has often been limited to high-tech innovation, neglecting the complexity of problems and the diversity of possible solutions. Many research projects only involve formal research institutes and universities, thereby denying the innovation potential of other actors. Agricultural research is no exception.

Despite this, it is possible to identify examples of bottom-up initiatives where formal research institutes have engaged with civil society networks or individual farmers and enterprises. Such approaches are common in agro-ecological research. Agro-ecology aims to make effective use of biodiversity and other ecological services such as nutrient cycling, whilst establishing trust between producers and consumers, and contributing to the fair development of rural areas.

It is this kind of innovation that IFOAM EU, together with TP Organics and ARC 2020, addresses as lead partner in the project Agro-Ecological Innovation: from best practice exchange to policy frameworks, sponsored by Fondation de France and running from March to December.

As a first step in the project, the project partners launched a questionnaire. We are asking all stakeholders involved in the food and farming sector to share their experiences on best practices and obstacles to the exchange and use of agro-ecological knowledge by scientists and non-scientists. Whether you are a farmer, gardener, scientist, advisor, food chain operator, rural development initiative, environmental group or consumer organisation...we want to hear from you!

We estimate that it will take about 30 minutes of your time to fill in the questionnaire. We look forward to receiving your answers by 4th June 2012.

Thanks for your cooperation!
2. IFOAM EU GROUP OFFICE & INTERNAL STRUCTURE

2.1. IFOAM EU Group Internal Updates

**FAREWELL TO COMMUNICATION ASSISTANT STEPHEN TURNER (CA)**
In April the office of IFOAM EU bade farewell to its communication assistant Stephen Turner. Stephen joined the communication unit in January 2011 as a trainee and continued as a communication assistant from September 2011. From the beginning he demonstrated great interest and talent for design and editing softwares. He took over the task of designing the new-look IFOAM EU newsletter and established IFOAM EU’s representation in social media channels, such as facebook and twitter. As an English native speaker he also had the pleasure of proofreading various documents – a mission that he accomplished with his renowned calmness. He will be missed at IFOAM EU for both his relaxed and helpful personality, and his technical skills. The IFOAM EU Group wishes him all the best for his further professional career.

**NEW POLICY ASSISTANT:**
**TERESA ELOLA-CALDERON (ES)**
During my Law studies at the Autonomous University of Madrid, I got deeply interested in the structure and establishment of the European Union. I decided to go on with a Master’s degree in European Integration and International Relations at the University of Liege (Belgium) where I started my professional life as a researcher. For three years I had the great opportunity to focus on European governance and policies - mainly on environment and agriculture. After that, I supported the Belgian Presidency of the European Union (second half of 2010) and participated actively as a climate policy officer in the COP16 in Cancun. I recently joined the IFOAM EU Group as a policy assistant with a high motivation to learn more about organic and to combine both my passion for European issues and my professional experience in environmental matters. As part of the policy unit I will mainly deal with the 7th Environmental Action Programme, water and climate mitigation/adaptation policies.

**NEW COMMUNICATION TRaineE:**
**CHRYSA KARAGEORGIou (GR)**
I studied Balkan studies in Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece and completed a Master’s degree in Multilingual Communication with focus on International Relations at the Universite Libre de Bruxelles (ULB). During my studies in ULB I did an internship in the MUSTT Foundation as an assistant and when I finished my studies I did an internship in FORMULA EUROPA INSTITUTE as a country coordinator for development projects in SE Europe. I am currently also working in the Atelier Turtlewings in which I have the position of “Atelierista” where my responsibilities include organising and realising creative activities for children. At the beginning of May I started my internship at IFOAM EU in the communication department. In terms of personal interests I have always been keen on issues relating to social development, education, vulnerable groups and communications. Working as a communication trainee for IFOAM EU Group will give me the opportunity to explore the very interesting field of organic agriculture that has been unknown to me until now.

Teresa Elola-Calderon
Stephen Turner
Chrysa Karageorgiou
2.2. Sponsorship

Support IFOAM EU Group!
Next to membership fees, sponsoring is the only other financial input that can guarantee the carrying out of independent advocacy work and a proper presentation of the organic movement in Brussels.

To gain a wide number of sponsors, the IFOAM EU Group offers a variety of sponsorship options – there is at least one that will fit your needs!

The IFOAM EU Group will be pleased to jointly develop with you the best sponsoring option with you. An excellent way of gaining recognition on a European level for 2012 is supporting the **IFOAM EU-FiBL-AOEL Processors’ Conference in November 2012**. Get in contact with us for the fine-tuning of your sponsor ideas:

**LenaWietheger@ifoam-eu.org**
Tel: +32 2 808 79 91

Key Sponsor Presentation
**IFOAM EU key sponsors 2012: ARIZA, CAAE and ICEA/FECD**

ARIZA, CAAE and ICEA/FECD show their support for the work of IFOAM EU by a financial cooperation with IFOAM EU throughout the year 2012. Their money will be used to co-finance IFOAM EU events, projects and publications and is a highly valued contribution to our work.

IFOAM EU Sponsorship in Action!

Sponsorship awards at the 6th European Organic Congress

5th European Organic Congress

Processing Conference
THE ORGANIC VEGETABLE GARDEN OF EUROPE

Fresh fruits and vegetables from Andalusian organic production are high in demand and approximately 85% of products are exported, mainly to European markets. Spanish agri-food companies are enjoying great prestige at international level due to the security, quality and traceability of their products.

The companies are certified by various control systems of the highest quality requirements, going beyond the rules established at national and international level. In addition, the great majority of organic companies also comply with other guarantee systems, such as IFS, BRC, EUREPAGAP, ISO 9001:2000 (quality), ISO 14001:2004 (environment) or the UNE 155000 rules. The products are mainly destined for European countries, where the Spanish organic sector has its main markets. The reference mark for all these organic products is CAAE, leader in the Spanish and European organic sector with nearly one million certified hectares.

The CAAE Association is renown in the global organic sector, is part of the IFOAM EU Group and the LOA. Its main objective is the promotion and development of organic productions. Its activities include training, the further development of organic food trade, as well as internationalisation of all companies involved. Next to that it also fosters business initiatives and contacts by organising training programmes, discussion forums, roundtables, trade missions, attendance at trade fairs and site visits.

The CAAE Certification Service, subsidiary of the CAAE Association, is a board member of EOCC (European Organic Certifiers Council). Its services cover certification according to the European Regulation (Reg. EC 834/2007 and its application rules, as well as Reg. EC 889/2008 for plant protection products), and certifying its registered members under international standards: NOP, JAS, Bio Suisse, Naturland, Soil Association, KRAV, AB France, Biosiegel, BRC (British Retail Consortium), Global Gap, etc.
Andalusia, organic vegetable garden

Spain is leader in the production of organic products in Europe with 1.6 million hectares under organic management, and Andalusia is the main motor of the Spanish organic sector, accounting for more than 53% of the national organic surface. Approximately half of the surface dedicated to horticulture crops is located in Andalusia, where Granada ranks first, followed by Almeria. Almeria, Huelva and Malaga are important producers of citrus fruits.

Vegetables (1.68% of the cultivated surface in Spain), citrus fruits (0.89%) and fruit trees (0.82%) together represent 28% of the organic industry, the main industrial activity being precisely the processing and packaging of horticultural products (this represents 19.51% of industries related to vegetal production). The processing of canned food and plant juice account for 7.51% of national organic industries. As regards the market for those products, 85% of organic horticultural production is exported and, of the total exported, 90% is destined for direct consumption and only 10% is sold to the processing industry.

Horticultural products are economically important but in terms of surface in Andalusia, the main vegetal productions are cereals, pulses, industrial crops and fallow land, together 63,047 hectares, followed by olive groves with 49,420 hectares, and dried fruits (22,588 ha.). It is also worth mentioning the vineyards, of which the major part of production takes place in Castile-La Mancha (16,176.84 ha.). Andalusia only registers 534.03 hectares.

Regarding animal production, farms dedicated to beef cattle rank first at 1,351. In second place comes sheep production with 1,052 farms. In the beekeeping sector, which has a significant impact on the environment, a total of 64 farms are registered with 21,772 bee hives. The production and packaging of organic honey is the main animal production-related industrial activity with a total of 65 industries.

A total of 790 industries are registered in Andalusia, of which 555 are for vegetal production (olive oil production ranks first), 155 for animal production, 70 traders and 10 working in imports.

*All statistics from CAAE certified productions (data 2011).
3. EVENTS

3.1. Review of events

**Organic Marketing Forum 2012**

Also in 2012, the IFOAM EU Group held the patronage of the "Organic Marketing Forum - International Meeting on Processing and Marketing of Organic Products and Raw Materials (OMF)". The seventh OMF took place in Warsaw from 7th to 9th May. About 350 participants from 26 countries, mainly organic producers, traders, importers and farmers, enjoyed the networking opportunities and the discussion forum the conference provided.

In addition, the conference programme was well received, and the atmosphere among the visitors was very good. With these positive results the Forum could extend its position as the largest international branch meeting for the organic market sector in Central and Eastern Europe.

The IFOAM EU Group was also represented at the OMF 2012 with a workshop organised by its sector group on Organic Processing to stimulate cooperation of IFOAM EU & companies regarding rules for organic processing and pesticide residues in EU organic regulations. **Read more**

**IFOAM EU at ‘Organic Agriculture in Cyprus’ event**

On 5th May 2012, Marco Schlüter, director of the IFOAM EU Group, participated in the event “Organic Agriculture in Cyprus”. Marco Schlüter was a member of the opening panel in which he had the opportunity to introduce the work of the IFOAM EU Group in Brussels and to talk about the organic sector in Europe and especially Cyprus.

The director of the IFOAM EU Group and the Cypriot minister of agriculture Sofoclis Aletraris discussed the different common projects that will take place during the Cypriot EU Council Presidency, such as the common event called “Organic days in Cyprus” and the revision of the organic regulation by the European Commission.
IFOAM EU high-level delegation at AgroBalt 2012

IFOAM EU president Christopher Stopes and director Marco Schlüter were officially invited by the Lithuanian ministry to participate at the AgroBalt 2012 in Kaunas on 9th May. The IFOAM EU Group used this opportunity to discuss a possible cooperation during the Lithuanian EU Council Presidency in the second half of 2013 with vice-minister Mr. Mindaugas Kuklierius and officials from the Lithuanian ministry. The IFOAM EU Group underlined the potential of organic farming in the Baltic area, also in terms of common branding and market opportunities.

Further, the fair was used to present the work of the IFOAM EU Group to interested stakeholders and visitors of the Agrobalt. Director Marco Schlüter met organic stakeholders separately at roundtables in the Lithuanian Chamber of Agriculture to discuss the current status and challenges of organic farming in Lithuania. As a result of the meeting, the newly-founded Lithuanian organisation of Organic Farmers became member of the IFOAM EU Group.

IFOAM EU – Baltic seminar on capacity building

The IFOAM EU Group cooperated with the organic movements of Latvia and Estonia and with Aloja Starkelsen, Ltd. in organising a seminar for capacity-building in the organic sector. The seminar “Knowledge Transfer and Generation of Innovation in and for the Organic Sector” held 8–9 May, 2012 in Cēsis, Latvia, addressed various issues relevant to organic farming. The IFOAM EU representatives, president Christopher Stopes and director Marco Schlüter, provided an insider view into several EU policies to the approximately 50 participants, such as the EU-decision making process, the EU organic regulation, innovation policy, CAP and other IFOAM EU activities. The seminar was organised in the context of the project Balticorgpotato.

Sustaingas project kick-off

Project partners, including the IFOAM EU Group, met in Wels, Austria on 7th and 8th May for the kick-off meeting of the SUSTAINGAS project.

SUSTAINGAS aims at promoting sustainable biogas supply from organic farming. The meeting served to frame the project responsibilities and to concretely plan the work of the upcoming 6 moths. The visit of Gerhard Übleis delivered some practical insight into an organic farm-based biogas plant. More information will follow soon.
Green Week: The Organic Impact on Preserving Water

This year, Europe’s largest environmental forum had the leading theme “The Water Challenge - Every Drop Counts”. Over 3,000 participants, among them EU policy-makers, business representatives, researchers, civil society representatives, NGOs, and public bodies of the Member States met in the Charlemagne building of the European Commission to seek answers to the challenges associated with this valuable resource.

Issues such as how to safeguard the availability of good quality water against the backdrop of rapid population growth and climate change were addressed during the course of the event and at the 52-stand exhibition.

The week’s events will feed into the Blueprint to Safeguard Europe’s Water Resources, scheduled for release November this year. The EU will propose water efficiency to be one of the few top priority areas in which clear operational targets and concrete actions with agreed timeframes should be addressed at the Rio+20 Conference in early June, Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik stressed. The Blueprint, which has the long-term objective of ensuring the availability of good quality water for sustainable and equitable water use, will form the new EU policy response to the challenges surrounding water.

IFOAM EU was present with an attractive stand to represent the organic sector in Europe. A new roulette game was ideal to involve people and to spread information about how organic can strongly improve the conservation of high-quality water! Also the opportunity to experience concrete examples of organic products consisting primarily of water, such as juices, lemonade, fruits and vegetables, and lemon/mango/strawberry sorbet, provided by our sponsors (Pa-jottenlander, Bioshop, Biofresh, Boomgaard and Tijst-it), was well appreciated.

The event was not only an opportunity to inform the participants about the positive effects of organic agriculture on the preservation of water, but it was also the moment to meet people equally interested in water conservation and protection. As the Director General of DG Environment Karl Falkenberg said, “Water is literally a vital resource and human activity is having enormous impact on it. And we need to treat it with care”. It’s basic: for human and ecosystem health, clean water must be available for everyone!!
3.2. Preview of events

**Sustainable Foods Summit: June 7-8**
The Sustainable Foods Summit is a series of summits that focuses on the leading issues the food industry faces concerning sustainability and eco-labels, such as Organic, Fair-Trade, Rainforest Alliance, etc. For the fourth consecutive year, this time with the partnership of IFOAM EU Group, the European edition of the Sustainable Foods Summit will take place in Amsterdam on 7th-8th June 2012. Central themes are sustainable commodities and food authentication. With growing incidents of food fraud, the summit will discuss emerging technologies and modern tools to authenticate sustainable foods. Methods of de-commoditising ingredients/foods by sustainable methods will also be explored. Other topics will cover supply chain efficiency, novel distribution models, mobile technology, social impacts and marketing best-practices.

There will also be a pre-conference workshop that will highlight the business opportunities in the global market for organic products with the new organic equivalency agreement between the EU and the US.

Like previous events organised by Organic Monitor, the summit will bring together key stakeholders in the food industry and debate these major issues in a high-level forum.

**GMO free Regions Conference 2012 – 4th & 5th of September in Brussels**
The 7th GMO free regions conference will be held on 4th and 5th of September in Brussels. Central topics of the conference this year will be the upcoming seed legislation and the right to a national ban of GMO cultivation, the import of GM-soy in connection with the approaching European CAP reform, and the deficient risk assessment of GMOs by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Find the preliminary programme, as well as the details on registration and accommodation here.
**IFOAM EU Organic days in Cyprus**
The IFOAM EU Group would like to announce the “Organic Days in Cyprus” during the Cypriot EU Council Presidency, which will cover three individual events on 24th, 25th and 26th September at the Sun Hall Hotel, Larnaca, Cyprus. The Organic Days is the product of cooperation between the IFOAM EU Group, the Cyprus EU presidency, the European Commission, Pasybio and TP Organics.

- **Monday, 24 September:** Pre-conference Excursion – Rural economy and society in Cyprus – challenges and opportunities  
  **Organiser:** Cyprus EU Council Presidency, IFOAM EU Group, European Commission, Pasybio

- **Tuesday, 25 September:** Organic and Low-Input Agriculture - Implementing Innovation to respond to EU Challenges  
  **Organiser:** European Commission, Cyprus EU Council Presidency in cooperation with the IFOAM EU Group & TP Organics

- **Wednesday, 26 September:** Future farming in times of climate change - Rural development and sustainable farming approaches for Mediterranean areas and beyond  
  **Organiser:** Cyprus EU Council Presidency, IFOAM EU Group, Pasybio

For more information please send us an email at: events@ifoam-eu.org

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**Conference announcement - Organic Food Processing**
The IFOAM EU Group, in collaboration with AoeL and FiBL Germany, is organising its 2nd Organic Food Processing Conference on 26th and 27th November 2012 in Oberursel-Frankfurt, Germany. The conference aims to discuss the current status and further developments of organic processing rules and practices, and extend this debate with topics of current concern, such as organic credibility and integrity.

The conference will offer the possibility to discuss below issues in the form of three workshops:

- Sustainability: Ecological and social performance of the organic food chain
- Quality: Careful processing and quality of processed organic foods
- Integrity: Credibility of the organic sector - certification, control requirements, traceability, imports

Organic businesses but also experts, including representatives from DG Agriculture and Rural Development, certifiers, scientists and NGOs are invited to participate in the debate.

The detailed conference programme and registration details will be available by the end of June 2012.
## 3.3. Calendar of events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 June 2012</td>
<td><strong>Roundtable Horizon 2020 for a more sustainable and fairer knowledge society</strong></td>
<td>Brussels, Belgium</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-8 June 2012</td>
<td><strong>Sustainable Foods Summit</strong></td>
<td>Amsterdam, The Netherlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-24 August 2012</td>
<td><strong>12th Congress of the European Society for Agronomy</strong></td>
<td>Helsinki, Finland</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-5 September 2012</td>
<td><strong>7th GMO free Europe Conference</strong></td>
<td>Brussels, Belgium</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-14 September 2012</td>
<td><strong>2nd IFOAM Animal Husbandry Conference</strong></td>
<td>Hamburg, Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>24-26 September 2012</td>
<td><strong>Organic Days in Cyprus</strong></td>
<td>Larnaca, Cyprus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-27 November 2012</td>
<td><strong>IFOAM EU Processing Conference</strong></td>
<td>Brussels, Belgium</td>
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Director-General for Environment of the European Commission Karl Falkenberg visits the IFOAM EU Group stand at the Brussels Green Week on May 24.

The IFOAM EU Group acknowledges the financial support of the European Community, DG Environment throughout the year 2012. The sole responsibility lies with the IFOAM EU Group, and the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided by IFOAM EU Group.

This newsletter exists to inform IFOAM members about the work of the IFOAM EU Group and its liaison and coordination office in Brussels. The IFOAM EU Group is the European Regional Group of the worldwide umbrella organisation IFOAM and is responsible for all matters related to organic farming with a Europe-wide scope.

Information IFOAM EU Group: http://www.ifoam-eu.org

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Please send any comments or contributions to the newsletter to communication@ifoam-eu.org. For further information contact your national board member or the office in Brussels.