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Lithuanian organic farmers’ market outside the 7th European Organic Congress © John Portelli
Dear readers,

In the context of the new CAP and the ongoing Organic Regulation Review, it is my pleasure to inform you that the 7th European Organic Congress yielded clear outcomes:

• There was a resounding call for a new European Action Plan to support the further development of the organic sector in Europe at all levels. For example, consumers want organic and the responsible public authorities need to facilitate this
• Principles are fundamental to our sector, development means moving forward in ways that respect and build on these principles in a way that is economically viable and environmentally and socially sustainable
• Growth of the organic sector is essential, but with this growth we must ensure that we protect the quality and integrity of organic products. This requires stability and security for the whole sector
• The review of the regulatory and legislative framework must improve on what we have at present, taking into account the needs of all stakeholders: public authorities, citizens, environmental organisations and consumers, as well as organic farmers and businesses. All of this in the context of the new CAP.

The congress was planned to coincide with the start of the Lithuanian Presidency of the European Council and we were lucky to be able to welcome the Lithuanian Vice Minister for Agriculture Mr. Rytis Šatkauskas as well as the Deputy Director of the Agricultural Production and Food Industry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture of Lithuania, Mr. Salius Jasius. They both emphasised the importance of organic food and farming in Lithuania and the whole Baltic region. We also greatly appreciated the active participation of key representatives of the European Commission including Mrs. Alina Ujupan, Cabinet of Commissioner Mr. Dacian Cioloș, Head of the Organic Farming Unit Mr. João Onofre and Ms. Linda Mauperon, Internal Policy and Regulation Coordinator in the same unit.

On behalf of the whole IFOAM EU Group, I would like to thank all policy makers and governmental representatives for engaging with the diverse stakeholders present, the speakers for nourishing our reflections in this crucial period, and the participants for their input and exchange on the key topics in organic.

On 6–8 November, IFOAM EU will host an event dedicated to celebrating 10 years of IFOAM EU’s presence in Brussels. This will be an opportunity to work on the European organic movement’s vision for the future and to find out more about developments on the organic regulation review and CAP implementation. Save the date now and more details will follow soon.

Sincerely

Christopher Stopes
IFOAM EU President

© John Portelli
POLITICAL HOTSPOT

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION ON ORGANIC REGULATION REVIEW

The half-day Advisory Group on Organic Farming (AGOF) of 26 June 2013 marked the close of the period provided by the Commission to give input on the impact assessment, part of the ongoing organic regulation review process. Previously the Commission proposed a range of potential options for the direction of the organic regulation. This AGOF meeting therefore focused in particular on the market, and the socio-economic and environmental impact that the different options can have on the sector, as well as the related administrative burden.

At this stage, the three options proposed by the Commission are:

- “Improved status quo” option: foresees some small amendments to the current regulation, in order to improve on it, and therefore would have a soft impact on the sector
- “Market driven” option: tries to solve the gap between demand and supply
- “Principle driven” option: focuses on the principles, aims and objectives of organic farming and production, in contrast to focusing the market as a guide for legislation.

However, IFOAM EU’s 7th European Organic Congress organised on 2–4 July was a central stakeholder event gathering more than 200 people from the organic sector. Key people involved in the Commission’s Organic Regulation Review, including members of Commissioner Cioloş’ cabinet as well as those leading the process in DG AGRI’s organic unit, attended the event and actively engaged with participants and speakers. The outcomes of the congress are therefore also likely to feed into the drafting process.

IFOAM EU firmly believes that the objective of the review should be to move the organic sector forward and has put together a proposal, a combination of the Commission’s instruments, which we believe would help the organic sector move forward in a way that is consistent with our principles. We want to push operators to be more ambitious, whilst recognising the day-to-day reality that they face.

Opening plenary at the 7th European Organic Congress: Mr. Frank Macken from the Organic Unit at the Irish Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Mr. Rytis Šatkauskas, Lithuanian Vice Minister for Agriculture; IFOAM EU Director Marco Schlüter, from the Cabinet of Commissioner Mr. Dacian Cioloş, Mrs. Alina Ujupan; and IFOAM EU President Christopher Stopes (from left to right)
1 NEWS FROM IFOAM EU WORKING FIELDS

1.1 REGULATION

UPDATE ON DG SANCO LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL ON CONTROLS

As part of a larger initiative on the part of DG SANCO (COM(2013) 265 final) to bring all food oversight processes together, it has issued a legislative proposal to take over the organic control process, which is now in the co-decision process. The European Parliament and Council will decide whether to shift oversight of organic controls from DG AGRI to DG SANCO.

This DG SANCO legislative proposal on official controls was the main topic at a meeting in the Baden-Württemberg State Representation in Brussels on 5 June 2013. Representatives from German competent authorities, European Commission, Irish Presidency of the Council, European Parliament, IFOAM EU, COPA-COGECA and EOCC discussed the new legislative proposal and its possible future impact on the organic sector.

During their presentations most of the organic stakeholders, including IFOAM EU, highlighted the importance of maintaining a process-oriented approach and of focusing on risk-based inspections during controls carried out at organic farms and producers.

NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND ORGANIC STAKEHOLDERS TACKLE THE NEW ORGANIC IMPORT REGIME

On 17 June 2013, the Italian Ministry of Agriculture and CIHEAM-IAMB, Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari, organised a workshop on the imports of organic products in the EU. In the morning, representatives of the Dutch customs authorities, German authorities and a Belgian control body presented their experience with the new import regime for organic products, which came into force in July 2012.

In the afternoon, the opportunities and challenges of the current import regime was the topic of an expert round-table discussion. As one of the invited experts, IFOAM EU Director Marco Schlüter emphasized that there is room for improvement, in particular regarding the traceability of imported products and the exchange of information between all actors, control authorities, control bodies and importers. This opinion was generally supported by the others around the table.
NEW REGULATIONS ON ORGANIC IMPORTS TO THE EU PUBLISHED IN JUNE

After the 113th meeting of the Standing Committee on Organic Farming of 28 May 2013, two new regulations amending Reg. (EC) No 1235/2008 on organic imports have been published.

Reg. (EU) No 567/2013 corrects small mistakes that were present in Annex III e IV of Reg. (EC) No 1235/2008.

The key amendments to Reg. (EC) No 1235/2008 presented in the new Reg. (EU) No 586/2013 are:

- **Transparency** is enhanced. As of January 2014, control bodies will be obliged to publish the list of operators they certify outside the EU, the operators’ certification status and the product categories concerned on their websites. Furthermore from 1 July 2015, the production standards and the control measures applied in each country will also have to be published on their sites.
- **Annex III – List of equivalent Third Countries** has been updated. The duration of the period of inclusion on the list has been changed to “unspecified” for Japan and Tunisia’s inclusion period has been extended until 30 June 2014. In the equivalence with Switzerland, wine is now included. Concerning the US, the categories of products is better specified and the regulation now states that “products that have been imported into the United States and processed or packaged in the United States in accordance with US legislation” are considered equivalent.
- **Annex IV – List of Control Bodies recognised for the purpose of equivalence** was updated.

IFOAM EU LETTER ON ORGANIC AQUACULTURE

In response to the upcoming deadlines on the further implementation of Reg. (EC) No 710/2009 on organic aquaculture, IFOAM EU sent an official letter expressing its concerns to DG MARE and DG AGRI of the European Commission on 24 June 2013. The letter was based on the technical reflections of organic aquaculture experts.
1.2 POLICY

CAP AND AGRICULTURE

CAP DEAL LACKS STRONG AND CREDIBLE STEPS TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABILITY

The Irish EU Presidency, European Parliament and Commission negotiators reached a political agreement on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2014–2020 on 26 June in Brussels. Formal adoption of the texts by the AGRI Council and all MEPs as well as a preliminary vote by the European Parliament’s Agriculture Committee will take place in September and October. While the deal sets out changes that begin to steer EU food and farming towards greener and fairer outcomes, it lacks strong, credible measures that would prioritise organic farming and transform the sustainability of EU agriculture.

In a press release IFOAM EU welcomed the introduction of Pillar 1 greening as a first step to guide direct payments towards better practices. The recognition of organic farming in Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 is an acknowledgement of their pioneering role in sustainability and the need to support the development of organic production. However, IFOAM EU strongly criticises the lack of ambition in the final settlement and called for good national and regional implementation to help support greener and fairer outcomes for farmers and citizens.

IFOAM EU and Civil society groups challenge EU leaders on green, fair and local CAP

Final CAP negotiations began on 24 June, with the EU leaders meeting for talks at the Agriculture Council in Luxembourg. As talks took place between the EU Institution negotiators and Agriculture Ministers, IFOAM EU Farmer Sector Group Chair Jan Plagge and IFOAM EU Vice President Thomas Fertl were speaking with ministerial delegations about the importance of green and fair reform outcomes, of supporting the transition to sustainable agriculture and of the development of organic farming. Civil society organisations representing small farmers, organic farmers and citizens challenged the negotiators saying: “You promised a Green, Fair and Local CAP – Politicians don’t cheat your citizens.” Jan Plagge, IFOAM EU Board Member Raymond Aendekerk from Luxembourg, as well as Stephen Meredith and Laura Maeso from the IFOAM EU office took part in this protest action organised through the ARC 2020 platform.
Deal reached
Following an agreement between Agriculture Ministers on 25 June, the negotiations moved to Brussels where a final agreement was reached by all the EU Institutions on 26 June.

Direct payments: Greening principle & recognition of organic farming
Under Pillar 1, organic farmers will now automatically receive 30% of direct payments through the so called greening component, in recognition of their contribution to environment and climate action. On the other hand, all conventional farmers are required to fulfil a package of basic agronomic practices in order to be eligible for direct payments. This requirement includes diversifying arable crops, maintaining permanent grassland and dedicating 5% (instead of 7% as proposed by the Commission) of land to ecological focus areas. However a number of farmers will not be required to fulfil greening as a principle of equivalency has been introduced which exempts farmers participating in certain measures under Pillar 2 agri-environmental schemes and practices under national or regional certification schemes from greening.

Movement towards equitable distribution, but reform undermines greening of direct payments
Most old member states now have CAP payments under Pillar 1 based on historical reference (average of premiums received in reference years 2000 to 2002) which creates great disparities. These will move towards a more equitable level of distribution based on a per hectare basis. However the pace of change has been slowed down compared to the Commission proposal.

Farmers are now guaranteed to receive no less than 60% of the regional/national average by 2019. However losses to farmers receiving more than the current national or regional average will be limited to 30% of their current direct payment. Member States will have the option to calculate the 30% greening payments as a percentage of an individual farmer’s basic payment. The Commission originally proposed a flat rate greening payment representing 30% of a country’s total Pillar 1 allocation. However a derogation on greening, linked to a member states’ convergence of direct payments, would see higher greening payments going to farmers currently receiving more than the national or regional average, in contrast to a farmer who has a basic direct payment below the national average. The process would result in a “proportional greening” rate serving to offset some of the reductions in Pillar 1 payments for farmers who currently have a higher per hectare payment. This is despite the fact that farmers on high or low payments both have to fulfil or qualify for Pillar 1 greening.

Support for protein production, small farmers, further payment redistribution and School Fruit Schemes
Members States also have the option to use 2% of their national envelope as coupling support for protein crops and to introduce a small farmers scheme to provide annual payments to smallholdings of between 500 euro and 1,250 euro. Member States can also use 30% of their national envelope to top-up the first 30ha or the equivalent national average as a redistribution measure. Elsewhere the School Fruit Scheme annual budget under the Single Common Market Organisation is set to increase from 90m euro to 150m euro.
New rural development programme offers potential for organic farming

Pillar 2 provides a toolbox of voluntary measures relevant to organic farming including support for advanced sustainability measures. This is provided by a dedicated measure to support conversion to and maintenance of organic production and an additional agri-environment-climate measure. Moreover higher investment related support can be provided for investments related to these both measures and support for organic farming in quality schemes. Optional advice for organic farming is also promoted in the Farm Advisory System, while the newly created European Innovation Partnership recognises the importance of transitioning towards agro-ecological production systems.

Potential of advanced sustainability measures dependent on Pillar 2 budget

These positive moves can only have a real impact if there is significant Pillar 2 budget. In this respect the deal earmarks at least 30% of the rural development spending to measures which include organic farming and agri-environment-climate and which contribute to enhanced environmental performance for the most part. However this allocation is simply a continuation of the status quo. The deal also includes 70% co-financing rates for environmental measures as set out in the European Council budget agreement in February 2013, but these still need to be confirmed.

While financial allocations offer some potential to prioritise advanced sustainability, they could be seriously undermined by the introduction of costly insurance schemes, an income stabilisation tool, and the option for member states to shift 15% of their Pillar 2 budget to Pillar 1. Member States with direct payments below the EU average can shift an additional 10% from their Pillar 2 budget to Pillar 1. As a positive continuation of the former modulation Member States also have the option to move 15% of their Pillar 1 budget to Pillar 2, but for some Member States it is more likely that they may be tempted to offset losses to direct payments by transferring money from Pillar 2 to Pillar 1. This would result in even deeper funding cuts for new rural development programmes.

AGREEMENT ON EU BUDGET, BUT FLEXIBILITY BETWEEN PILLARS & CO-FINANCING STILL TO BE RESOLVED

EU leaders have backed the compromise reached on the EU budget for the next seven years under the Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014–2020 on 27 June. Although a deal has been reached, there are still questions remaining regarding CAP financial elements related to the MFF. These include the capping of direct payments, the transfer of funds between Pillar 1 and Pillar 2, and higher co-financing of up to 75% for environment measures (including organic farming). It is expected that further discussions may take place between the EU Institutions during the Lithuanian EU Presidency. Despite outstanding issues the compromise was welcomed by European Heads of State and Government at their European Council 27-28 June, while the Parliament passed a resolution on the agreement on 3 July. One of the main changes in the agreement would see the limits increased for the use of unused funds year on year. While the figures related to Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 remain unchanged EU Finance Minister still have to make a formal decision. 3.3 bn euro top-up to the 2013 EU Budget expected to take place on 9 July. At time of press the timeline for further negotiations on CAP financial elements remains unclear, but it is expected that these issues will be finalised by EU Institution CAP negotiators in the coming weeks and months. Formal ratification of the entire EU budget will then take place in September or October.
MIXED REACTIONS TO THE AGRI EIP FROM MEMBER STATES

For national ministries and managing authorities, the new European Innovation Partnership (EIP) for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability offers much potential to promote agricultural innovation but many questions remain about how to implement it in practice.

These were some of the observations made by Member State officials involved in rural development programming who took part in the European Commission Seminar on ‘Programming Innovation: How to use the Rural Development Toolkit most effectively for the implementation of the EIP’ in Madrid on 26 June. The seminar organised by the new EIP AGRI Service Point was also attended by representatives of the European civil society organisations, including IFOAM EU.

Participants discussed the setting up of “Operational Groups” that bring together stakeholders to tackle a certain problem or develop innovative solutions, and the concept of innovation brokerage which encourages individuals and organisations to take the lead and put innovation projects into practice. For more information about the implementation of EIPs in new rural development programming please contact bram.moeskops [at] ifoam-eu.org.

JOIN THE TRAINING FOR SUSTAINABLE BIOGAS!

SUSTAINGAS is distributing knowledge and expertise on organic Biogas to interested parties. As part of this aspect of the project, free training sessions will be offered to organic farmers and their representatives, biogas consultants and associations, green energy companies and interested consumers. The sessions will take place in all six project countries in the national language from September 2013 to February 2014.

For further information please visit: www.sustaingas.eu/trainings.html

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**AgrICAPture: organic agriculture photo contest**

4 July – 15 October

Capture your idea of sustainable food and farming in Europe and win a weekend at an organic farm in Italy!

Upload your photo and vote on eu.foam.org/en/mind-cap/agricapture

**THINKING CAP**

SUSTAINGAS is distributing knowledge and expertise on organic Biogas to interested parties. As part of this aspect of the project, free training sessions will be offered to organic farmers and their representatives, biogas consultants and associations, green energy companies and interested consumers. The sessions will take place in all six project countries in the national language from September 2013 to February 2014.

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LAND GRABBING VERSUS LAND SHARING

Access to land and competition for land are topics that increasingly gain importance in many countries. One of the competitors for land is the production of biofuels. IFOAM EU Group supported a letter that calls on politicians to halt the expansion of land based biofuels in order to stop damaging effects on food security and biodiversity.

A conference organized by Demeter International, Terre-de-Liens, Bioforum Vlaanderen and Terre en Vue on 3 June in Brussels aimed to discuss strategies to address the problems related to loss of farm land due to land grabbing, urbanisation and other threats. As alternative, it moreover demonstrated best practices of land sharing and other ways to make land accessible for sustainable farming. IFOAM EU Group office contributed to the event with an update on the CAP reform by Policy Manager Antje Kölling, who highlighted the importance of an ambitious shift towards a greener and fairer CAP to encourage generational renewal also on small farms and to raise environmental sustainability of farms.

On 25 June, Via Campesina and TNI discussed their report on land concentration, land grabbing and peoples’ struggles in Europe in a conference. The report shows case studies to shed light on the situation in Europe today: the process of concentration of land under larger holdings controlled by fewer hands, resulting (in part) from land grabbing and resulting in shrinking access to land for small-scale food producers.

The topic land sharing has also been discussed by the policy committee in the IFOAM EU Group board meeting on 5th June. If you are interested to join the discussion, please contact: laura.maeso [at] ifoam-eu.org.

COOPERATING WITH EU PRESIDENCIES

IFOAM EU Director Marco Schlüter met Latvian Minister of Agriculture, Laimdota Straujuma on 26 June in Riga. He was accompanied by Gustavs Norkarklis the president of the Association of Latvian organic agriculture.

The meeting was organised to discuss possible cooperation during the Latvian Council Presidency in 2015, as well as current political issues such as the organic regulation review, the agreement on the CAP reform as well as the development of organic food and farming in Latvia.

7th European Organic Congress © John Portelli
SEED AND GMOS

SEED AND FOOD LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE PRESENTED BY THE COMMISSION

The legislative proposals for plant reproductive material, animal health, plant health and controls were presented by the Commission to stakeholders on 13 June. The conference gave stakeholders the opportunity to provide their first reactions to the proposals. But unfortunately the stakeholders present on the panels did not represent a balanced overview of the stakeholders. IFOAM EU was asked for a statement from the floor, and Policy Manager Antje Kölling highlighted the need for legislation for plant reproductive material that finally recognises the significant benefit farmers and smaller breeders bring to biodiversity and future food security.

The key documents of the conference are:
- Agenda
- Webstream
- Legislative proposals discussed
- Presentations of the conference

Meanwhile, the European Parliament has chosen the rapporteurs for the legislative proposals. The report on animal health will be drafted by Marit Paulsen (Sweden) from the ALDE group, the report on seed and plant reproductive material by Sergio Silvestris (EPP group, Italy), the report on controls by Mario Pirillo (S&D group, Italy), Plant health by Fajmon Hynek (ECR, Czech Republic). Rapporteur offices reported that they are now working on the guiding lines of the report and meeting the different interests of the representatives. The first draft reports and discussions in the Committees can be expected to start in September.

GMO IMPACTS ON EU ECONOMY TO BE EXAMINED BY NEW BUREAU

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the European Commission established a European Socio-Economic Bureau (ESEB). This bureau has the task of defining methodological tools for investigating the crop, trait or product-specific ex-ante and ex-post socio-economic implications of the cultivation and processing of GMOs along the seed-to-shelves chain in Europe for both users and non-users of GMOs. Moreover it will undertake analysis of the data collected at Member State level according to the agreed methodologies as necessary. Stakeholders were consulted on the terms of reference and work programme.

IFOAM EU comments can be found here.

NGOs WARN: US-EU TRADE DEAL MUST NOT LOWER STANDARDS!

The European Parliament gave the green light for negotiations on a transatlantic agreement on trade and investments between the EU and the US, opening the door for negotiations. In an open letter, NGOs – including ARC2020 and IFOAM – warned policy makers of the risk of lowering food & bio-safety standards in both of the negotiating regions.

EU MINISTERS AGREED ON CONCLUSIONS ON FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

The Foreign affairs Council agreed in its meeting on 27th–28th May the Council conclusions of the Food and Nutrition Security. The Council therewith endorses the Commission Staff Working Document on “Boosting Food and Nutrition Security through EU Action: Implementing our commitments.” This Implementation Plan defines EU policy action to fight hunger globally over the period from 2014 to 2020. Council Conclusions on resilience were also agreed, in which the EU commits itself to address the root causes of crises, especially recurrent crises, chronic poverty and vulnerability and to take a long-term perspective which is firmly embedded in local and national policies and linked to complementary action at regional level.
1.3 EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION POLICY/TP ORGANICS

TP ORGANICS STAKEHOLDER FORUM

On 25 June, TP Organics stakeholders discussed the future priorities of the platform in view of Horizon 2020 and the EIP for Agriculture. Stakeholders were asked to comment on three publications:

TP Organics’ priority topics for the Work Programme 2014 / 2015 of Horizon 2020

Although the Horizon 2020 legislation is not yet final, the Commission has already started preparing the first Work Programme in order to be able to launch Horizon 2020 in January 2014. That’s why TP Organics has presented a list of 13 priority topics to the Commission. The list covers all themes of TP Organics’ Strategic Research Agenda: empowerment of rural areas, eco-functional intensification and food for health and human well-being. When presenting the 13 topics, TP Organics’ core team member Cristina Micheloni paid particular attention to the need for a knowledge exchange platform in the organic sector, and for research supporting the further development of care farming in Europe. The full list of topics is available at www.tporganics.eu

Action Plan for Innovation & Learning

In collaboration with ARC 2020, TP Organics will publish an Action Plan for Innovation and Learning that will demonstrate the innovation potential of the organic sector and provide policy recommendations for achieving innovation from an organic and agroecological perspective. Participants agreed that EU funding schemes should be adapted in order to take account of the specific requirements of participatory research. For example, project funding should allow for a preparatory phase needed to build trust among the participants. Furthermore, practitioners should be remunerated for the value they add and the knowledge they develop. Likewise, new academic reward systems are needed that adequately value performance aspects such as relevance to the regional farmers’ community and societal needs.

Revised Strategic Research Agenda

TP Organics’ first Strategic Research Agenda was published in 2009. It has been very successful up to now. About 1/3 of the topics have been funded through projects of the 7th Framework Programme, ERA-Nets or national research programmes. In order to assure the relevance of the Strategic Research Agenda, it should be adapted to the new policy context and take account of new challenges that have emerged in the organic and wider food & farming sector, such as the need for increased protein self-sufficiency in Europe, the wish to achieve zero fossil fuel input in agriculture or consumers’ demand for better animal welfare. Participants of the stakeholder forum in particular mentioned the need to investigate into urban horticulture as a way to reduce food miles and to promote sustainable, diverse and healthy diets. Participants also called for wider socio-economic research on the drivers and barriers to moving away from agro-industrial modes of production to farming methods based on agroecology and eco-functional intensification.

The stakeholder forum was hosted by Paolo De Castro, chair of the European Parliament’s Agriculture Committee and was organised in cooperation with the Mediterranean Organic Agriculture Network (MOAN), a network of agricultural ministries of 24 countries in the Mediterranean area. In his opening speech, Paolo De Castro cited the commitment of TP Organics’ members and the transparency of the secretariat as reasons why he agreed to host the stakeholder forum. At the end of the conference, MOAN representative Uygun Aksoy stated that organic agriculture has enormous potential for the revitalisation of rural areas in the Mediterranean, but improved governance mechanisms and scientific collaboration are needed in order to make this potential reality.
SUSTAINABILITY SHOULD BE GUIDING PRINCIPLE FOR ADVISERS BY THE STOAS PARTNERS

Funded by the EU’s Leonardo da Vinci programme, the STOAS project aimed to familiarise organic advisers, organic organisation managers and inspectors with some of the recently developed tools to assess the sustainability of farms. In June, the last course of the STOAS project took place. Based on the many inspiring discussions held during the project, the STOAS partners wrote this statement about the role of sustainability in advisory services.

Organic farming is generally considered to be synonymous with sustainable farming and it has led the field in the development of farming systems and practices based on broad principles of financial, social and environmental sustainability. Organic farming should therefore also take the lead in the current debate about the right balance between the different dimensions of sustainability in the agricultural sector. An increasing number of sustainability rules have been integrated into organic certification schemes during the last 20 years. The EU regulation as well as multiple private standards have helped to establish a bottom line of ‘minimum criteria’.

The question remains nevertheless how to further advance on the sustainability path. Creating more rules or stimulating farmers to act voluntarily? More impact can be achieved if farmers are driven by intrinsic motivation (values and vision) rather than by regulations imposed by external bodies. To keep these farmers motivated is exactly the role of advisers, as farmers receive much technical and economic advice. And at the same time, they increasingly have to respond to often contradictory public demands. Advisers should help farmers put their own objectives and the demands from society into perspective and choose a path forward. Increasing sustainability performance across all dimensions should be the overarching principle of the advice, as it benefits both parties.

To increase sustainability performance, we must be able to measure it and some tools for sustainability assessment are already available. But yet they do not satisfy our (ambitious) needs. We need a good sustainability assessment tool, which is

- Simple (low time-investment, easily collectible data)
- Sensitive (able to find differences between organic farms of the same type)
- Affordable
- Motivating for farmers (impact)
- Recognized (based on scientific data and accepted by the public)

The STOAS project helped to get a clear understanding of the criteria a new common tool should have. The STOAS project was also instrumental in promoting sustainability as a central concept in organic agriculture. In some countries, the organic sector has already recognised the importance of sustainability, but in others this is a new issue. In order to mainstream sustainability in organic agriculture, financial support is needed from authorities, processors, traders or consumers for voluntary but effective sustainability management.
UPDATE ON EIP FOR AGRICULTURE: HIGH-LEVEL STEERING BOARD WILL AGREE ON STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

On 11 July, the EIP (European Innovation Partnership) High-Level Steering Board will agree on the Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) of the EIP for agriculture. This political document gives strategic advice and orientation to the EIP for agriculture in terms of bottlenecks and solutions to the creation of an innovation culture in European agriculture. The SIP should be considered as a general recommendation that leaves room for new insights and bottom-up initiatives that will emerge during the implementation of the EIP.

Whilst first drafts of the SIP were rather balanced, IFOAM EU noticed considerable weakening of clauses demanding reduction of input use in the final draft presented to the High Level Steering Board members. Christopher Stopes, IFOAM EU’s president and member of the Steering Board, will state this is unacceptable. In addition, he will demand that increasing soil fertility, reducing per capita demand, and promoting sustainable and healthy diets be specified as goals of the EIP.

IFOAM EU STARTS PROJECT TO PROMOTE AGROECOLOGY IN THE EIP

At the beginning of June, IFOAM EU, TP Organics and ARC 2020 launched a project to promote agroecological innovation in the EIP. The project aims at enhancing collaboration among agroecological organisations at EU level as well as initiating cooperation with European regions. Finally, the project will help IFOAM EU and TP Organics members to better understand the complex implementation of the EIP. First activities within the project included an introductory meeting with the EIP Service Point and with ERIAFF, a network of European regions with an interest in cross-border operational groups.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE ORGANICDATANETWORK

Marco Schlüter and Prof. Raffaele Zanoli discuss the development of the OrganicDataNetwork project

Marco Schlüter (MS): The project OrganicDataNetwork is about improving the collection of organic market data, but can you explain more in detail what the project is about?

Prof. Raffaele Zanoli (RZ): We launched the OrganicDataNetwork having in mind, on one hand, that transparency of the European market for organic food is needed to prevent increasing asymmetries, with all stakeholders being somewhat affected. On the other hand, better availability of market intelligence will lead policy makers and organic market actors involved in organic markets to better decision-making. The availability of timely and accurate market information on organic markets may encourage market entry and make the market more competitive and more efficient.

MS: Availability and access to data regarding organic food markets is of high relevance both for organic market actors and policy makers. How does the OrganicDataNetwork project aim to improve the availability, and can access to the data be realistically achieved in the end of the project?

RZ: Better data availability may be approached in two ways. The first strategy is simply to increase the quantity of data publicly available on organic farming markets. In doing so, we will explore new sources to be compiled and to be made accessible in a timely way. The second strategy is to provide more accurate data, by
better checking the sources and by increasing consistency and quality checks. In the OrganicDataNetwork we aim to increase data availability and access in both ways.

**MS:** The project consortium consists of 15 partners from 10 European countries, but the project covers analysis of data collection systems in all EU members States and beyond. Can you describe the challenges when collecting and analysing information on organic market data in Europe?

**RZ:** The project relies on a core partnership that is based on a consolidated and long-term collaboration about data collectors and researchers which has been established since almost two decades. FiBL and AMI have been collaborating for many years in organic market data collection, while IAM has its own Mediterranean Organic Agriculture Network, which is also concerned in basic data collection. The major challenge of our project is to convince internal and external stakeholders that organic data collection is a must for the organic sector, and every organisation – private, public and NGOs – should contribute to the task.

**MS:** The project has been running for more than 17 months already, almost half of the project period. What are the achievements that have been made so far and which further steps will be taken?

**RZ:** We have compiled a first version of the database, and the data collected are now being published on the project homepage. We have not collected new primary data - the project does not have this goal given the limited funding - but we have systematically introduced a larger amount of secondary data than previously publicly available by means of a specific survey among data collectors.

In addition, we have conducted two other surveys: one is a sort of census of organisations involved in data collection and the other is about data end users. The reports are all available on the Project’s homepage. Finally, since our aim is to establish a long-term network of interested parties, in March we organised our first multi-stakeholder workshop aimed at identifying problems in current data collection procedures and barriers to stakeholder commitment to an improved European organic market information system.

**MS:** In the context of the project you launched the OrganicDataForum. How does this forum work and what are the key issues currently discussed?

**RZ:** The forum is the network of all involved stakeholders and interested parties can share their opinions on the project issues. The first forum discussions were about the proposed OrganicDataNetwork statement on potential improvements in data collection connected with the currently on-going revision of organic regulations.

The forum is the place where the network of stakeholders and data collectors can experience the flavours and the advantages of a long-term collaboration. The aim is for this network will become permanent after the project’s conclusion.

**MS:** What have you learnt personally from the implementation of the project as a project coordinator so far, and is there something that has impressed you especially?

**RZ:** Coordinating an FP7 project is always challenging and quite time consuming. But I had already a strong relationship with many partners and this is certainly of great help. But even the less experienced project partners have so far contributed with their variety of viewpoints, ensuring that the project really achieve results by a real bottom-up and participatory approach.

**MS:** Would you like to add something else?

**RZ:** As you said we are now half way through. However, now we are starting to experiment in a limited way with new approaches to data collection. We have established a set of case studies on improving data quality in selected countries/regions. This is a very crucial step in our project and we ascribe great importance to its results, which will provide us exemplary evidence on how to improve current data collection. The collaboration of all involved parties is therefore crucial. And next year we will have our second and final multi-stakeholder workshop in Bari aimed at envisioning solutions for better organic market data collection in Europe.
This year we are celebrating 10 years of IFOAM EU’s presence in Brussels with major achievements for organic food and farming in Europe. IFOAM EU’s lobbying work improves and sustains the framework organic stakeholders need to operate successfully in Europe.

The political and legal framework for organic farming in the EU is set by the European Institutions, and the uniting power of IFOAM EU gives the European organic movement the possibility of bringing its needs to the political decision makers and enables the movement to achieve so much.

Help to make organic’s impact in Europe stronger – donate today

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ARIZA, Ecowalia, Wessanen

ARIZA, Ecowalia and Wessanen show their support for the work of IFOAM EU by a financial cooperation with IFOAM EU throughout 2013. Their money will be used to co-finance IFOAM EU events, projects and publications and is a highly valued contribution to our work.

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IFOAM EU is proud of a new partnership with O.W.N. to benefit our members and sponsors (of €3,000 or more). You can now receive a 15% discount when advertising in Organic & Wellness News (O.W.N.) when displaying the IFOAM EU 10-year logo in their ad.

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3 EVENTS

3.1 PREVIEW OF EVENTS

BIO ERLEBEN

The “Bio erleben” festival will take place from 19–21 July in Nuremberg is one of the biggest organic markets in Germany, combining the possibility of buying organic food and other products with a cultural programme including cookery shows, discussion rounds and concerts.

Cooperating with IFOAM EU, Naturland will be present with a stand, informing on the CAP and its importance for food and farming in Europe. For more information and the programme of the event: http://www.nuernberg.de/internet/bioerleben/  

31 AUGUST: ACTION CAMP IN WIEZTE: FARMS NOT FACTORIES!

Wietze in Lower Saxony is home to Europe’s largest chicken slaughter house in planning. Subsidised with €6.5 million of taxpayers’ money, it aims to to kill 430,000 chickens daily. It is a symbol of industrial farming that is destroying fair, green and local food and farming.

On August 31, a large demonstration and a human chain around the factory is being organised by the people behind the ‘Wir haben es Satt’ demonstration which took place in January in Berlin. This is their first summer event.

Either side of the demonstration, an action camp is being organised to allow people to build networks, hold workshops and much much more. Find the official website here: www.wir-haben-es-satt.de

11–13 OCTOBER: NATURA FOOD

The 6th edition of the Natura Food – International Fair of Organic and Regional Food – the eco-friendly and low processed food exhibition in Poland and Central Europe will take place on 11–13 October, together with the 2nd edition of the beECO – Ecological Lifestyle Fair.

The significance of Natura Food 2013 is emphasized by the patronage of the Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Union of the Voivodeships of the Republic of Poland, the Marshal of the Lodz Region, and the Mayor of the City of Lodz. The IFOAM EU Group is an official fair partner. Conference sessions will be organised at Natura Food by the Polish Ministry or Agriculture and IFOAM EU.

The Natura Food and beECO fairs are a chance for business people and producers of organic, traditional and low processed food to meet consumers, and present an ideal opportunity to learn more about the most recent trends on the Polish eco-food market.
13 NOVEMBER: EUROPEAN RURAL PARLIAMENT TO PREMIERE THIS AUTUMN

The first European Rural Parliament, ERP, will be held in Brussels on 13 November 2013. It will bring together rural movements at a European level. The European Rural Parliament has been initiated on an international seminar at the Swedish Rural Parliament in last September, where the need for a strengthened dialogue between the national rural movements and European rural networks was identified. The meeting is open to all interested stakeholders. More information: www.europeanruralparliament.com

3.2 REVIEW OF EVENTS

AGROECOLOGY FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

On 26 and 27 June, more than 100 people attended the conference “Agroecology for Sustainable Food Systems in Europe: A Transformative Agenda.” IFOAM EU was one of the organisers. Participants identified key elements in policies, research, and social processes required for the spread of agroecological models of production, towards a fundamental transformation of the agro-food system in Europe.

Whilst agroecology contests the dominant production- and growth-oriented agro-food regime, participants acknowledged that at the same time agroecology is becoming a new buzzword. The term ‘agroecology’ has been recently adopted by some actors who have promoted conventional agriculture. Therefore it is important to clarify the different potential strategies for up-scaling agroecology.

Participants identified four areas of action:
1. Sustainable resource use
2. Shift to re-localised food systems
3. Rethinking economics, trade and markets
4. Improved knowledge exchange

IFOAM EU Director Marco Schlüter spoke at the political part of the conference in the European Parliament. He linked agroecology to the upcoming EIP for Agriculture. He demanded that the EIP employ a holistic approach that connects food production based on ecosystem services with responsible food habits, and fair food chains empowering rural areas. He added that new partnerships are needed for multi-actor knowledge exchange. In this regard, he criticised the tendency of DG Research & Innovation to only fund bigger projects. The diversity of actors and approaches in the agricultural sector should be reflected in a diversity project types.
SUSTAINABLE FOODS SUMMIT

The 8th European edition of Sustainable Foods Summit took place in Amsterdam on 5–6 June and was dedicated to sustainable ingredients and consumer behaviour, including focus points on the marketing of sustainable food and responsible consumer behaviour. The summit brought together over 160 executives from the food industry to debate key sustainability issues.

Greater collaborations were called for to overcome the sustainability challenges facing the food industry. With the global population expected to reach 9 billion in light of scarce resources and agricultural production swings, industry partnerships were encouraged to meet such challenges.

ORGANIC MARKETING FORUM

The Organic Marketing Forum (OMF) is an international business to business exhibition as well as a networking and training meeting for companies and organisations from Eastern and Western Europe for a trade exhibition, conference, workshops, networking and excursion. The 8th edition was held in Warsaw, Poland, from 17 to 19 June 2013. IFOAM EU was proud to be a patron of this event organised by EkoConnect. This year’s edition informed on latest trends of modern-day organic business, such as the experience of organic boom in France, presented by Diego Garcia from Brochenin / Agence Bio. Member of the IFOAM EU Executive Board, Dorota Metera, explained the effects of EU reforms on the sector.
3.3 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **19–21 July**
  - **Bio erleben**
  - Nuremberg, Germany

- **31 August**
  - **Action Camp in Wietze: Farms not factories!**
  - Wietze, Germany

- **9–13 October**
  - **4th International Conference on Organic Agriculture Sciences (ICOAS)**
  - Hungary

- **11–13 October**
  - **Natura Food Fair**
  - Lodz, Poland

- **6–8 November**
  - **IFOAM EU 10 year anniversary celebration**
  - Brussels, Belgium
  - Save the date now, more info coming soon

- **13 November**
  - **First European Rural Parliament**
  - Brussels, Belgium

This newsletter exists to inform IFOAM EU 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.


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Please send any comments or contributions to the newsletter to communication [at] ifoam-eu.org.

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