A debate at the “What opportunities for organic farming and food systems?” conference by IFOAM EU: Jan Plagge (IFOAM EU Board Member), João Onofre (Head of Organic Unit, European Commission), Marco Schlüter (IFOAM EU Director), Magda Stoczkiewicz (Friends of the Earth Europe Director) and Christiane Kirketerp de Viron (European Commission, EIP Policy Officer)
Dear readers,

The IFOAM EU celebrated a decade of organic food and farming advocacy in Brussels at a three-day event held in the European Union capital. It was a proper occasion to reflect on past achievements, focus on the present situation and to discuss the future for the organic sector development.

The "Making Europe More Organic" event gathered the people whose work has ensured the organic presence at the EU institutions and stakeholders throughout the sector. That influence that has been shaping the regulation, promoting agro-ecological approaches and sustainable farming while opposing spreading of GMOs and pesticides, as well as encouraging development by founding a research & innovation platform that has obtained official recognition from the European Commission.

On behalf of the IFOAM EU, I would like to thank Mr. João Onofre, Head of the Organic Unit at European Commission, for pointing out the goal he shares with IFOAM EU: “Making Europe More Organic!”

Hot topics were discussed during the conference on 7 November: the CAP and how it will be implemented by the Member States, the ongoing organic regulation review and how to obtain upcoming EIP funding for regional, organic projects. Thanks to all the presenters and participants for sharing so much information to help bring the organic movement forward.

I would also especially like to thank:

- Our excursion hosts at the European Parliament and Commission, as well as Friends of the Earth and Corporate Europe Observatory during for explaining how the Brussels political scene works
- Pierre Ott, Francis Blake, Dirk Ahner, Jean François Hulot, Hannes Lorenzen and Claudia Olazabal who brought the development and achievements of IFOAM EU to life
- Our generous host at the Representation of the State of Baden-Württemberg to the EU, Mr. Wolfgang Reimer, Director General of the Ministry of Rural Affairs and Consumer Protection of Baden-Württemberg (Germany)

It is fitting that the 10-year celebrations closed with the kickoff of a vision process. “Organic 2030” aims to provide the sector with a self-created vision of where we would like to be in 2030. This process will last around two years and will end with a strategy for attaining the goals set out. During the kickoff, we were graced by the presence of Urs Niggli (FiBL), Josef Wilhelm (Rapunzel) and Geoff Tansey (Food Ethics Council), who spoke to the development & current state of organic and food politics, as well as the larger context in which the organic movement is situated. The strengths, unique points and core values of organic were then identified by participants. Although the stakeholders present were quite diverse, there is a clear message: the organic sector must progress and be the leader of its own development.

IFOAM EU will continue to strive for a more organic Europe and I would like to welcome you to take part in shaping our shared organic future. As the vision process develops you will receive more information on how you can participate.

Sincerely
Christopher Stopes
IFOAM EU President
IFOAM EU 10 YEARS IN BRUSSELS

The 10-year anniversary of IFOAM EU’s offices in Brussels this November was an excellent occasion to bring together the sector. The European political context was explored, current hot topics debated and a process for creating a self-determined organic vision for 2030 was launched. Not to mention there was also a good party.

EUROPEAN POLITICAL & LEGAL FRAMEWORK

João Onofre, Head of the Organic Unit at DG Agriculture said he shares the goal of making Europe more organic during the opening plenary session of the 3-day event in Brussels. This understandably brought an approving reaction from participants.

The opening plenary session was devoted to EU policy tools and whether they will help boost sustainable farming. In a presentation on the new CAP, Jan Plagge (IFOAM EU, Bioland) analysed the measures included in the CAP reform and how they fall short of delivering on the promise of a fairer, greener CAP and does not provide a coherent framework to boost sustainable organic agriculture. Magda Stoczkiewicz, Director of Friends of the Earth, spoke to the grave danger agricultural policy is facing. João Onofre presented the CAP reform and organic regulation review as opportunities and Christiane Kirketerp de Viron from the Commission’s Innovation in Farming unit presented ways organic stakeholders could make use of the European Innovation Partnerships.

Three thematic sessions followed the plenary with discussions on Rural Development Programmes after CAP reform, the new Organic Regulation and European Innovation Partnership for Agriculture. Presentations are available on the IFOAM EU website.

Celebrating good times from the past and looking forward to new ones

Head of DG Agrí’s Organic Unit João Onofre says that he shares the goal of making Europe more organic

The Executive Director of Synabio Cécile Lepers presented the conclusion of the workshop “New Organic regulation: A principle-driven approach”

Alexander Gerber (IFOAM EU, Demeter) at the “What opportunities for organic farming and food systems?” conference
AN ORGANIC VISION FOR 2030

The “Making Europe More Organic” celebration’s final day presented the future projection of organic development. That was done through the “Organic Vision 2030: Build the European Organic Future” workshops.

It is important for the organic movement to know where it wants to go to and to actively shape the future development of the sector, rather than to merely respond to circumstances created by others, says IFOAM EU’s Lena Wietheger the organiser of the Organic Vision 2030.

To create a vision for the organic movement that can guide the way until 2030, IFOAM EU has started a vision process: the kick-off was a full-day conference in Brussels on 8 November. Following an introduction by IFOAM EU president Christopher Stopes, the keynote speeches by Urs Niggli (FiBL), Josef Wilhelm (Rapunzel) and Geoff Tansey (Food Ethics Council) set the scene for the workshops that followed. About 100 participants from all over Europe discussed society’s expectations of organic, the strengths of organic as seen by the sector itself and the values to be cherished in the face of a potential gap between society’s expectations and the sector’s own wishes.

The day yielded an abundance of contributions and ideas and all input received will be taken up in the further vision process. The programme as well as some of the presentations are available here.

MEET YOUR DECISION-MAKERS

The three-day event started off with a visit to the European Parliament, where MEPs Ms. Anna Rosbach (European Conservatives and Reformists Group) and Mr. Andrzej Nowakowski (advisor on Agriculture and Rural Development, The Greens) hosted the visitors. The political excursion continued with a visit to DG Agri, enriched by a presentation of Rural Development programmes 2014-2020 from Mr. Jean-Francois Hulot and a presentation of the European Innovation Partnership by Mr. Martin Scheele (Head of Innovation in Farming).
1 NEWS FROM IFOAM EU WORKING FIELDS

1.1 REGULATION

AMENDMENT TO ORGANIC AQUACULTURE RULES PUBLISHED

The transitional rule for organic aquaculture operators established before 2009 has been extended to 2015.

On 24 October 2013 Regulation (EU) No 1030/2013 was published. It amends Regulation (EU) No 889/2008 as regards the organic aquaculture rules regarding the authorisation given to operators to keep their organic status if they started their activities and produced under nationally accepted organic rules before 1 January 2009. Such operators were given until 1 July 2013 to become compliant with the rules laid down in Regulation (EU) No 889/2008. This deadline has now been postponed to 1 January 2015.

The Commission considered the extension of this transitional rule necessary since aquaculture production is a new and complex field in which many different kinds of animals and seaweeds are involved.

In June 2013, the Expert Group for Technical Advice on Organic Production (EGTOP) received a new mandate to give their opinion on different aquaculture issues such as the use of non-organic juveniles and the permitted feed sources and feed additives.

ORGANIC FACTS AND FIGURES ON DG AGRI WEBSITE

At the beginning of November 2013, DG Agriculture published a report on facts and figures on organic agriculture in the European Union. Focusing on the production side, it gives an overview of the organic farming in the European Union and its latest evolutions.
Members of the European Parliament have ratified the final political agreements reached by EU institutional negotiators, on the EU budget 2014–2020, the CAP reform legislative package and transition rules for 2014 at their plenary session in Strasbourg on 19-20 November. Once the basic legislative acts on CAP are formally adopted by the AGRI Council in December, they will be published in the 24 official languages by the end of 2013 or the beginning of 2014. CAP implementing rules will be put forward by the European Commission in January and February 2014. The final agreement on the CAP transition rules for 2014 has the new direct payment regime coming into force on 1 January 2015. Some instruments including the new voluntary redistributive payment on the first 30 hectares and the shifting of funds between Pillar 1 direct payments and Pillar 2 rural development can already be implemented in Member States from 1 January 2014.

National and regional governments are currently in the final preparatory stages of setting priorities for key EU structural funds to 2020 using so called Partnership Agreements/Contracts as well as the designing of new rural development programmes (RDPs). Member State authorities are expected to submit draft national and regional rural development programmes to the Commission by the end of 2013 or the beginning of 2014 with approval taking place on a rolling basis in 2014. During the plenary session it was underlined that this CAP reform must be used to make farming more sustainable by clearly promoting it via the measures under pillar 1 and pillar 2 payments, with organic farming playing a major role.

In a press release, IFOAM EU criticised the Parliament vote for ignoring EU citizens’ calls for greater agricultural sustainability by rubber stamping a much weaker approach to Pillar 1 greening and accepting dramatic cuts to the Pillar 2 budget over the next seven years. It was outlined that the CAP delegated acts must incentivise more farmers to increase their sustainability and to convert to organic farming. The press release added that recognising organic farming as green by definition under Pillar 1, but making deductions to Pillar 2 organic production payments would put into question the EU’s commitment to organic farming as a systematic approach to sustainability. Furthermore, any attempts to permit the use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides on ecological focus areas as part of Pillar 1 greening must be clearly rejected.

STAKEHOLDER DISCUSS OPPORTUNITIES IN CAP RURAL DEVELOPMENT REGULATION

Opportunities for organic farming and agro-ecology under new Rural Development Programmes (RDP) and the European Innovation Partnership were key topics of discussion at the IFOAM EU “Making Europe More Organic” event on 7 November. The main conclusions of a workshop on rural development implementation included the importance of developing a synergetic approach to demand and supply through opportunities such as:

- promoting organic food in public canteens
- looking at all options in new RDPs to link organic farming with RDP measures supporting market development, advisory services and research and innovation
- increasing organic stakeholder influence in the process by working with other organisations.
PLANNING TOOL FOR BIOGAS PRODUCERS NOW AVAILABLE

Eco-Plan Biogas has been developed by SUSTAINGAS partners to provide a tool for practitioners who are considering building a biogas plant. The Eco-Plan worksheet enables operators to calculate the profitability of investing in biogas installations, taking the fertilizer value of digested biomass into consideration. The use of manure and clover grass from the operator’s farm as well as the possibility of using biomass from additional farms can be included in the calculations.

Find the tool on sustaingas.eu/strategy.html. Updated information on the SUSTAINGAS project is available in the latest newsletter.

DISCUSSING RURAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The AIAB conference “Le opportunità offerte dalla nuova programmazione dei PSR per lo sviluppo nazionale” (The opportunity offered by new RDP for national development) was held in Perugia on 21 November, in context of the “Mind the CAP” campaign. There were more than 120 participants, including national and regional Ministries of Agriculture gathered to discuss opportunities for Organic Food and Farming in the next Rural Development Plans.

IFOAM EU was represented by a delegation of three people: Marco Schlüter, IFOAM EU Director, who presented the “Position of the European organic sector”; Eduardo Cuoco, TP Organics Strategic Relations Manager, who illustrated the potential of the European Innovation Partnership “Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability”. Andrea Ferrante, the IFOAM EU Vice-President, concluded the event.

Marco Schlüter also gave a statement to Italian press: “The good news of the CAP reform is that the Member States can do a real good reform. The bad news is that they are not obliged to do so. Organic got its first-time political recognition, as it is green by definition and it is also ameasure for itself in rural development schemes. However, now it is important to ensure that organic farming doesn’t become a victim of this success by reducing the amount paid under pillar 2 (double funding) and by being questioned by the WTO for its eligibility under environmental scheme.”

AGRICAPTURE PHOTO CONTEST WINNER

Mr. Erkki Pöytäniemi from Finland is the winner of the AgriCAPture contest and will be awarded with a prize weekend on an organic farm in Italy for presenting the best idea of sustainable food and farming captured in a photograph. Find more details about the contest and other prize winners here.

The award winning picture: “A shepherd with his dog” © Erkki Pöytäniemi
FOOD & ENVIRONMENT

EU PARLIAMENT NOT MOVING TOWARDS BIODIVERSITY

The policy process on the seed legislation arrived at a first peak of activities. Observers from the European Parliament session in Strasbourg on 18–21 November reported to have seen “seed lobbyists in suits standing at each corner of the European Parliament”. The rapporteurs of the European Parliament for this legislative package, Pilar Ayuso and Sergio Silvestris have delivered their draft reports. Unfortunately, they do not introduce any improvements for biodiversity, farm saved seed and organic breeding.

Therefore it is most important to contact the Members of the European Parliament, with a focus on the ENVI and AGRI committee, from your regions now to stand up for clear improvements in the legal text that would serve the needs of organic farmers and gardeners, groups working for the conservation of genetic resources and organic breeders for greater freedom to do their work without disproportionate administrative burden.

The deadlines for amendments in the Agriculture Committee is 4 December and in the Environment Committee on 10 December. The Committees will vote on these amendments in early 2014.

In parallel to the European Parliament, the working group of seed experts in the Council is discussing the Commission proposal, having gone through almost two third of the text already. According to valid rumours, some of the country’s representatives are not so well informed about the specific needs of the organic sector. Take the chance to contact them!

For more information please contact: antje.koelling (at) ifoam-eu.org

US-EU TRADE TALKS: RISKY BUSINESS

The second round of negotiations between the US and the EU on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership took place on 12–15 November in Brussels. The third round will be in mid December. Stakeholder briefings take place after each round, where chief negotiators present the main results. However, the lack of transparency remains a major problem in the process, as real insight into the negotiations is not given. NGOs and consumer organizations are criticising this lack and calling attention to the risk that standards for the protection of the environment and consumers will be significantly weakened through the agreement. NGOs also pointed out that the interests of the big corporations rather than consumers and the environment are in the centre of negotiations. Aspects of agriculture are expected to be treated in the next round of negotiations, the risk of an ease of access of GMOs to the European market still exists. Therefore, stay informed and take action! Under www.stopthecrop.org you will soon find proposals for action, at www.arc2020.eu you find updated information.

The complete animal and plant health legislative package is on the agenda of the European Parliament committees in charge from 26 to 28 November. The AGRI committee invited for experts for a hearing on the seed legislation which takes place on the 26 November. Livestreaming/a video of the session will be available at this link.

In a disappointing move, the Commission handed the decision on the authorisation of the GMO maize 1507 over to the Council on 6 November with a recommendation for approval. The maize produces an insecticide in its cells and contains a gene that makes it resistant to the non-selective herbicide glufosinate. The cultivation of this maize in Europe would pose unpredictable risk on the environment and consumers. The Commission moreover recommended that the Council to re-start the discussion on the possibility of national GMO cultivation bans. Environment Ministers are expected to discuss GMOs in their Council meeting on 13 December. Get latest updates on www.stopthecrop.org and call on your minister to vote against the authorisation of this GMO maize.
NEW PROJECT TO EXPLORE ORGANIC MITIGATES CLIMATE CHANGE

The five-year project ‘Strategies for organic and low-input farming to mitigate and adapt to climate change’ (SOLMACC) has started. It has the aim of exploring organic’s benefits both for reducing emissions and helping farmers adapt to changing climate. The project partners FiBL Germany, AIAB, Bioland Beratung, Ekologiska Lantbrukarna and IFOAM EU Group will use this time for applying and monitoring climate-friendly practices on selected organic farms in Germany, Italy and Sweden. The farms applying these practices are expected to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by about 15% compared to average farms under similar climatic conditions and to be better able to adapt to the negative effects of climate change. IFOAM EU will make sure that the project outcomes are widely disseminated, not last within the EU political institutions, and will develop concrete policy recommendations based on the project.

The project is co-funded by the Directorate General of Environment of the European Commission (LIFE).

TRANSATLANTIC TRADE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE EU AND CANADA

On 18 October 2013, the European Union and Canada politically agreed on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) which could enter into force in 2015 after European Parliament and Council approval. Measures to facilitate and simplify trade between the two parties have been included in the agreement, meaning that almost all the relevant international trade tariffs would be removed. The import quotas for dairy, beef, pork and sweet corn products will be increased, allowing more import of these goods from Canada. All the tariffs on prepared agricultural products will be removed and, in addition, 145 Geographical Indications (GIs) of European products will gain recognition and protection on the Canadian market. As for organic, an equivalency agreement between EU and Canada exists since June 2011.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU NITRATES DIRECTIVE

Despite the fact that the latest report on the implementation of the Nitrates Directive shows a trend towards reduction of water pollution by nitrates issued from agricultural activities, it affirms that nitrate pollution is still a significant environmental problem. High concentrations of animal husbandry in certain regions is a major source of pollution. The report concludes that a lot remains to be done to reduce nitrate pollution. This should be another incentive to increase the amount of land farmed organically, which helps to reduce nitrogen pollution (European Commission DG ENVI, 2006).
CORE ORGANIC CALL WORTH €11 MILLION AND BROKERAGE EVENT IN DECEMBER

CORE Organic will launch a joint call for research proposals in December 2013. This is an excellent opportunity for organic stakeholders to get involved and receive funding for their projects. The budget of the call is more than €11 million, including the EU contribution of €3 million. The provisional call text and indicative call budget by country as well as the call schedule and the list of national contact points are available here.

On 18 December a brokerage event will be organised in Brussels to give potential applicants a chance to meet and discuss ideas. TP Organics is organising the event for CORE Organic. The agenda with registration form is available here.

The four thematic research areas of the call are:
• Plant/soil interaction in organic crop production
• Functional biodiversity to improve management of diseases, weeds and pests
• Livestock health management systems, including breeding
• Ensuring quality and safety of organic food along the processing chain

The guideline for applicants with national rules and priorities, the new CORE Organic website and the call submission site will be ready in December. Please register for news at www.coreorganic2.org. The CORE Organic consortium hopes to receive applications from a wide range of research & innovation actors, including those who have not previously received funds from CORE Organic.

EUROPEAN INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP ‘AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY AND SUSTAINABILITY’ UPDATE

EIP FOCUS GROUP: REDUCING ANTIBIOTICS IN PIG PRODUCTION

The first meeting of the EIP-AGRI focus group on the reduction of antibiotic use in the pig sector took place on 24–25 October in the Netherlands. The objective of this focus group is to develop and explore integrated strategies to reduce antibiotic use; list good practices; look at alternative treatments (e.g. adapted housing systems, feeding, use of herbs); and analyse economic implications, veterinary aspects and the impact of genetics. Three main areas of work were identified:
• Alternatives to antibiotics including vaccination and breeding
• Management and husbandry
• Behavioural change amongst farmers and veterinarians, economics and cost-benefit at farm level

PROGRAMMING INNOVATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

TP Organics was invited to a meeting of representatives of Member States and regions, who met in Berlin on 25–26 November to discuss how to link science and practice in rural development programmes. Themes of the conference were the setting-up of operational groups, the creation of links between Horizon 2020 and Rural Development Programmes, and cross-border/interregional cooperation.

EIP-AGRI WORKSHOP ON THE FIRST CALL OF HORIZON 2020

On 14 January 2014, an EIP-AGRI workshop about the 2014–2015 work programme of Horizon 2020 will be held in Brussels. At this workshop, participants will receive information about funding opportunities for demand-driven innovation as well as about how to link research and practice. Best-practice examples from Member States and from projects funded by the (preceding) 7th Framework programme will be presented. Contact servicepoint@eip-agri.eu, if you would like to receive an alert when registration is open.
CALL FOR EXPERTS: TP ORGANICS IS REVISION ITS STRATEGIC RESEARCH AGENDA

TP Organics is looking for experts, scientists and practitioners, willing to contribute to the revision of its Strategic Research Agenda. Farmers and entrepreneurs are in particular encouraged to apply. The first version (2009) received funding for about one-third of the topics through 7th Framework Programme projects, transnational or national research programmes – a significant and highly satisfactory number. In order to assure relevance, the TP Organics Strategic Research Agenda should be adapted to Horizon 2020, the new EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, as well as to new challenges that have emerged in the sector.

The Strategic Research Agenda will be structured according to three themes:
- Empowerment of rural areas (socio-economic research)
- Eco-functional intensification (food production and ecosystem management)
- Food for health & well-being (sustainable consumption, health, food quality).

In addition, a dedicated chapter will deal with the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and water scarcity. Each chapter will have two coordinators and a team of experts. Taking into account the outcome of EU-wide and national stakeholder consultations, the experts will formulate research questions. These descriptions should be in line with the challenge-driven approach taken in Horizon 2020. Experts should have a broad understanding of the research needs of the organic sector. The work will start in February 2014 and the final version should be ready by the end of 2014.

Contact info[at]tporganics.eu if you would like to participate!

TRAINING AGRICULTURAL ADVISORS ON SUSTAINABILITY

In the Sustainability Training for Organic Advisors (STOAS) project, eight European organic associations taught agricultural advisers, organic organisation managers and inspectors about some of the recently developed tools available for evaluating the overall sustainability of organic farms. This project is nearing its end and the final activities will be a presentation of the main outcomes at BioFach 2014 and the writing of a memorandum. This memorandum will make the case that to genuinely assess sustainability evaluation must be an integrative process of integrative with support by advisory services, rather than a product-based assessment.

EUROPEAN ORGANIC DATA TO BE HARMONISED BY ORGANICDATANETWORK

Partners of the OrganicDataNetwork are continuing their work on collecting organic market and production data. That includes data on area, production, livestock and operators for a second survey. The data from the surveyed countries will be harmonised and quality assured using the newly developed test of methodologies for data quality improvement before the data is published on the project website. At the same time, case studies on improving data quality in selected countries and regions are continuing in order to provide recommendations for improving data quality and contribute to the future code of practice and project manual.

The “Data network for better European organic market information” (OrganicDataNetwork) project aims to increase the transparency of the European organic food market through better availability of market intelligence about the sector to meet the needs of policy makers and actors involved in organic markets. It is funded under the 7th Framework Programme of the European Union and runs from 2012 to 2014.

For more information about the project and future activities, see the project website: www.organicdatanetwork.net.
2 EVENTS

2.1 PREVIEW OF EVENTS

POLICY SEMINAR: A FUTURE FOR DIVERSITY IN THE SEED LEGISLATION REFORM
Brussels, 27 November

Organic farming relies on the availability of a broad range of plant genetics in order to respond to consumer demand and to different geographic conditions. Taking this into account together with pressing environmental challenges such as resource depletion and climate change, it is essential to preserve the plant genetic resources in use, as well as to develop, multiply and market new varieties that are adapted to low input and local conditions.

The current legislation puts disproportionate burden on producers of seed and plant propagating material who work with a focus on organic farming and agrobiodiversity. It does not recognise the contribution of small breeders, farmers and seed savers to the development of genetic resources. The current revision of this legislation following the Commission proposal of 6 May (COM(2013) 262) can be an opportunity to reach improvements. This seminar will present and discuss strategies to come to a seed law that encourages active preservation, use and development of plant genetic resources.

More information here Register for the event

AN EU COMMON SUSTAINABLE FOOD POLICY: WISHFUL THINKING OR REALITY?
Brussels, 28 November

At the end of this month, at a crucial moment in discussions on European food policy, Slow Food is holding a conference in the European Parliament in Brussels. Taking place on November 28, the event will bring civil society organizations together with representatives from the European institutions to enable an exchange of views on the future of the European food system. Anyone interested in the topic is welcome to attend: simply register by November 20.

SUSTAINGAS TRAINING ON SUSTAINABLE BIOGAS

SUSTAINGAS invites you to learn more about advantages and challenges of biogas in organic farming as well as about SUSTAINGAS project results during a series of workshops and webinars.

The live webinars will deliver a compact overview of the possibilities and requirements to produce biogas sustainably on organic farms. Participate online:
- 17 December in Spanish
- 21 January in English
- 29 January in Danish.

Regional workshops will also be held to provide deeper insight into the current market situation and essential sustainability aspects of organic biogas. Workshops will be held in the language of the country.

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<td>Bulgaria</td>
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<td>Denmark</td>
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<td>Austria</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
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Please find more information and register at: http://sustaingas.eu/trainings.html
2.2 REVIEW OF EVENTS

ICOAS 2013 – DEMONSTRATING THE IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIC IN CENTRAL EASTERN EUROPE

Beginning with the Organic Policy Summit 2013 held in Budapest at Hungary's Parliament, then moving to Eger for two days of presentations and forums by scientists and researchers from 4 continents, and ending with a tour including on-farm research sites in Tokaj, the four days of ICOAS 2013 proved that the science of organic agriculture is a critical component for Central Eastern Europe and beyond.

In the opening Plenary Session, Prof. Urs Niggli of the Swiss Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), spoke about a new vision for organic agriculture. He called for embracing the new paradigm of diversity that exists within organic agriculture production. He also urged taking up the tools of technology and leading innovation in organic agriculture by rethinking the processes we use based on all the knowledge and instruments available.

Marco Schlüter, Director of IFOAM EU (conference coordinating partner) stressed the importance of organic development in Europe through action plans on both European and national levels. The recognition of organic by key political actors is a necessity for establishment of truly sustainable food chains, concluded Schlüter.

Prof. András Székács, Director of the Central Environmental and Food Research Institute in Hungary provided the key note for day two at ICOAS. The theme of his presentation, External Risks, Practical Implications and Pitfalls of Ecological Agriculture Practices and their Relation to Food Safety allowed Prof. Székács to show results of extensive water and soil testing projects in Hungary. He questioned the continued allowance of synthetic pesticide use based on appearance of significant residuals in water and soil samples over the years. While organic agriculture substantially reduces the risks of both on and off site contamination, prior contamination may be an emerging issue for conversion from conventional to organic practices.

Find the full report here and the conference abstracts are available for download here.

EUROPEAN RURAL PARLIAMENT

The first European Rural Parliament (ERP) aimed to give a voice to all representatives of rural movements in the EU. It took place on 13 November 2013 in Brussels. The ERP will provide a platform for exchange of experience at an EU level, and participation in policy for rural and local development. Proposals concerning gender equality, agriculture, democracy, among others, were developed, discussed and voted on by the plenary in order to agree a common statement for rural development. The process will continue until the end of the year. Upcoming activities be published on the ERP website.
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

Everyone who donates this year will have their (organisation) name and amount published. Top donors first!

Contact us:
laura.ullmann [at] ifoam-eu.org
Tel: +32 2 808 79 91

Although IFOAM EU has been in existence since 1990, first as an internal working group and later as a regional group of IFOAM, the Brussels-based liaison and coordination-office was only established in 2003.

Over these 10 years, IFOAM EU Group has been ensuring organic presence at the heart of the EU, helping more than 160 member organisations to sound their unified voice at all levels of the European Institutions.

ARIZA, Ecodesign, Wessanen
ARIZA, Ecodesign 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.

Everyone who donates this year will have their (organisation) name and amount published. Top donors first!

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4 IFOAM EU NEWS

IFOAM EU FARMER INTEREST GROUP ELECTS NEW STEERING COMMITTEE

The IFOAM EU Farmer Interest Group (FIG) an internal specialist group within IFOAM EU which seeks to create better connections between organic farmers and increase their involvement in the policy process. It provides members with regular updates about issues relevant for them within the EU policy framework and facilitates exchange between farmers in different farming regions in the EU.

The FIG unanimously elected a new steering committee for 2014 and 2015 at a meeting held in Brussels, in the beginning of November. The new steering committee is comprised of Jan Plagge (Bioland, Germany) as chair and five vice chairs Thomas Fertl (BIO AUSTRIA, Austria), Andrea Ferrante (AIAB, Italy), Laurent Moinet (FNAB, France), Kees van Zelderen (Biohuis, the Netherlands) and Juan Carlos Perez Montero (Ecovalia, Spain), who will be responsible for the FIG strategy and work programme. For more information please contact stephen.meredith [at] ifoam-eu.org

NEW ROLES AND A NEW COLLEAGUE AT THE OFFICE

Lena Wietheger

Lena Wietheger has accepted a new position and starting in October she has taken on the role of Chief Coordinator Climate Change, coordinating the trans-European project SOLMACC (see page 10 of this newsletter for more information). Lena’s great experience with IFOAM EU is precious - prior to this new position she evolved from project coordinator to head of communications – and we believe she will be an excellent leader for the SOLMACC project.

Kathleen Delage

I was born in La Rochelle, but I have decided to leave my hometown for study in Paris. The choice to study law came from my desire to work on legal aspects of environment protection. After four summers spent with farmers and working for an Agricultural cooperative CAVAC (in Vendée), I decided to specialize in agriculture. While working for Synabio, the French syndicate of processors, I obtained a degree in European Agricultural Law at the University Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne. After this year and half and gaining a lot of experience in organic sector, I joined the Organic Unit at DG Agriculture for a traineeship of five months followed by a contract of three months. To complete these experiences by a practical one, I have spent two months in Italy, working as a volunteer on organic farms thanks to the WWOOFing association. Presently, I am really grateful to IFOAM EU for giving me the opportunity to keep on working on the Organic Regulation of the European Union.

Angela Morell Perez

Office and Events Coordinator Angela Morell Perez has been promoted to Manager for Event and Operation as of this month. Angela is an indispensable member of the office team, with five years with IFOAM EU, a period throughout which she has obtained excellent organisational skills.

Angela Morell Perez is now the Manager for Event and Operation

Kathleen Delage, the new Regulation Assistant

Lena Wietheger has become the Chief Coordinator Climate Change
5 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

27 November
Policy Seminar: A future for diversity in the seed legislation reform
Brussels, Belgium

28 November
An EU Common Sustainable Food Policy: Wishful thinking or reality?
Brussels, Belgium

29 November–1 December
Terra Sana – National Fair of Organic Agriculture
Porto, Portugal

29 November
Family Farming conference
Brussels, Belgium

18 December
Core Organic Brokerage Event
Brussels, Belgium