

IFOAM EU welcomes approval of EU organic wine rules

Brussels, February 8, 2011 – The IFOAM EU Group¹ welcomes today's approval of implementing rules on organic wine production² by the Standing Committee on Organic Farming (SCOF) and appreciates that its compromise proposal for reduction of sulphites was taken up as a basis. This conclusion is the result of a long decision making process dating back to 2009³, and guarantees that in the future organic wines can be clearly distinguished from non-organic wines in Europe.

"IFOAM EU Group acknowledges the challenging process involved in agreeing on EU wide common wine processing rules, as the tradition of wine production in Europe is very diverse. Therefore, we believe that the new rules currently represent the best political compromise possible, while targeting credible organic rules will allow for the production of a wide range of organic wines in different climate zones without distorted competition", said Christopher Stopes, IFOAM EU Group President.

"The IFOAM EU Group is in particular proud that it constructively contributed to the discussion and that the approved implementing rules are based on a compromise proposed by the IFOAM EU Group", adds Marco Schlüter, Director of the IFOAM EU Group. "This is in particular true concerning the controversy discussed over the level of sulphites reduction in organic wine, that are now dependent on the wine type and content of the residual sugar. The IFOAM EU Group thanks particularly the European Organic Winemaking Carta initiative⁴ that helped working out this compromise".

"Organic wine producers were waiting for the possibility to label "organic wine" since 1991 and therefore today's decision is a big step forward. While the new rules surely are a political compromise, they offer a clear benefit to consumers who can now buy organic wines that exclude several substances, techniques, additives and oenological practices", concludes Cristina Micheloni, Italian member of IFOAM EU wine expert group and former leader of the research project ORWINE⁵. "The new rules represent a good start, and the innovative organic wine sector will use it as opportunity to discuss further improvements."

"I believe that these rules will boost the development of the market for organic wines, allowing organic wine to be labelled with the new EU organic logo" replacing the label "wine made from organic grapes" for products produced before 31 July 2012", explains Uwe Hofmann, German member of IFOAM EU wine expert group. "The new rules are a good compromise, even if the level of sulphites reduction will be a challenge for organic wine producers in some EU countries from Central Europe. We now have to monitor the impact of the new rules and to make sure that organic wine producers can apply the regulation EU-wide."

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¹The **IFOAM EU Group** represents more than 300 member organisations of IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) in the EU-27, the EU accession countries and EFTA. Member organisations include: consumer, farmer and processor associations; research, education and advisory organisations; certification bodies and commercial organic companies.

² Draft proposal as a version after TBT presented for SCOF: http://www.ifoam-eu.org/workareas/regulation/pdf/COM_draft_wine_afterTBT_EN_02.2012.pdf

³ The new wine rules will be published soon after short administrative procedure in the Official Journal of the European Union as amendments to Regulation (EC) No 889/2008. The new rules are the result of a very long decision making process started already in early 2009 with the first Commission working documents, based on the outcomes of the ORWINE project. After discussions and several revisions in June 2010, Commissioner Ciolos has withdrawn his draft proposal because no consensus between the Member States could be found. One year later the Commission came back to discussion, and finally news rules were approved today by Standing Committee on Organic Farming.

⁴ www.organic-wine-carta.eu

⁵ ORWINE: Proposal and recommendations for elaborating rules for organic wine in EU Regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products (Commission Reg. EC 884/2008 based on Council Regulation EC 834/2007 repealing Regulation EEC 2092/91)": http://www.orwine.org/intranet/libretti/d/%205.8%20final%20version%201st%20july%20_263_01_0_.pdf