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**IFOAM EU**  
NEWSLETTER

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Marco Schlüter, IFOAM EU Director; Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries; Mario Salerno, Maltese IFOAM EU Deputy Council Member; and Eric Gall, IFOAM EU Policy Manager at their meeting in November

## WELCOME NOTE

Dear members,

A challenging year 2015 is coming now to an end and it's time for a short recap.

The biggest issue on the organic plate remained the Commission proposal for a new organic regulation, in particular as the European Parliament and the Council of ministers decided on their position this year. Whilst IFOAM EU rejected the initial proposal, it was very successful bringing core elements into the opinions of the Parliament and Council. This neutralised many dangerous elements, and some innovative elements were brought in the Parliament. Nevertheless, whether or not the organic sector will have a regulation that makes it fit for the future now all depends on the current trilogue negotiations. At the end of the day, the question to be answered will be: Was it worth effort?

When the Commission announced the Horizon 2020 EU working programme on research and innovation this autumn, it was clear that IFOAM EU's strategic involvement in TP Organics paid off. About **200 million EUR in the programme** is dedicated to projects that either directly or indirectly deal with organic production. This is an important success for sustainable growth of organic in Europe.

One topic that extends beyond organic food and farming is the issue of climate change. The world

is looking to Paris (COP 21) to find out whether policy makers achieve to find a far enough reaching agreement or not by this Sunday. **IFOAM EU Policy Manager Eric Gall was in Paris** advocating for the recognition of organic's contribution climate change mitigation and adaptation.

In terms of political recognition IFOAM EU made further progress as a delegation was invited to participate in **the informal Council meeting of ministers in Latvia**, which provided an excellent opportunity for discussing key points with European ministers and building relationships.

However, Making Europe More Organic is not only about being driving politics, it is also about moving things forward. In this light, a major achievement this year was the launch of the **organic Vision 2030 "Transforming food and farming."** The organic movement is committed to continuing to lead the change in the food and farming system and achieving ambitious organic growth. Workshops organised by IFOAM EU for the sector to develop strategies are facilitating the way towards Vision 2030.

IFOAM EU has also directly benefited from the vision directly and is currently developing a new internal strategy, which will be the basis of a new work programme and will be presented at the next IFOAM EU General Assembly on 4 April 2016. I would like to invite and encourage all IFOAM EU members take part in the

opportunity at this year's General Assembly to discuss and make important decisions, such as the election of the board that will serve for the next two years. For all organic stakeholders who are not yet members, now is a good time to sign up.

The new IFOAM EU member extranet – launched this summer – was developed to provide added value for you our members and to facilitate your participation. The feedback we have received so far has been very positive and we are looking at developing the tool further.

Last but not least, I have the pleasure to inform you that we have just received the news that IFOAM EU has successfully passed the evaluation to obtain an operational grant from the European Union for 2016 and 2017. If this comes true, IFOAM EU will have a stable core budget for the next two years. Something that has never been achieved before.

**With this I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year**



Sincerely,  
*Marco Schlüter*  
IFOAM EU Director

## POLITICAL HOTSPOT

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The threat of GMO contamination in the supply chain is growing rapidly due to that the current GMO authorisation do not properly reflect the opinion of Member States and due to the way that risk assessment is carried out in Europe.

In the current system, there are two levels at which Member States can make a decision on the authorisation of a GMO for cultivation and food & feed use. If there is not a qualified majority of Member States at any of these levels, the Commission is then mandated to make one. This means that even if the majority of Member States reject a GMO, the European Commission can still approve it.

After being appointed Commissioner, Mr. Juncker made a clear statement to the Parliament when he declared: *"It is simply not right that under the current rules, the Commission is legally forced to authorise new organisms for import and processing even though a clear majority of Member States is against"* and give a mandate to the Commissioner for health and food safety, Mr. Andriukaitis to review the existing decision-making process in the first six months of his mandate. However, the proposal from the Commissioner for Health and Food Safety reduced Mr. Juncker's pledge to a single measure that would grant Member States the possibility to ban imports of GM food and feed. This proposal was presented in April 2015 and since then, the Council, the

Parliament and economic stakeholders have opposed it for various reasons, including the failure to address one of the core problems of GMO authorisation namely the one that Commissioner Juncker promised to fix – the voting rules. In July 2015, the European Commission told the Parliament that it didn't *"have any plan B for this proposal (...) If the proposal is rejected, we will stay in the current situation"*.

In addition to the problem with the voting rules, the way the EU assesses the impact on environment and human health of GMO crops and related pesticides is seriously flawed. This year, the specialized cancer agency of the World Health Organization (IARC) classified glyphosate as probably carcinogenic to humans. Asked to review this assessment, the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) took the opposite view and recommended the renewal of the licence for glyphosate across the EU and, moreover, an increase in the legally permissible exposure levels of EU consumers to glyphosate by 26%. The EFSA opinion is based on undisclosed studies sponsored by the industry and looks at glyphosate as an individual ingredient rather than assessing the impact of glyphosate-containing herbicides formulas, which is the way that glyphosate is used.

The negative impact of the combined use of such herbicides and GM crops is widely documented. For

example, due to their massive use, flora surrounded by GM crops become more resistant to herbicides including herbicide resistant weeds which leads to the application of even more herbicides. Moreover, the commercial pesticide formulas widely used by farmers, include 'co-formulants' that are easily absorbed by the plant and consequently contaminate the whole supply chain.

According to biotech company data, more than half of all genetically modified crops cultivated are herbicide tolerant. To make things worse, a 'new generation' of GMO crops resistant to multiple herbicides, including glyphosate-based ones, is currently in the pipeline for authorisation in Europe for import to Europe.

The "Plan B" that Commissioner Andriukaitis should present is a new text ensuring GMOs cannot be authorized when a majority of Member States is against. If there is no simple majority to approve a GMO application, then the Commission should withdraw its proposal to authorize the GMO and instead propose not to allow the GMO in question in the European market. At the same time, the EFSA risk assessment should be submitted to a thorough review and must be changes to take the impacts on health and environment based on a wide range of studies and with total transparency and independency into account.

The organic sector calls for an urgent review of the current GMO authorisation voting rules and the methodology used by EFSA to assess the risk associated with GMOs and the products linked to its use on environment and human health. Polluters should be made to pay for their own pollution! IFOAM

EU is continually advocating for a change together with NGOs and interested stakeholders. Organic and non-GM farmers and operators must not be forced to bear the cost of prevention and mitigation of GMO contamination and the voting rules must reflect the interests of the majority of consumers.

## IFOAM EU MEETS WITH COMMISSIONER FOR ENVIRONMENT, MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

In November, an IFOAM EU delegation met Karmenu Vella, EU Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. The benefits of organic farming for reaching EU biodiversity targets were discussed, and IFOAM EU stressed that there was no need to review the Birds and Habitats Directive and that reaching the 2020 targets was a matter of better implementation. IFOAM EU underlined that it is willing to support Commissioner for strong and efficient environmental legislation and initiatives.

IFOAM EU also discussed its concerns regarding aquaculture, about which the Commissioner showed detailed knowledge. Of particular concern to IFOAM EU is the requirement to have 100% organic juveniles in aquaculture as of 1 January 2016 would threaten a very young sector. A short discussion on eco-labelling also took place.

### OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL MEASURES TO PREVENT GMO CONTAMINATION

|                          | AT<br>(depending on region) | BE - Brussels-Capital Region<br>(2013) | BE - Flanders Region<br>(2010) | BE - Wallonia Region<br>(2008) | BG<br>(no info) | CZ<br>(2010) | DE<br>(2008) | DK<br>(2008) | EE<br>(2012) | FI - Åland region only<br>(2012) | FR<br>(2008)  | HU<br>(2006) | IT<br>(2005) | LT<br>(2007) | LU<br>(2008) | LV<br>(2013) | PT<br>(2007) | RO<br>(no info) | SI<br>(2009) | SK<br>(2008) | SE<br>(2007) |   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---|
| Ban on GMO cultivation   | Maize MON810                | All GMO crops                          | Maize MON810                   | Maize MON810                   | Maize MON810    | Maize MON810 | Maize MON810 |              |              |                                  | All GMO maize | Maize MON810 | Maize MON810 |              | Maize MON810 |              |              |                 |              |              |              |   |
| GMO-free regions**       | ✓                           |  | ✓                              | ✓                              | ✓               |              | ✓            |              |              |                                  | ✓             | ✓            | ✓            | ✓            | ✓            | ✓            | ✓            | ✓               | ✓            |              |              | ✓ |
| Technical measures       |                             |  |                                |                                |                 |              |              |              |              |                                  |               |              |              |              |              |              |              |                 |              |              |              |   |
| Information and training |                             |  |                                |                                |                 |              |              |              |              |                                  |               |              |              |              |              |              |              |                 |              |              |              |   |
| Liability regime         |                             |  |                                |                                |                 |              |              |              |              |                                  |               |              |              |              |              |              |              |                 |              |              |              |   |

\* Brussels-Capital Region, France, Latvia and Italy have submitted drafts but they are not in force.

\*\* Only national and/or regional and local policy bodies are taken into account. Private land owners banning GMOs have been left out.

- Spatial isolation and/or buffer zones between all types of conventional crops and GM maize
- Spatial isolation and/or buffer zones between organic crops and GM crops
- Temporal isolation for sowing & growing of organic/conventional vs GM crops
- Restriction of cultivation or any other measure in or near protected areas, e.g. Natura 2000 areas
- Mandatory and voluntary training procedures on GM crop management and coexistence measures for GMO growers
- Specific liability regimes or legal provisions for GMO contamination cases
- Spatial isolation and/or buffer zones between all types of conventional crops and GM crops other than maize
- Spatial isolation between beehives and GM crops
- Other technical and physical measures taken during seed handling, cultivation, harvest, post-harvest, transport and storage
- Mandatory procedures for informing authorities and/or neighboring farmers about the intention of growing GM crops
- Public register of GM crops
- Fines for GMO contamination and non-compliance

Read more in our publication: [Preventing GMO contamination: an overview of national "coexistence" measures in the EU](#), IFOAM EU, 2015

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# 1 NEWS FROM IFOAM EU WORKING FIELDS

## 1.1 REGULATION

### REGULATION UPDATE

On 19 November and 9 December 2015, the first two trilogue negotiation meetings between the three EU institutions – Parliament, Council and Commission – on the organic dossier took place in Brussels. With the Luxembourgish Presidency coming to a close, the Dutch Presidency will take over the dossier from January 2016.

The aim of the discussions is to find a compromise text based on the Parliament's and the Council's opinions.

Both the Council and the Parliament have taken up many of IFOAM EU's and the sector's proposals on board such as:

- Rejection of a specific "organic" threshold for residues of non-allowed substances
- Room for flexibility of the import system which will have to take "*regional differences in ecological balance, climate and local conditions*" into account
- Keeping the organic control requirements in the organic regulation, instead of transferring them to the "food safety" legislation as desired by the Commission

Furthermore, the Council opinion has a very good legal structure which would allow the Commission to decide on the detailed production rules, e.g. for poultry and greenhouses, at a later stage. Such areas are highly complex and have a significant impact on specific geographic areas and operators. Careful evaluation is needed in order to reach a text that is consistent and satisfactory.

At the same time, the Parliament report proposes innovative concepts, for example, a requirement obliging the Commission to establish specific "new structures" to solve the need for better implementation and EU co-ordination.

If the final text includes both institutions' constructive proposals, the result will be satisfactory.

During the process, IFOAM EU and its members have been in continuous contact with EU and national institutions to obtain a regulation that supports the development of the sector both in terms of principles and growth.

### IFOAM EU LETTER ON ORGANIC AQUACULTURE

IFOAM EU has again demanded that the Commission review article 25e(3) of Regulation (EC) No 889/2008, which restricts the use of non-organic aquaculture juveniles to no more than 50% from January 2015 and completely prohibits their use from 2016, in an **official letter** sent on 19 November.

The end of this derogation would not take into account the reality of the sector and the technical constraints that the – still young – organic aquaculture sector is facing.

According to IFOAM EU, organic juveniles should be used when available and this concept, including the creation of a database indicating the availability of organic juveniles, should replace the current "minimum-percentage" approach.

IFOAM EU's position is in line with many Member States, the European Parliament, with the recommendations of the independent Expert Group for Technical Advice on Organic Production (EGTOP) and with the likely approach of the new organic regulation to enter force in 2017 or 2018.

We urge the Commission to fulfil the request of the other EU institutions, the experts and the sector.

## ONGOING REVISION OF ANNEXES II, VI AND VIII OF REGULATION (EC) NO 889/2008

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During the last meetings of the Regulatory Committee on Organic Production, representatives from Member States discussed amendments to the current organic regulations based on opinions issued by the Expert Group for Technical Advice on Organic Production (EGTOP).

IFOAM EU has voiced concern over a number of topics currently under discussion.

A main concern is the proposal to automatically authorise the use of all “basic substances” of animal and plant origin considered foodstuffs as plant protection products registered in the horizontal legislation without a further check whether they are in line with

the principles of organic farming and – importantly – whether the use of such substance is needed in organic farming.

The proposal to require the use of organic lecithin in organic processing, despite the fact that unfortunately the quality of the organic lecithin available on the market does not have the purity level required for some products nor the technological properties needed for a number of organic products. IFOAM EU trusts that the demand for high quality organic lecithin will incentivise its production. However, this process needs some time and current product recipes need to be adapted to the specificity of organic lecithin. Therefore, a 5-year period is necessary to transition to the exclusive use of organic lecithin.

### IFOAM EU position on the EGTOP food reports

## NEW EGTOP REPORT ON WINE PUBLISHED

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The European Commission has just published **the final report on wine from the Expert Group for Technical Advice on Organic Production (EGTOP)**. **This report** gives technical and independent recommendations to the European Commission for the amendment of Annex VIIIa to regulation (EC) 889/2008 regarding the possible inclusion, deletion or change of conditions for the use of a number of substances. Furthermore, the opinion of the subgroup of wine experts assessed several new oenological practices which have not yet been considered for organic wines.

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## 1.2 POLICY

### CLIMATE CHANGE

#### COP21 – THE IMPACTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS ON AGRICULTURE

IFOAM EU was part of the IFOAM - Organics International delegation at COP21. As negotiations are still ongoing when this newsletter is being published, it is not clear yet whether land issues will be part of the agreement, and whether there will be safeguards on the use of land. Because it has been a contentious issue for developing countries so far, agriculture was not as such on the official menu of the negotiations at COP21. However, given that it represents a significant part of human emissions (estimations range between 10% to one third of all emissions depending on whether deforestation and indirect impacts are also taken into account), it has been much discussed on the fringe and at numerous side events.

First it is part of the **Lima to Paris Action Plan** (LPAA) or “Solutions COP21” (dubbed “**False Solutions COP21**” by some NGOs concerned by the presence of big polluters in several initiatives). In particular, the “4/1000” initiative launched by the French government on 1 December has attracted much attention. This research initiative is intended to increase the level of organic matter in the soil (at a rate of 4 parts per thousand

per year) and to encourage carbon sequestration through agricultural practices that are suited to local conditions. It has the strong merit of drawing attention to the importance of soils, which have been neglected for too long in all political processes, and as such it is supported by IFOAM Organics International. But **Coordination Sud**, the French platform of international solidarity NGOs, have warned that they will remain vigilant about the initiative, whose governance and concrete direction remain largely undefined for now. In particular, increasing carbon storage in the soil should not be taken as a license to emit as much or more in other sectors of human activity, and it should not divert attention from the need to reduce agriculture emissions in the first place, which are mostly due to nitrous oxide (production and use of fertilisers) and methane emissions (livestock). IFOAM – Organics International will contribute to steer this important initiative towards agroecology, keeping in mind that some key principles have to be considered when talking about **soil carbon sequestration**.

On the “Farmers Day” at the COP (2 December), IFOAM – Organics International, together with the **World Agroforestry Centre** (ICRAF) organised a side-event on “Agroecology as a viable solution to create climate resilience and a sustainable food system”, where it

was highlighted that it is difficult for negotiation processes that are organised “in silos” (mitigations versus adaptation, food security, etc.) to acknowledge the “multiple benefits” of agroecology.

Agriculture also figured prominently at the **Global Landscapes Forum** (5–6 December). The presentation of the interim report of the **TEEB Ag Food** was particularly interesting and promising. The project, led by Alexandre Müller, is a follow-up of The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) assessment of the economist Pavan Sukhdev, and aims at “making nature’s value visible” and at using a holistic approach to evaluate “all significant externalities of eco-agri-food systems, to better inform decision-makers in governments, businesses and farms.”



Hear what Eric Gall, IFOAM EU Policy Manager, had to say about land use and agriculture in the climate change negotiations at COP21



## » GMO

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### **GMO FREE LABELLING SCHEMES IN EUROPE: NO NEED FOR HARMONISATION AT EU LEVEL**

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According to the **European Regulation**, food and feed produced with GMOs have to be labelled. However, Member States in Europe have the possibility to set up national labelling schemes indicating when products such as eggs, milk or meat have been produced from animals fed without GMOs. These GMO-free national labelling schemes coexist alongside with private GMO-free labels set up by retailers and producers.

In 2013, DG SANTE commissioned a **study** on existing GM-free labelling schemes at EU level to assess the need for harmonisation. The report was published in 2015 and states that “[...] *the assessment of the current evidence, including the fact that GM-free label markets are still predominantly national with limited intra-EU exchanges,*

*does not indicate a clear need for harmonisation at the present time.”*

Since GMO-free labels markets are predominantly national, Member States should better focus on harmonising their labelling schemes especially on regards with threshold in food and feed.

These schemes can benefit both the conventional and organic sectors by encouraging consumers to avoid GM and thereby reducing the presence of GMOs in the food chain and the risk of GMO contamination to the non-GM and organic supply chain.

At the same time, the popularity of GMO-free labelling schemes is increasing across Europe. Organic should take advantage of this to communicate that organic products are GM-free and deliver additional benefits for health, the environment, animal welfare and fairness.

## » CAP

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### **116 OF 118 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL RDPS NOW APPROVED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

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The Commission has now approved 116 of 118 national and regional Rural Development Programmes for the period 2014 to 2020. RDPs still have to be adopted in Cyprus and Greece respectively and are expected to be given the greenlight by the end of 2015. Commission figures project that about 6.4% of total public expenditure for rural development (including both EU and national co-financing) will be spent on organic farming conversion and maintenance payments during the period. Overall information on each RDP can be found on **the Commission’s website**. For further details concerning support for organic farming please **contact Stephen Meredith**.

## FOOD, FARMING AND ENVIRONMENT

### LAND ACCESS

#### Civil society groups discuss land grabbing and land concentration issues ahead of WFAL 2016

Ahead of the **World Forum on Access to Land (WFAL) 2016**, IFOAM – Organics International participated in a **conference** on land grabbing and land concentration in Europe at the European Economic and Social Committee on 16 November. The conference sought to address how agricultural policies can best support land access utilising production models that create jobs and support rural areas without compromising our natural resources.

At the event, IFOAM – Organics International spoke about inequitable access to land and natural resources and its impact on production models, resource use and employment.

The conference is part of a series of regional events in preparation for WFAL 2016, which is intended to address the major issues linked to unequal access to land and natural resources. The **WFAL 2016 Call**, of which IFOAM – Organics International is a signatory, aims to create the necessary conditions for inclusive debate and develop constructive proposals. The Forum comes more than ten years after the World Forum on Agrarian Reforms (Valencia, Spain, 2004) and the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (Porto Alegre, Brazil, 2006).

#### New website dedicated to land access issues launched

Elsewhere, a **new website** dedicated to land access issues has recently been launched by a number of IFOAM EU members including the **Italian Association of Organic Agriculture (AIAB)** and the **Soil Association** together with the French civil society group **Terre de Liens**. The website aims to be a hub for best practice and information about issues related to preserving

land under organic and agro-ecological management, supporting existing farmers and facilitating the entry of new farmers through land access. The website is an initiative of the **European Access to Land network** an informal group of 15 organisations established in 2012 which seeks to share experiences and promote the significance of access to land for agro-ecological transition and generational renewal.



WORLD FORUM ON ACCESS TO LAND  
**WFAL 2016**

## 1.3 EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION POLICY / TP ORGANICS

### CONSULTATION ON LONG-TERM EU STRATEGY FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

The European Commission is preparing a long-term strategy for agricultural research and innovation. The strategy will serve to programme the remaining three years (2018 to 2020) of Horizon 2020 and is also meant to guide agricultural research and innovation activities in the next EU framework for research and innovation after 2020. The strategy document makes reference to the specific research and innovation needs of the organic sector, but does not acknowledge the fact that ecological approaches in the organic sector can help the whole of agriculture to become more sustainable. For example the organic sector is frontrunner in the reduction of pesticide use and experiences gained should be more widely used.

Stakeholders have the opportunity to **provide comments on the draft document** until 15 December. We encourage all those with an interest in organic research to use the TP Organics response as a basis to **submit their own response**.

**Comment on the Commission draft**  
**Read the TP Organics response**

The final strategy will be presented at the conference **Designing the path: a strategic approach to EU agricultural research and innovation** in Brussel on 26–28 January. **Registration for this conference** closes on 8 January 2015.

### EIP-AGRI SEMINAR ON KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

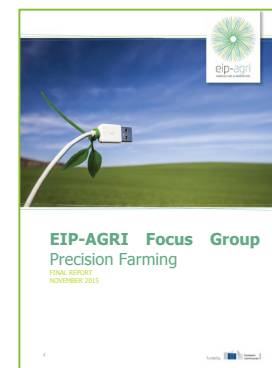
On 3–4 December, the European Commission organised a seminar dedicated to Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS). Participants discussed how the different elements of AKIS – research, advisory services and education – can better address farmers' needs and how mutual learning among farmers and other actors can be better organised. The event also aimed to raise awareness on how diverse EIP-AGRI tools can contribute to this transformation.

**You find all presentations here.**

### REPORT FROM THE FOCUS GROUP ON PRECISION FARMING

The Focus Group on “Mainstreaming Precision Farming” identified the main reasons why farmers would or would not take up precision farming and what role advisers and public research has to play to address current barriers.

**The report** concludes that farmers, cooperatives and independent advisers need to play a major role in research and innovation on precision farming and decision support systems. The added value of these precision farming solutions should be tested, validated and demonstrated in practice on commercial farms. The report also highlights the need for precision farming tools that are specifically designed for small and medium-sized farms.





# 10<sup>th</sup> EUROPEAN ORGANIC CONGRESS

4-6 APRIL 2016  
THE NETHERLANDS

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## Transforming food and farming through organic

- › Explore how organic production and consumption can pave the way for agri-food systems
- › Discuss ways to profile organic as a leading solution
- › Analyse new EU rules & policies to maximise their benefits



[organic-congress-ifoameu.org](http://organic-congress-ifoameu.org)

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Show your support for the organic movement and gain visibility, inquire here for more information on sponsorship opportunities

## 2.2 REVIEW OF EVENTS

### WHY SOIL MATTERS? – SOLMACC PRESENTS AT CONFERENCE AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

18 November – Brussels, Belgium

Ahead of the climate negotiations in Paris, academics, policy makers as well as civil society representatives and field actors met to discuss “Why soil matters?” and specifically the links between soils, food security and climate, and how this interconnectivity is dealt with at the European level. The conference, organised by the Greens/EFA, offered the possibility to exchange views on what EU policies are needed to protect soil, as well how agricultural practices can improve soil quality, help adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.

IFOAM EU representatives were present and a German farmer participating in the EU funded **SOLMACC project** (*Strategies for organic and low-input farming to mitigate and adapt to climate change*) presented his work on the farm which puts these ideas into practice.

Topics discussed included the need and the feasibility of obtaining binding European legislation for the protection of soil after the withdrawal of the soil directive by the European Commission in 2014. The representative from **the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development** stated that the debate on whether there should be an EU legislation on

soil needs to be held in the Member States first before a decision at EU level could be taken.

#### The potential of soil to mitigate climate change

Another point of discussion was the potential of soil to contribute to carbon sequestration. In this respect, the benefits of agro-ecological approaches to contribute to the mitigation and adaptation to climate change were highlighted by various speakers.

However, it was also underlined by Olivier de Schutter, former United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, and Eric Gall, IFOAM EU Policy Manager, that the agricultural sector cannot continue “business as usual” and claim that it acts as a carbon sink. Soil carbon sequestration is important, but it is non-permanent and difficult to measure. It should be seen as a benefit of ensuring living and healthy soils, but must not divert



Hans-Joachim Mautschke, SOLMACC farmer from Gut Krauscha, participates in the panel discussion on healthy soils © CC Greens/EFA; European Union

attention from the need to reduce agriculture-related emissions in the first place. Considerable efforts have to be made by the agriculture sector to reduce its emissions, in particular nitrous oxide linked to the production and use of fertilizers. Agroecological practices that increase organic matter content in the soil should be scaled up, in particular through the Common Agricultural Policy. Have a look at the presentations and interviews with selected speakers on **the website of the Greens**.



SOLMACC is implemented by IFOAM EU, AIAB, Bioland, Ekologiska Lantbrukarna and FiBL. The project is funded under the LIFE financial instrument of the European Union. The sole responsibility for the content lies with the author and the communication reflects only the author's view. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.

## ORGANIC REGULATION UPDATE AT LIVORG

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24 November – Tartu, Estonia

IFOAM EU presented its Vision 2030 and an update on the legislative process for a new organic regulation at the final seminar of the LivOrg project which took place at the Estonian University of Life Sciences in Tartu (Estonia) on 24 November 2015.

**LivOrg** is a EU funded project which involves organisations from 6 EU member states and aims at developing innovative training solutions for young and adult learners wishing to work in the organic livestock sector.



Emanuele Busacca, Regulation Manager at IFOAM EU provides participants to LivOrg an update on the organic regulation

## EU AGRICULTURAL OUTLOOK CONFERENCE

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1–2 December – Brussels, Belgium

AGRI Outlook is high-level conference organised by the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) with the aim of having a broad exchange of views on the state of agriculture, and the global issues which lie ahead. The conference –organised under the auspices of Commissioner Phil Hogan – was attended by over 400 stakeholders and the Commissioner himself. IFOAM EU was represented by Director Marco Schlüter.

Jürgen Vögele, Senior Director of the World Bank's Global Agriculture Practice, affirmed that we need "dramatic change in how we do things and holistic approaches in order to cope with challenges."

Key topics at the event were the challenge for agriculture to provide food in an environmentally sustainable way while adapting to/mitigating the effects of climate change and the functioning of the food supply chain.

**Revisit the conference programme and presentations on DG AGRI's website**

## ORGANIC INNOVATION DAYS IN BRUSSELS

1–2 December – Brussels, Belgium

Organic sector leaders and policy makers met to discuss the innovation potential of organic food and farming system and the opportunities and potential risks that could arise from innovations developed outside the organic sector. The occasion was the “Organic Innovation Days” organised by the **European Technology Platform for Organic Food and Farming Research and Innovation** (TP Organics) in cooperation with the **Mediterranean Organic Agriculture Network** (MOAN) and **Union Camere Lombardia**.

Innovation is essential for the development of the entire European agri-food system: organic food and farming is a proven pioneer and providing innovative solutions to increase the sustainability of production.

In this light, the first session aimed to showcase the innovation potential of the organic food and farming sector. Over 30 innovative proposals were submitted to the TP Organics call for innovations launched in July 2015. The winners presented their solutions that addressed the challenge of pest management, food processing, and business models providing added value addition at local level. The winning solutions included a decision support system Vite.net® for the sustainable management of vineyards, the reduction of nitrates in organic cold meats and a crowdfunding campaign for a small-scale dairy farm. All short-listed submissions will be freely available on the **TP Organics website**.

The second session explored the opportunities and potential risks of innovations such as bio-plastics, the Internet-of Things, proteins derived from insects and algae, and the recycling of urban and human waste. The third session brought together stakeholders and



Winners of TP Organics' call present their solutions at the Organic Innovation days

policy makers to discuss how to increase and improve spending for organic food and farming research. The speakers and participants at the Innovation Days agreed that organic farming has great potential to be a driver for change in the agri-food systems in Europe. The support of policy-makers on all levels, from regional to European, is crucial to make this happen.



Ralph Loges, Senior scientist, Kiel University; Aldo Longo, Director Directorate General Aspects of Rural Development and Research, DG Agriculture and Rural Development; Simona Caselli, Minister of Agriculture, Emilia Romagna Region; Eduardo Cuoco, Head of TP Organics Secretariat; Hans-Jörg Lutzeyer, Research programme officer, DG Research and Innovation; and Marco Schlüter, IFOAM EU director at the roundtable discussion during the session 'Boosting organic innovation in EU policies'

### 3 MAKING EUROPE MORE ORGANIC – SUPPORT IFOAM EU

#### IFOAM EU KEY SUPPORTERS 2015

The contributions of sponsors allow IFOAM EU to focus on its most important work – representing organic stakeholders. This funding is a means to co-finance IFOAM EU events, projects and publications and is a highly valued contribution to our work.



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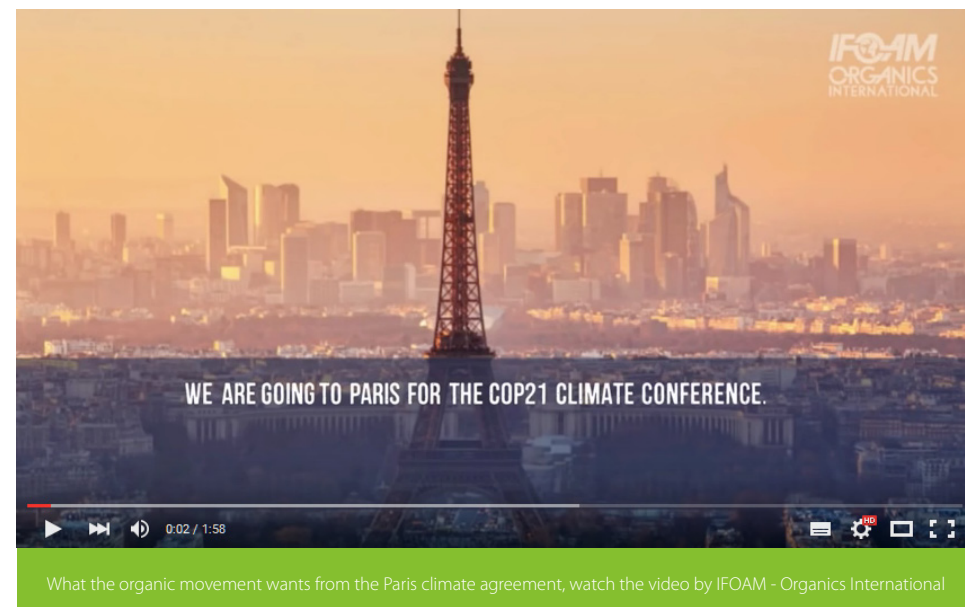
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## 4 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ▶ 20–21 January **Bio-beurs**  
Zwolle, the Netherlands
- ▶ 10–13 February **BioFach**  
Nürnberg, Germany
- ▶ 15–17 February **17th International Conference on Organic Fruit Growing**  
Hohenheim, Germany
- ▶ 4–6 April **10th European Organic Congress**  
Amsterdam & Driebergen, The Netherlands
- ▶ 6–7 April **B.I.O. N' Days**  
Valence, France
- ▶ 17–18 April **Natural & Organic Products Europe**  
London, the United Kingdom



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