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WELCOME NOTE

Dear readers,

I am happy to tell you that IFOAM EU organised another well-attended and successful edition of the European Organic Congress. This year the organic movement came together in the charming city of Bucharest.

On 19 and 20 June, the organic movement's national representatives at European level came together at their annual meeting. At this year's Council meeting, one year after the 2018 General Assembly 2018, [our Council members](#) exchanged about the development of organic in the different European countries and related hot political topics like the organic regulation and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). They also had the chance to discuss about the future development of IFOAM EU and how to strengthen the participation of the members in our different activities.

Following the Council meeting, we kicked-off the 2019 edition of [the European Organic Congress](#). This year's theme was "Innovation and technology - How organic improves, inspires & delivers?".

On the first day we focused on innovating agriculture through policies. Alexandru Stanescu, Chair of the Committee for Agriculture of the Romanian Parliament welcomed the participants to the Congress. Jan Plagge, IFOAM EU President, painted the bigger picture with the importance of the CAP for the organic movement.

A big and diverse high-level panel exchanged on the reform of the CAP. Discussions focused on how this policy can contribute to healthy farms, a healthy food sector, and a healthy society. All the panellists agreed that public money should support farmers delivering public goods to Europeans. Moreover, they agreed that farming families are a backbone of the European community and that the succession of farms is an issue to take into account. Further they also discussed the redistribution of the value among the supply chain and fair pricing for agriculture products. The policy-side of the panel consisted of Dumitru Daniel Botănoiu, Secretary of State and Representative of the Romanian Presidency, Pierre Bascou, Director Sustainability and Income Support at the European Commission's Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development and Aard Mulders, Senior Advisor at the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of The Netherlands. Luc Bas, Director of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Tiberiu Cazacioc, Member of the Expert Group of the CAP at Slow Food represented civil society. Last but not least, farmers were represented through Joachim Rukwied, President of the Comité des Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles (COPA), while Aina Calafat of the Sociedad Española de Agricultura Ecológica (SEAE) and Jan Plagge of IFOAM EU represented the organic movement.

[Field] Making Europe more organic is the most effective if all policies at all levels support this. The afternoon session about a new European organic action plan tapped into this idea. Paul Holmbeck, Political Director at Organic Denmark provided an insight into the Danish governmental support system for organic. Ioana Dragos of the North-West Regional Development Agency added a regional perspective to this by sharing experiences from the SME ORGANICS project. The regional partners in this project set up organic action plans. In doing this, they used the guidelines provided in 'Organic

Action Plans - Development, Implementation and evaluation'. Peter Defranceschi, Head of the Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) Brussels Office, continued. He gave insights into the potential that cities and public procurement play in making food more sustainable.

Of course, the European Organic Congress is not complete without a session on the organic regulation. Nicolas Verlet, Head of the Organics Unit of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development updated the participants about various topics. He provided an assessment of how the ongoing work on the secondary legislation should aim at strengthening the sustainable development of the organic sector, keeping in mind that the consumer's willingness to pay more for an organic product remains the primary condition. Following his presentation Antoine Faure of the European Organic Certifiers Council and Marian Blom, IFOAM EU Board member provided input and critical remarks from the sector on the developments on the delegated acts and implementing rules.

On day two we changed the focus to technological innovations. Prof. Dr Arni Janssen and Prof. Dr. Rogier Schulte of Wageningen University showed the possibilities of emerging technologies such as robotics, the Internet of Things (IoT), sensors, big data and artificial intelligence. Participants were engaged in an interactive session using their mobile devices. After this, Oskar Marko, researcher at BioSense further elaborated about the possibilities of these technologies, and Mute Schimpf of Friends of the Earth Europe provided critical remarks about aspects surrounding these new technologies. The following parallel workshop sessions collected participants' criticisms, enthusiasm and questions about all facets of these technologies – from social, economic and environmental issues to technological, political and ethical issues. The findings from these discussions will feed into an IFOAM EU position paper on digital technologies that will be published in the coming months. We closed the second day with three inspiring examples of innovation that goes beyond technology – Vermigrand farm, community supported agriculture (CSA) in Lavancia and the social standard developed by the Leading Organic Alliance to guarantee the application of fairness in organic agriculture.

Finally I would like to use this opportunity to thank the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Romanian Presidency of the Council of European Union and our member Bio România for helping in organising this amazing edition of the European Organic Congress. Without them it would not have been possible.

Last but not least, this congress marked the official launch of a few tools that you might like:

- The updated version of [our interactive infographic with organic retail and production data](#);
- [the IFOAM EU 2018 annual report](#). Available for the first time in mobile-friendly format. Now you can read our publications wherever you go on read.ifoam-eu.org;
- the 12-minute film '[We Unite](#)', produced by our colleagues at IFOAM – Organics International. I highly recommend watching it, as it offers a window into the lives of two organic farmers and the reasons they join the yearly 'We are Fed-Up' demonstration in Germany.

Enjoy this edition of the newsletter before both you, and us, take a summer break.

We will be back in your inbox in September. In the meantime you can keep following us on our [website](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

Don't panic, the future is organic!

Eduardo



POLITICAL HOTSPOT

After several months of discussion, IFOAM EU adopted [a position paper on Plant Reproductive Material in the new Organic Regulation \(EU\) 2018/848](#). This paper highlights the areas of the basic text of the new Organic Regulation that require more attention and possible actions by the Commission. And action is indeed needed on several fronts.

Organic seed use in Europe

Increasing the availability and use of organic seeds across Europe is one of the priorities of the European organic movement. In all European Member States, there is a lack of organic seed, therefore organic farmers can apply for a derogation to use non-treated conventional seeds. According to the new Organic Regulation 2018/848 that will enter into force in 2021, derogations should be phased out and only organic seed should be used by 1 January 2036. This is only a limited improvement on the derogation process on the use of organic seed, and additional rules are needed to ensure the phasing out of the use of conventional untreated seed.

How to phase out derogations on organic seed use

Individual applications for such derogations can help raising awareness about the fact that farmers should 'in principle' use organic seed. Of course, this is only effective if there is at least some organic seed available. Strict derogation rules in a situation where there is no organic seed on the market might be counter-productive. On the other hand, where a substantial offer of organic seed from suitable cultivars available already exists, stricter derogation rules can be an effective policy measure to reduce the amount of derogations and increase the use of the available organic seeds. A desirable outcome from such a regime, would be that farmers start asking for more organic seeds of their cultivars of choice, motivating seed producers to increase organic seed production.

The [LIVSEED](#) research project, coordinated by IFOAM EU and FiBL, was precisely developed with the intent of exploring ways to expand the production and use of organic seeds. It already published [policy recommendations](#) for national and regional authorities, such as developing and implementing a National Annex listing species or subspecies for which sufficient organic seed is available in their territory and thus no derogation can be granted anymore, like it is already done in some countries (the Netherlands, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Sweden, Belgium, and Switzerland).

Adjusting DUS criteria for organic organic varieties suitable for organic production

Aside from conventional varieties multiplied under organic conditions ("organic seeds") and farm saved seed for own use multiplied under organic condition, the future organic regulation mentions two new possibilities: organic varieties suitable for organic production, and organic heterogenous material (both multiplied under organic condition).

IFOAM EU is looking forward to the planned seven-year temporary experiment that the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) will conduct. This experiment should foster research and development of organic varieties. Those open pollinated organic varieties are less homogenous and often do not comply with the criteria set out in the current EU horizontal legislation on the marketing of seeds, in particular with the uniformity criteria of the DUS registration (Distinctness, Uniformity and Stability).

For arable crops the cultivar also needs to pass the national thresholds defined for the value for cultivation and use (VCU). Here the organically bred cultivars are discriminated, as these VCU tests are in most cases performed under conventional farming systems. Adjusted DUS and VCU criteria are therefore needed for organic varieties suitable for organic production.

‘Organic Heterogenous Materials’: good for (bio)diversity

The recognition that organic heterogeneous material (OHM) can be marketed and used by organic farmers is also a good step forward, as it will increase the availability of plant genetic resources suited to organic farming. According to IFOAM EU, OHM should be defined broadly and should include Organic Farmers selections, Organic Dynamic populations and Organic Composite Cross populations.

The diversity in different types of OHM is important. Many of these have long traditions (farmers’ selections and heirloom cultivars) and are of great value for dynamic utilization and conservation of biodiversity. Dynamic populations, outcrossing, as well as composite cross populations, are of great importance for breeding organic crops. Several new and highly innovative breeding approaches offer great potential for the development of resilient OHM particularly suitable for organic growing conditions.

The process of notification for OHM should be kept simple and easy and be accessible also for smaller breeders. The description of OHM should be based on traceability, breeding history and seed production processes and performance characteristics, rather than on the usual DUS parameters.

According to IFOAM EU’s seed experts, OHM should have to be developed for at least 3 to 5 years (for annual and biennial/perennial crops respectively) under conditions subject to the organic control system. This is a minimum duration to have material adapted to organic agriculture and tools for traceability.

The definition of ‘Organic Heterogenous Materials’ should be broad to give farmers choice

The Commission is expected to come up with delegated acts on OHM and seems to consider for now that only Composite Cross populations should be included. IFOAM EU also discussed OHM with like-minded movements, such as Arche Noah, and agreed with them on a broader definition of OHM, which should include farmers’ selections, heirloom cultivars, outcrossing populations, and evolutionary populations. We also agreed that OHM *“must be developed (by human or natural selection) for at least 3 years under organic certified conditions, and origin (parent cultivars/lines) and process of OHM development must be disclosed”*. A [common letter](#) from 41 organisations on OHM was sent to the Commission on 29 May.

New genetic engineering techniques are GMOs!

Last but not least, the position paper underlines once again that the use of all genetic engineering techniques, old and new, is excluded from organic plant production and from organic plant breeding activities. Therefore, such techniques are also forbidden in the development of OHM and Organic varieties suited for organic production. IFOAM EU asks the Commission to urgently take the necessary steps to ensure that the European Court of Justice decision of 25 July 2018 is effectively and properly implemented, so that all these new genetic engineering techniques are subjected to a risk assessment and to mandatory traceability and labelling requirements. Making sure that the new Commission will maintain the current GMO legal framework, rather than revising it - to exempt the new genetic engineering techniques from it - is currently one of hot topics for discussion in the European Parliament, as political groups are trying to agree on a list of priorities for the Commission’s work programme.

For more information about organic seed, please contact [eric.gall \[at\] ifoam-eu.org](mailto:eric.gall@ifoam-eu.org). For more information about the LIVESEED project, please contact [agnes.bruszik \[at\] ifoam-eu.org](mailto:agnes.bruszik@ifoam-eu.org).

1 NEWS FROM IFOAM EU WORKING FIELDS

1.1 Policy

GMOs

All techniques of genetic modification must be regulated: IFOAM EU's new publication available in all European languages

In July 2018, the European Court of Justice issued its long-awaited [decision](#) that states that plants modified with new techniques of genetic modification like CRISPR/Cas9 must be regulated under the GMOs legislation. The organic movement had [welcomed this decision](#), contrary to the biotech industry which is strongly pushing for a revision of the European GMO legislation, namely reopening of the [Directive 2001/18](#).

Such a deregulation would lead to the exclusion of these new genetic engineering techniques from risk assessment, traceability and labelling. Consequently, it would be a breach of European consumer's right to know what is in their food, as well as the loss of the organic sectors ability to avoid GMOs contaminations in its produce.

IFOAM EU is pleased to officially publish our new leaflet, which gets you up to speed with what is at stake regarding this issue. Furthermore, the leaflet touches upon the policy recommendations of the organic sector, which, among other things, urges the Commission to maintain the existing EU legislation and to implement the ECJ decision concerning new GMOs immediately.

To make this information easily available to everybody, [read the new leaflet in all official European languages](#).

Seeds

IFOAM EU position paper on 'Plant reproductive material and the new organic regulation'

Following the adoption of the basic act of the new EU Organic Regulation ([Regulation \(EU\) 2018/848](#)), the European Commission started working on the adoption of the delegated and implementing acts. These acts will fine-tune the details of the regulation.

IFOAM EU published a [position paper regarding seeds and plant reproductive material](#). This paper highlights the areas that require more attention and possible actions (see the political hotspot for details)

The new Organic Regulation could be a step forward for organic farmers to access more and diversified seeds and other plant reproductive materials. However, it will depend on how it will be implemented.

Moreover, in December 2018, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP). This document is meant to protect the right to seeds to peasant farmers and ensure biodiversity. In April 2019, the Geneva Academy published an academy briefing, "The Right to Seeds – The United Nations Declaration on the

Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas and the Protection of Right to Seeds in Europe". IFOAM EU was involved in the process of creating this document that highlights steps the EU and the EU Member States can take to better protect the right to seeds in Europe. [Read the full academy briefing.](#)

1.2 Food, farming and environment

We need to change agriculture in Europe: Join the Good Food Good Farming European Days of Action

Do you want to be part of changing the European food and farming sector? Join the [European Days of Action Good Food Good Farming](#). Whether as groups or individuals, the Good Food Good Farming (GFGF) network calls on all of you across Europe to grab your pots and pans, pitchforks and wheelbarrows and organise demonstrations, protests, picnics, markets, festivals and all kinds of creative actions between 1 and 31 October 2019.

Last year, over 60 actions in 19 European countries rallied support for change in our food and farming system. Let's go even bigger, bolder and more colourful in 2019! As the new European Parliament and Commission start their work, and national governments take important decisions on the reform of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, it's our moment to rise for policies that respect the rights of people and the planet!

Please share the [GFGF video](#) with the [call to action in various languages](#) within your networks and on social media. Use #GoodFoodGoodFarming, retweet and tag @GFGFActionDays. In case you are planning your own event between 1 and 31 October inform [guenther \[at\] goodfoodgoodfarming.eu](mailto:guenther@goodfoodgoodfarming.eu) so it can be shared with a wider audience. Feel free to [use online banners, posters, postcards and other materials](#) to promote your event.

For questions or any further support you might need, please get in touch with [guenther \[at\] goodfoodgoodfarming.eu](mailto:guenther@goodfoodgoodfarming.eu).

We are looking forward to seeing many of you join the action days.



This website and materials have been funded with support from the European Commission. The content reflects the views only of Friends of the Earth Europe and its partner organisations, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Watch the "We Unite" film that was premiered at the European Organic Congress 2019!

On 21 June we launched the film "[We Unite](#)" at the [European Organic Congress 2019](#) in Romania. Produced by [IFOAM - Organics International](#) as a part of their Good Food for All campaign*, the 12-minute film "We Unite" is a window into the lives of two organic farmers and the reasons they join the yearly "We are Fed-Up" demonstration in Germany. Along with hundreds of other farmers, they drive their tractors into the heart of Berlin where they unite with thousands of citizens calling for a better food and farming system for all.

Carlo Horn and Hanna Erz talk about why they farm organically, the impact it has on soils and yield, and how, even in times of drought, they are still able to harvest crops. They highlight the need for

sustainable food systems that give farmers access to land, protect the environment, pay fair prices and provide good food for all.

Want to find out more about this film? Visit the official website <https://campaigns.ifoam.bio/we-unite!>

*The Good Food for All campaign is organized by 25 partners across Europe who have come together for 'Make Europe Sustainable for All', a three-year cross-sectoral project to promote ambitious implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. #GoodFood4All

'Organic' in the Commission's proposal on market transparency

On 22 May, the European Commission published a [legislative proposal on market transparency](#). This proposal strives to increase and improve market transparency across the supply chain and foster effective conditions of competition along the chain. It wants to achieve this by introducing and enhancing existing price reporting. This proposal aims to enhance the position of producers and weaker actors in the supply chain. Read more [in the Commission's press release](#).

IFOAM EU took part in a public consultation by the European Commission.

For the first time, the Commission proposes that data be collected on a range of organic products, and IFOAM EU very much welcomes this positive step.

IFOAM EU's members can read more about this legislative proposal and the next steps in the full version of this article on the [IFOAM EU member extranet](#).

For more information about membership, contact [IFOAMEU_membership \[at\] ifoam-eu.org](mailto:IFOAMEU_membership@ifoam-eu.org). For more information about IFOAM EU's work on market transparency and fairness in the supply chain, contact [silvia.schmidt \[at\] ifoam-eu.org](mailto:silvia.schmidt@ifoam-eu.org).

Call for contributions to the Organic World Congress 2020 open 15 April-30 September!

"From its roots, organic inspires life" – Submit your contribution [between 15 April and 30 September 2019](#) and take part in the world's biggest organic food and farming conference in Rennes, France 21-27 September 2020!

Every three years, the IFOAM emblematic Organic World Congress (OWC) is held in conjunction with the General Assembly. At this event thousands of organic farmers, producers, researchers, advocates and policy experts from around the world gather.

By rotating across countries, the OWC brings global visibility to the host country. The Congress aims to provide organic and likeminded stakeholders working toward sustainable agriculture, value chains, and consumption with an opportunity to trade knowledge, innovations, and experiences about the organic world. The congress offers inspiration and momentum to all who take part and is seen as a leading event for the global organic sector.



If you want to contribute to the OWC, please submit your contribution via [the online platform](#) by September 30, 2019. Pre-conference applications can be submitted by June 28, 2019. The next Congress will take place in Rennes, France from 21-27 September 2020.

1.3 EU Research & Innovation Policy / TP Organics

Great interest in shaping the future research & innovation agenda

The preparation of TP Organics' new Strategic Research & Innovation Agenda is in full swing. More than hundred people took part in the public consultation on this key document that sets research and innovation needs of the organic sector until 2027.

[Check out the highlights from the consultation](#) and save the date for its official launch at the Organic Innovation Days 3-4 December 2019 in Brussels!

A unique opportunity provided by the LIVESEED project: Cross-visit in Italy

Cereal breeders from several EU Member States where organic seed production and use is relatively underdeveloped were given a rare opportunity to learn from Italian experiences and initiatives.

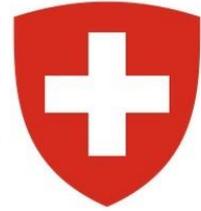
Rete Semirurali, one of the Italian partners of the LIVESEED project, organised a colorful program. Participants of the cross-visit checked out the Italian Ministry of Agriculture's Research Agency's comparative field trials. These trials cover all Italian and German registered bread wheat CCP for evaluation by the expert group of the Directorate General for Health and Food Safety of the European Commission (DG SANTE). This evaluation is part of the implementation of the temporary experiment on marketing of cereal populations (2014/150 EU). It was particularly interesting for the group to understand the procedure and the benefits of participating in temporary experiments. It enables them to consider the registration of populations from their own Member States. The deadline of the latest upcoming application of population registration is 31 December 2019 (EU) 2018/1519).

Furthermore, the participants learned from a mixed farm that uses biodynamic methods in their production of cereals. The farm grows cereals in rotation with legumes, vegetables, forage and pastures. They also got acquainted with Italian approaches to leading a community seed bank holding local varieties and populations of cereals. Lastly, participants exchanged with the largest vegetable seed producing operator in the country that has a new dedicated organic processing plant.

The intensive program allowed the participants to get acquainted with different organisational models for producing, multiplying and storing organic seeds, with setting up participatory research under organic and low-input conditions, and involving further stakeholders (bakers, millers, researchers, farmers, health professionals) in the breeding of cereal varieties. A knowledge sharing workshop on Common bunt (*Tilletia caries*) management with Italian farmers and experts from other EU countries provided insights for cereal experts in Central and Easter Europe where the pathogens have lately started to affect populations



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Farmer exchange visits to pigs and poultry farms in Switzerland

Organic farmers, advisers and researchers from eight countries met in Switzerland to exchange knowledge on how to reach 100% organic and regional feed for monogastrics. Depending on their expertise, participants could choose to visit an organic pig, layer or broiler farm. Innovation groups of the project presented their planned testing activities and the knowledge gaps within their countries.

The three-day visit was part of the OK-Net EcoFeed project, coordinated by IFOAM EU. [OK-Net EcoFeed](#) is a three-year Thematic Network that started on 1 January 2018.



OK-Net EcoFeed project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 773911. The information contained in this communication only reflects the author's view.

IoF2020 project present at the Internet-of-Things week in Aarhus, Denmark

How are the internet of things (IoT) technologies and solutions developed within [IoF2020](#) project really helping the farmer? Setting foot in the farmer's shoe and considering the investment in IoT technology has its benefits but also the constraints in terms of training and re-organisation. It's not only about IoT technology, it's also about addressing competition aspects, production aspects, and field activity. The [IoF2020 project took part](#) in the European [IoT week](#) in Aarhus from 17 to 21 June 2019 to discuss these and other issues in the workshops.

Farmer Field Schools, peer-to-peer learning to reduce the use of antibiotics – Read the RELACS project's first Practice Abstract

In March 2019, the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), IFOAM EU and the French Research Institute for Organic Farming (ITAB) published the first [RELACS Practice Abstract](#). A Practice Abstract contains practical guidelines for different actors of the food and farming system to solve a given problem, in this case farmers and farm advisors.

In the abstract, readers can learn how peer-to-peer learning reduces antibiotic inputs and improves animal health and welfare in organic farming. Sometimes advisory services do not lead to an improvement in animal health. This can be due to a lack of ownership of arguments and recommendations. In Farmer Field Schools farmers advise each other. This results in recommendations that are implementable and convincing. This in turn leads to a reduced use of antibiotics and incidences of mastitis and allows farmers to move from static to more dynamic health plans.

Read the full [Practice Abstract](#) and follow the RELACS project's development on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

[RELACS](#) seeks to promote the development and adoption of environmentally safe and economically viable tools and technologies to reduce the use of external inputs in organic farming systems.



Replacement of Contentious Inputs in Organic Farming Systems' (RELACS) has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 773431. The information contained in this communication only reflects the author's view.

Last year of the SME Organics project: implementation and monitoring of the Regional Organic Action Plans

The SME Organics project started its last year in April 2019. In this year, the partners' main efforts are focusing on the monitoring of the implementation of the Regional Organic Action Plans. All Plans were approved by the Interreg Europe Joint Technical Secretariat. They encompass different actions aiming at enhancing entrepreneurship and supporting the existing Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in improving their performance to increase the growth capacity of the organic regional sectors. Partners are now monitoring the implementation of the different actions in close collaboration with the regional stakeholders' groups created at the outset of the project.

Partners kicked off the implementation and monitoring phase in a partnership meeting that took place in Brussels on 26 March. The meeting was hosted by the Navarra Government Representation in Brussels.

The [SME Organics](#) project, funded by [Interreg Europe programme](#), encompasses 8 regions across Europe. Its objective is to improve policies and programmes under the Investment for Growth and Jobs goal to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of SMEs in the organic sector of the participating regions. [Read more about developing Organic Action Plans in the Method Guide developed for the project.](#)



SME Organics is supported by the European Union's Regional Development Fund. The information contained in this communication only reflects the author's view.

2 IFOAM EU DEVELOPMENTS

Have you ever wondered what IFOAMEU is and does? Read our brochure and annual report to find out more about our past and future work

Read IFOAM EU's annual report to learn about the work we did in 2018 to transform the European food and farming sector.

Find out what exactly we did to make sure the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) rewards farmers that grow food in a way that does not harm the environment, how we strived to ensure that the new organic regulation reflects the day-to-day working on the sector and how we raised awareness on organic's role in protecting our climate and ecosystems. Dive into the issues regarding of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and new genetic engineering techniques and our success with the ruling of the European Court of Justice in July 2018.

If you want to know more about IFOAM EU's structure and vision, have a look at our recently updated [brochure](#). It will tell you more about the topics IFOAM EU will be working on in the future, ranging from making our vision happen to the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).



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Welcoming our new colleagues

Bérénice Cau

Bérénice Cau is of French origin, studied in Lille and recently graduated with a master's degree of European Policies and Project Management. She worked as a Public Affairs and Communication intern at the Society of Audiovisual Authors in Brussels. Her education and experience reinforced her desire to work in the European scene by defending values she shares and believes in.

Thomas Haselberger

It took Thomas some time to see agriculture as a system that shapes both nature and society to an enormous degree, rather than mere food production. But he got there through first studying Biology and currently, Social Ecology with an emphasis on land use. This path also encouraged Thomas to become more proactive. Today, for example, he is proud to have worked with ARCHE NOAH and to be part of FIAN Austria. As Thomas puts it: "I can't wait though, for more experience to come!"

Katarina Šeme

Katarina is a graphic designer from Slovenia. She graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana and holds a Bachelor's degree in Visual Communication Design. For the past few years, she was mostly working as a freelance designer, which enabled her to travel and live abroad. Because of her desire for a meaningful design-related job, Katarina then decided to take the opportunity of a one-year ESC experience at IFOAM EU. Apart from her passion for design and animation, Katarina is a nature enthusiast and loves to spend her free time outdoors.

Saying goodbye to our colleagues

Nicolas de la Vega

Nicolas joined IFOAM EU in 2018 to take over the crucial work on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform. He quickly got up to speed with the complex dossier and worked tirelessly with the Commission and Members of the European Parliament to advocate for the IFOAM EU position of a reformed CAP along the principle of “public money for public goods”. Speaking four languages fluently, he interacted regularly with the IFOAM EU Farmers Group to coordinate our positioning and common work on the CAP. The IFOAM EU team thanks Nicolas for his hard work and dedication to changing the CAP, and wishes him all the best for his professional future!

Andreea Popa

After 9 months of working at IFOAM EU’s Communications Unit, we say goodbye to Andreea Popa. Her contribution to our work as well as her patience and willingness to learn were much appreciated. Andreea was responsible for a variety of tasks, from monitoring IFOAM EU’s social media channels to keeping the database up-to-date to preparing the newsletter. She will be missed by her communications colleagues and the entire team. We wish her all the best for her future endeavours and hope to see her again soon at climate-related events in Brussels.



The European Volunteer Service is funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. The sole responsibility for the content lies with the author and the communication reflects only the author’s view. The National Agency and European Commission are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.

3 EVENTS

3.1 Preview of events

Workshop on strategies how to access land

10-13 September 2019, France

Learning together about innovative land strategies to strengthen agroecology and the food sovereignty movement in Europe. That is the goal of Erasmus partnership that the European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC), Terre de Liens, IFOAM EU, Urgenci, Eco Ruralis, the Transnational Institute, and the Real Farming Trust launched. The partners will organise a training seminar on local land strategies in September.

IFOAM EU’s members can read [more information about the upcoming training seminar on the IFOAM EU member extranet](#).

For more information about membership, contact [IFOAMEU_membership \[at\] ifoam-eu.org](mailto:IFOAMEU_membership@ifoam-eu.org). For more information about IFOAM EU’s work on access to land, contact [isabella.lang \[at\] ifoam-eu.org](mailto:isabella.lang@ifoam-eu.org).



Erasmus+

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Agroecology Europe Forum

26-28 September 2019, Heraklion, Crete, Greece

The [second Agroecology Europe Forum](#) will be a interactive and transdisciplinary event on agroecology, combining different approaches and types of activities. Participants have the chance to exchange, discuss and networking with stakeholders representing the three main elements of agroecology: science, practice and movement.

The programme will include plenary and parallel sessions, panel discussions and workshops, with a limited number of oral presentations in certain sessions. Posters will be exhibited in an open space setting to foster engagement among participants. Topics will include species diversity in action and mapping agroecology. IFOAM AgriBioMediterraneo will also participate to the Forum.

The organiser of the event, [Agroecology Europe](#), is a membership-based association that wants to exchange knowledge and experiences on agroecology and supports the transition towards agroecological practices and policies. It intends to place agroecology high on the European agenda of sustainable development of farming and food systems by fostering interactions between actors in science, practice and social movements, and by facilitating knowledge sharing and action.

3.2 Review of events

Organic Food Iberia

6-7 June 2019, Madrid, Spain

IFOAM EU was an official partner of the first edition of Organic Food Iberia. IFOAM EU Director Eduardo Cuoco gave a keynote speech on the latest developments in organic food and farming worldwide at the well-attended opening day. He presented IFOAM EU's [vision](#) and [roadmap](#) for the future of European agriculture as well as the work that is currently being done to achieve the objective of "Making Europe More Organic". Julia Lernoud from the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) provided an overview of the latest statistics on organic in Europe taken from FiBL's yearly publication "[The World of Organic Agriculture](#)".

The fair also offered a great opportunity to network and have in-person meetings. On the first day, Eduardo Cuoco attended a technical meeting with some of IFOAM EU's Spanish members, Ecovalia, SEAE and CCPAE, to discuss strategies for the achievement of the agroecological transition.

Curious to see how Organic Food Iberia was like? [Scroll through the official photo gallery!](#)

The first edition of Organic Food Iberia, Spain's newest international trade show, took place at IFEMA exhibition centre in Madrid on 6-7 June 2019. The successful launch featured 500 exhibiting companies

and pavilions and attracted thousands of specialist retailers, supermarket and foodservice buyers, distributors, wholesalers, importers and exporters

Policy workshop at the meeting of IFOAM EU's Interest Group of Organic Farmers

11-13 June 2019, Kutná Hora, Czechia

The spring edition of the Farmers Interest Group meeting took place in the heart of Czechia, in Kutná Hora. IFOAM EU's farmers group discussed, among others, the possible design of the new Eco-Schemes in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) proposal post-2020, the secondary legislation of the new organic regulation, and the opportunities and risks of emerging technologies and digitalisation for organic farmers.

Prior to the meeting the farmers visited a Demeter-certified wine grower and a 600ha mixed organic farm. The farm raises pigs and has an on-farm slaughter facility, a biogas plant, hemp and cereal production as a diverse set of sources of income. Furthermore, there was a workshop for Czech farmers and representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture to exchange about the most important changes in the new organic regulation and the CAP Strategic Plans for the CAP post-2020.

If you want to take part in the IFOAM EU farmers group and if you have questions about the discussed topics, please contact [isabella.lang \[a\] ifoam-eu.org](mailto:isabella.lang@ifoam-eu.org).



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Ten take-aways from the European Organic Congress 2019

Innovation and technology – How organic improves, inspires & delivers

26 June 2019

1. Representatives of the Commission, conventional agriculture, civil society and organic farming agreed that public money should go to public goods.
2. Organic can improve through political support. By setting mandatory minimum expenditure of 70% for the environment and climate in each CAP Strategic Plan, organic will be able to deliver at its fullest.
3. Work on the Implementing and Delegated Acts of the European Organic Regulation is in progress. The European Commission will start working on controls this year.
4. Technology such as the Internet of Things (IoT), big data analytics and artificial intelligence can work with ecology rather than control it. It is important that we can adapt technology to natural cycles and to agroecological systems. When it comes to technology, data and its ownership are key challenges.
5. There are great examples of using the Internet of Things (IoT), big data analytics and artificial intelligence in (organic) agriculture. The organic movement is very engaged to thoroughly discuss social, economic, environmental, ethical, technological & political aspects of new technologies. Input collected at the Congress will feed into an IFOAM EU position paper on the matter.

6. Innovation goes beyond technology. Social, management and know-how innovation play an important role in transforming food and farming. Successful communication and a transdisciplinary approach in organic are key! This showed in the examples of the Vermigrand farm, the consumer organization [Bio Sud Ouest France](#) and the organisations part of the Leading Organic Alliance.
7. We should all unite for good food at fair prices, access to land, and a better future for us all! This is the message from IFOAM – Organic International’s short film that was officially launched at the European Organic Congress <http://bit.ly/WeUnite>.
8. 160 participants of 21 different countries attended the Congress
9. Do you want to relive the Congress? [Read through the Twitter Moments](#) and [have a look at the gallery on Facebook](#).
10. Thank you to our co-organisers, sponsors & media partners. You made the Congress possible!

We will update you about the date and location of the next edition of the European Organic Congress soon. Keep an eye on organic-congress-ifoameu.org and @IFOAMEU on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). We post updates about the congress with #EUorganic2030 and #EOC2020.

For a more in-depth report about the European Organic Congress 2019, please read the welcome note of this newsletter.



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Policy workshop at the meeting of IFOAM EU’s Interest Group of Organic Farmers

27-29 May 2019, Pamplona, Spain

The second annual meeting of the [ReMIX](#) project took place in Pamplona, Spain, according to a multi-actor approach. Participants shared project results and visited a field experiment run by INTIA, the farm advisory service of Navarra. The experiment tests different combinations of bread-quality wheat and soybean or lentils. Participants could observe the four mechanisms of interaction between intercropped plants – cooperation, competition, complementarity and compensation – in the field.

Participants also assessed the impact of intercropping on diseases. It seems that wheat suffers less from yellow rust when intercropped with lentils or soybean compared to wheat in sole stands. Participants also discussed the challenges of harvesting and separating intercropped cereals and grain legumes. Combinations that are easy to harvest are often difficult to separate, while combinations that are easy to separate are difficult to harvest. Increased efficiency in grain separation comes with higher costs, so the farmer needs to find a method which is cost-efficient too.

Implementing intercropping is not only a matter of agronomic and technological challenges. Farmers willing to try intercropping face marketing challenges and policy-makers do not know what policies best support them. Three actors discussed with participants what authorities can do to support intercropping: the coordinator of the Organic Action Plan of the Navarra region (Jokin Resano), the responsible person for the food policy of municipality of Pamplona (Monica Carcar) and the Transfer

Manager at INTIA advising the Spanish government on its protein crop strategy (Alberto Lafarga). Participants concluded that policy-makers need more scientific evidence on the benefits and problems associated with intercropping and actors across the supply chain need to cooperate better. Participants also noted that challenges are very similar in European countries, so an EU-wide strategy for intercropping is necessary.

[ReMIX](#) is a Horizon 2020 project that explores the benefits of intercropping to design more diversified and resilient arable systems. IFOAM EU is responsible for the Practice Abstracts in the [ReMIX](#) project. Practice Abstracts provide concise practical information for farmers, advisers and other actors. The first Practice Abstracts of [ReMIX](#) will be ready in spring 2020. They will be available on [Organic Farm Knowledge](#). This platform provides access to a wide range of tools that can help improve organic production.



ReMIX is funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement No. 727217. The information provided reflects the view of the authors. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided

4 MAKING EUROPE MORE ORGANIC – SUPPORT IFOAM EU

IFOAM EU KEY SUPPORTERS 2019

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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5 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

26-28 September 2019
Agroecology Europe Meeting
Crete, Greece

20-21 November 2019
IFOAM EU Farmers Group meeting
Helsinki, Finland



2 December 2019
Interest Group of Organic Processors (IFOAM EU members only)
Brussels, Belgium

3 December 2019
[IFOAM EU meets business](#)
Brussels, Belgium

3-4 December 2019
[Organic Innovation Days](#)
Brussels, Belgium

12-15 February 2020
[BIOFACH](#)
Nuremberg, Germany



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