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WELCOME NOTE

Dear readers,

Organic farmers use organic seeds when they grow organic plants. That seems common sense. But what if the farmer cannot buy organic seeds in his country or if the seeds available do not match his needs? With the LIVESEED project IFOAM EU, together with many partners, works on improving the awareness on the importance of using organic seeds and the importance of establishing a proper national system that stimulates production of organic seeds. The project also supports breeding varieties especially for organic farming conditions.

The many national workshops organised throughout the LIVESEED project so far provided a great platform for stakeholders involved in organic to network and meet their national authorities. It allowed organic stakeholders to suggest solutions on how to move forward and to show that the organic movement also has the capacity to initiate change itself. Think about participatory breeding programmes but also practical tips to national authorities how to better communicate the available organic seeds.

Are you interested in organic seeds and the LIVESEED project? Have a look at the LIVESEED overview report on existing [organic breeding initiatives in the EU and beyond](#). It provides an [extensive list of ongoing EU and national scale projects that are relevant for organic breeding](#). Further in this edition of the newsletter you will find a report of the [3rd LIVESEED cross-visit](#) that focused on organic seed production of vegetable crops and potatoes.

The LIVESEED national workshops focussed on national policy, yet our work on the European level also continues on many topics, from organic heterogeneous seeds and the whole secondary legislation on the organic regulation, to the CAP reform and to ensuring that the work programme of the next Commission will contribute to the making Europe more organic. We are particularly encouraged by the promise of the Commissioner-Designate for Agriculture, Janus Wojciechowski, to present a new EU organic action plan.

If you are interested in the innovative capabilities of the organic sector, [have a look at the programme of the Organic Innovation Days](#). On 3-4 December the organic sector and policy-makers gather in Brussels to celebrate innovations and discuss future research needs. For even more inspiration, check out the [Honest Food campaign](#). Launched by IFOAM – Organics International on World Food Day, this campaign will inspire citizens to make better food choices by highlighting the benefits of organic, local, seasonal and fair food on people and the planet.

Best regards,

Marian Blom
IFOAM EU Vice-President

POLITICAL HOTSPOT

Autumn has arrived in the European capital. Just like this season, the winds are changing in the European institutions. We wrote about the election results and developments following the European parliamentary elections [in the September edition of our newsletter](#). After the formation of the European Parliament, the next big step took place: the hearing of the candidates for the posts of Commissioners. The procedures foresee that every Member State gets to nominate a candidate who is subjected to a hearing in the European Parliament. The three hours back-and-forth of the Commissioner-Designates with the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) is also known as 'grilling of candidates'. This is often an intense debate where the candidates present their priorities and work plans. When the performance of a candidate is judged as not satisfactory by MEPs, they give him or her the chance to provide written replies, followed by a second hearing. This was the case for the Polish Commissioner-Designate for Agriculture, Janusz Wojciechowski. His first hearing was not satisfying according to the MEPs and they did not reach a uniform decision of approval.

During the second hearing, Mr Wojciechowski convinced the MEPs from the different parties. Mr Wojciechowski, who served in the European Parliament for 12 years, was member of the Agricultural Committee with a special focus on animal welfare. He clearly stated the ambition of the Commission to continue with the current proposal for a new Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) rather than starting from scratch. When elaborating about the CAP post-2020, Mr Wojciechowski stressed the need for fairer payments and a greener architecture, convergence between payments in Eastern and Western Europe and special support for small and young farmers. Furthermore, Mr Wojciechowski stated clearly: "I will support organic farming that might contribute to the protection of natural environmental and I will present an action plan to develop organic farming,"

Another Commissioner-Designate whose work will be relevant to the organic movement is Mr Frans Timmermans. He is said to serve as Executive Vice-President of Mrs Van der Leyen. The Dutch national has longstanding experience in EU politics and is fluent in six languages. Mr Timmermans will be responsible to set up a Green Deal for Europe and is Climate Commissioner-Designate. He promised to propose climate legislation aiming at reaching climate neutrality in Europe by 2050 within his first 100 days in office.

Besides the CAP, the European Green Deal contains the 'Farm to Fork Strategy' – sparking hopes for a more integrated food policy, the 'A zero pollution Europe' strategy – containing a reduction of synthetic pesticides and fertilisers and other interesting proposals for a greener Europe. The Environment and Oceans Commissioner-Designate, the 28 years old Lithuanian Virginijus Sinkevičius, will lead the work on the upcoming Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

Because the MEPs rejected three Commissioner-Designates, the vote of the Parliament on the entire College of Commissioners has been postponed. The new Commission is expected to take office on 1 December 2019, instead of on 1 November.

1 NEWS FROM IFOAM EU WORKING FIELDS

1.1 Policy

Organic regulation

Frequently asked questions on organic rules – A new document by the European Commission

[The European Commission published a list of answers to 86 frequently asked questions on the organic rules.](#) Visit the Commission's website for questions and answers regarding the provisions of Regulations (EC) No 834/2007, (EC) No 889/2008 and (EC) No 1235/2008.

The document covers questions related to:

1. [The subject matter, scope and definitions,](#)
2. [Labelling and logo,](#)
3. [Enforcement official control,](#)
4. [Certification system,](#)
5. [Production rules,](#) and
6. [Trade and third countries.](#)

Seeds

Stakeholders at the national level agree on concrete actions to stimulate the availability and use of organic seed in Greece and Bulgaria

On 2 and 4 October, national workshops took place in Bulgaria and Greece in the context of the LIVESEED project. The workshops focused on the regulation and policy framework regarding production, use and transparency on the availability of organic seed. The LIVESEED partners, including Bionext, the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL Germany) and IFOAM EU organised the workshop in Sofia (Bulgaria) and Athens (Greece), together with national partners Bioselena and Aegilops. Competent authorities involved in seed issues, farmers, researchers, certifiers, breeders and relevant stakeholders from the organic seed sector and value chain discussed how to improve:

- The national organic seed databases,
- The production & use of organic seeds,
- The cooperation between the stakeholders.

At the end of the meeting the participants signed a 'Declaration on organic seed'. In this document, the participating stakeholders agreed on concrete actions to stimulate the availability and use of organic seed in coordination with national authorities, research institutes and breeders. More detailed information about the national workshops and the declarations will be available in the upcoming national reports by LIVESEED. Keep an eye on www.liveseed.eu and @LIVESEEDeu on social media.

Organic Seed Database: different challenges in different countries

A hot topic during the discussion was the organic seed database. If no or not enough organic seeds are available in a national organic seed database, growers are allowed to apply for a derogation – meaning they are allowed to use untreated conventional seeds for organic production. To have a national database is compulsory according to the current Organic Regulation and will continue to be part of the New Organic Regulation. The new regulation will even extend the database to include new types of organic plant reproductive material. During the workshops in Greece and Bulgaria, it became clear that these countries face very different challenges when it comes to the database. In Bulgaria, only an Excel document is available, which does not allow seed producers to directly place their offers in the database. Due to this format, the information in the database is not up-to-date and farmers might be confronted with a situation where organic seed is available according to the database but already sold out at the time the database is accessed. In Greece the situation is different since there is a functional web-based database. However, it is not used by seed suppliers, for reasons such as the lengthy bureaucratic procedure to register products in the database. This sometimes causes an absurd situation in which derogations are granted even when organic seed is available.

Availability of organic seeds and the necessity of breeding programs

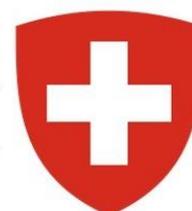
In Bulgaria, there is a general lack of information on the availability of organic seed. The actual benefits of organic seeds are often unclear to farmers, most importantly their better adaptation to low-input conditions that lead to better performance in organic systems. Farmers also highlighted the excellent characteristics of organic varieties relevant for consumers, such as taste. Besides, organic plant reproductive material is often not available on the market because organic seeds and/or varieties are not available or not imported into Bulgaria and Greece. This highlights the importance of national institutes and private companies to invest in organic breeding programmes. There will only be a true incentive for private companies to invest in this business if derogations are handled stricter.

Perspectives to boost the use & availability of organic seed

Farmers often do not order organic plant reproductive material if they can get a derogation easily. This is a missed opportunity since science shows that organic varieties perform very well. Participatory breeding, the practice of involving farmers at different stages in the breeding process, is a successful approach and should be expanded upon according to the Greek Institute of Plant Breeding and Plant Genetic Resources. Participants to the national workshops also concluded that cooperation between organic associations, seed producers and national administrations has to be intensified to make sure that databases are easy to use and to ease the process of meeting supply & demand.



LIVESEED is funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 under grant agreement No 727230 and by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) under contract number 17.00090. The information provided reflects the views of the authors. The Research Executive Agency or the SERI are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.



Calling for experts on seed for IFOAM EU Expert Group on Seeds

IFOAM EU is renewing its seed expert group and the terms of reference.

Are you an expert on matters related to (organic) seed? [Apply before 11 November 2019!](#) The full participation to expert groups is reserved to IFOAM EU members, but non-members can apply as observers.

The seed expert group prepares positions and opinions for the IFOAM EU Board and / or Council on seed marketing, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), plant property rights, patents on seeds. In the light of current and upcoming legislative developments with regard to seeds we are updating the group's membership.

IFOAM EU's members can consult the [terms of reference on the member extranet](#) for more information. Are you not an IFOAM EU member or you are a member who does not have access to the IFOAM EU member extranet yet? Contact Martin Sommer [Martin.Sommer \[at \] ifoam-eu.org](mailto:Martin.Sommer@ifoam-eu.org).

The deadline for expression of interest is 11 November 2019. [Please apply for membership by filling in the online form](#). The final decision on the composition of expert groups is taken by the IFOAM EU Board. You will receive feedback on whether your application was successful by the end of November 2019.

1.2 Food, farming and environment

Join the Honest Food Campaign

[On World Food Day, IFOAM - Organics International launched the Honest Food campaign](#). Honest Foods will inspire citizens to make better food choices by highlighting the benefits of organic, local, seasonal and fair food on people and the planet. Join this campaign to make it a success!

Honest Food

We live in a world where food is messed around with. It's produced using harmful chemicals that damage our health, wildlife and the environment. It's packed in plastic and unnecessarily transported around the world.

But things are changing. And so is the way we eat. More and more people are choosing Honest Food.

Honest Food is food with nothing to hide. And it's an easy way to do good. It's grown in harmony with nature. It pays farmers a fair price. It's simple, straightforward food you can trust. It's better for you, the farmer and the planet.

To join Honest Food, you can:

- Go to the [website](#) and download the materials you want to share with your audience;
- Request access to the original design files so that you can localize the content e.g. translate messages and use different images. [This video shows how the toolkit can be used](#);
- Share your own content using #eathonest to highlight the reasons why we need to produce and consume responsibly and sustainably e.g. farmer stories, studies highlighting benefits of organic, sustainable farming etc.



If you would like to learn more about the campaign and see sample messages, please send a mail to hello@honestfood.bio.

New Green Public Procurement (GPP) guidelines to increase the share of organic products in public bodies and institutions

On 2 October, the European Commission published the [new criteria on Green Public Procurement \(GPP\) for food, catering services and vending machines](#). These voluntary criteria will make it easier for public authorities to buy goods and services with reduced environmental impacts. The Commission's guidelines have several environmental objectives such as increasing the share of organic products, avoiding food waste, promoting plant-based menus and avoiding the consumption of fish from depleted stocks.

IFOAM EU's processors participate to the Organic Food Day in Finland

2-3 October, the IFOAM EU Interest Group of Organic Processors (IGOP) met in Helsinki. During the first day, the group participated to the Finnish Organic Food Day. This year's edition focused on innovations and the future. The event consisted of several presentations about topics like trends in the organic market. IFOAM EU's members also shared their expertise. Johanna Stumpner from AÖL presented guidelines for organic processing and whether these boost or are an obstacle for innovation, while Roberto Pinton from Assobio gave an overview of the existing organic standards. [Check out Pro Luomo's website for photos of the event](#).

Another highlight of the Organic Food Day was the European organic food innovation award. The winner of this award is one of IFOAM EU's members, Aira Sevón. Her innovative fava bean paste can be used as a replacement for soybeans for producing different products like ice cream, toffee, soups, and many more. We congratulate Aira on winning this award!

On 3 October, IGOP met at the premises of one of the biggest processing companies in Finland, Valio. Valio specializes in dairy products and juices. During its meeting, IGOP discussed the annexes of Reg. (EC) No 889/2008, potential labelling conflicts affecting organic, and other processing related topics. IFOAM EU would like to thank its member Pro Luomu for welcoming IGOP so wonderfully in Helsinki!

IFOAM EU's retailers meet in Paris and participate to Natexpo

On 21-22 October, the IFOAM EU Interest Group of Organic Retailers (IGOR) had their third meeting in Paris. Prior to the meeting, members had the opportunity to visit Natexpo, France's international trade fair for organic products. The retailers met in the morning of the 22nd. They discussed topics including an update of the organic retail market situation across Member States, the impact of certain articles of the new organic regulation on retailers, and going further in identifying what defines organic specialised shops in Europe. In the afternoon, the IGOR members visited some organic shops, including "new concept" shops such as the Naturalia vegan shop and a Biocoop shop "le retour a' la terre", owned by one of the IGOR members, and what a soulful shop it is!

IFOAM EU extends a heartfelt thank you to Synadis bio for organising this meeting and the wonderful welcome!

1.3 EU Research & Innovation Policy / TP Organics

We need defined minimum standards for derogation reports & harmonized data collection says LIVESEED analysis

The LIVESEED project analysed political obstacles to the implementation of the Rules on Organic Seed. The report calls for the definition of minimum standards for derogation reports across the EU. It also highlights the need for an ongoing and harmonized data collection on the use and on the production of organic seed as well as on organic production area. [Read the report](#) for a detailed analysis of the different types of bottlenecks and recommendations on the [LIVESEED website](#).

The LIVESEED project also published an overview report on existing [organic breeding initiatives in the EU and beyond](#), and an [extensive list of ongoing EU and national scale projects that are relevant for organic breeding](#). The overview of breeding initiatives shows that organic plant breeding activities are carried out by commercial breeding enterprises, social and medium enterprises (SMEs), non-profits, universities and public institutions. Next to breeding, these initiatives are frequently involved in variety testing under organic conditions, pre-breeding, research on organic breeding and education. The initiatives cover a wide range of crops with a strong focus on cereals, grain legumes and vegetables.

In stakeholder workshops in Witzenhauzen (2018) and Nuremberg (2019) stakeholders discussed new [concepts and strategies for organic plant breeding](#) and their integration in value chains. Organic plant breeding requires innovative breeding concepts and approaches dealing with technical breeding aspects and broader sustainability aspects – including socio-economic, environmental, climatic and ethical factors. To deal with so many different aspects simultaneously is difficult. The systems-breeding approach proposes an integration of four paradigms that currently co-exist: community-based breeding, ecosystem-based breeding, trait-based breeding, and corporate-based breeding. [Stakeholders along the value chain discussed](#) the potential roles of these approaches and their involvement in organic plant breeding. They also covered the advantages of bringing breeding to farmers, processors and traders and to society in general.



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Expand and better connect the network of key AgriTech stakeholders across Europe – Participate to SmartAgriHubs Innovation Portal

Would you like to share ideas, learn new skills or open a discussion about a specific topic? Visit the Innovation Portal and participate in its Discussion Forum. You can express your views as an organic farmer or producer, exchange about opportunities with the Innovation Portal community and bring a subject into the light, such as data management and ownership.

The SmartAgriHubs Innovation Portal has a multifaceted purpose: it is a search engine, a one-stop-shop marketplace, a library, a training platform, a calendar, a network, a matchmaking service and a discussion forum. [Sign in](#) and participate in the discussion with other members of the community.

You still have not joined the Innovation Portal? [Sign up and create a profile on the SmartAgriHubs website.](#)

SmartAgriHubs is a 20 million European project under the Horizon 2020 instrument and brings together a consortium of well over 164 partners in the European agri-food sector. The project aims to realise the digitisation of European agriculture by fostering and agricultural innovation ecosystem dedicated to excellence, sustainability and success.

2 IFOAM EU DEVELOPMENTS

Reminder: New bi-weekly email with highlights of the coming weeks for IFOAM EU members

As of October, IFOAM EU's members will receive an exclusive bi-weekly digest, dedicated to our affiliates and members only. In this email we will share highlights for the coming weeks regarding the organic movement and our advocacy work.

Did you not receive this email yet and are you an IFOAM EU member? Contact [IFOAMEU_membership \[at \] ifoam-eu.org](mailto:IFOAMEU_membership@ifoam-eu.org) and request to be on the list.

Call for membership: Task force of national contact points on GMOs and new genetic engineering techniques

IFOAM EU is setting up a task force of national contact points on new genetic engineering techniques. [The call for membership to participate in the task force is now open.](#) IFOAM EU members and members of IFOAM EU members can apply before 11 November 2019.

This group will ensure effective advocacy work at EU and national levels for the regulation of GMOs. This includes new genetic engineering techniques and adequate implementation of the EU legal framework on GMOs to ensure risk assessment, traceability and labelling.

As emphasized in the terms of reference, the mandate of this task force is not to provide scientific/technical advice that feeds into the position of IFOAM EU. We are looking for national contacts to do effective advocacy work at their national level.

IFOAM EU members can consult the [terms of reference on the member extranet](#) for more information. Members of IFOAM EU members can contact [Martin.Sommer \[at\] ifoam-eu.org](mailto:Martin.Sommer@ifoam-eu.org). Are you unsure if you are a member of an IFOAM EU member? [Check out the member list on our website.](#)

The deadline for expression of interest is 11 November 2019. Please [fill in the online form if you would like to apply to become a member.](#) Do read the terms of reference before applying! You will receive feedback about whether you have been selected in the last week of November 2019.

Background

The [ruling of the European Court of Justice](#) (ECJ) of 25/07/2018 clarified that products from new mutagenesis techniques are to be regulated according to the GMO legislation. Yet, there is currently



no proper implementation of the decision by the Commission and the EU Member States. On the contrary, there is an industry push to excluding certain products from new genetic engineering techniques from the GMO legislation. This would exclude these products from the risk assessment, traceability and labelling requirements and thereby threaten the capacity of organic agriculture to exclude GMOs from their production processes.

To enable the organic sector to remain GMO-free, coordinated efforts at the EU and national levels will be crucial. National contact points that are in touch with relevant networks and policy-makers are important to facilitate the flow of information. As emphasized in the terms of reference, the mandate of this task force is not to provide scientific/technical advice that feeds into the position of IFOAM EU. We are looking for national contacts to do effective advocacy work at their national level.

IFOAM EU's staff, making Europe more organic

The IFOAM EU office team explored the Walloon organic landscape on a two-days staff excursion in the Region of Namur. We started our trip at the cooperative [Agribio](#) producing flour, bread, pasta, cookies and much more. We met the farmer cultivating the crops and the different cereals and heard about his challenges. We also learnt how Agribio processes the cereals they receive from the farmers in the cooperative and saw firsthand how the artisan miller and baker process the grains into tasty produce. After a communal lunch with the sheep in Agribio's barn, we travelled to [Froidefontiane](#), a quaint farm in the Walloon hillside. The office received a tour of the domain and got informed about the ongoing and future projects at the farm incubator for organic projects. Some of the projects deal with poultry, vegetable gardens, pigment creation... After a day in the fresh air, we visited [Cycle en terre](#) to better understand organic seeds multiplication and the challenge they face to produce these seeds in Belgium.

Throughout the two days of our trip, we met very interesting and inspiring people who contribute to make Europe more organic. We would like to thank them again for welcoming us.

Are you active in the organic supply chain in and around Belgium and interested to welcome IFOAM EU staff at our next staff excursion? Please contact [info \[at \] ifoam-eu.org](mailto:info@ifoam-eu.org).

Saying goodbye to our colleagues

Tereza Maarova

IFOAM EU says goodbye to Tereza Maarova, who decided to head off towards new challenges. Tereza joined IFOAM EU in 2016, when she greatly contributed to the development of various project proposals, including IFOAM EU flagship projects - LIVESEED. Tereza also took over the coordination of SOLMACC project, where she did an enormous work in ensuring good project outreach as well as making a successful final event that received very positive feedback from participants, our members and partners. She also did great efforts to ensure the quality of the project final report to the European Commission - the main donor for the project. We would like to thank Tereza for her commitment, her outstanding team player attitude and we would like to wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

3 EVENTS



3.1 Preview of events

Share and discuss about keeping plants healthy in organic systems at the 4th European Conference on Copper in Plant Protection

14-15 November, Berlin, Germany

Sharing and discussing innovative ways are crucial to keep plants healthy in organic and integrated plant protection systems. Identifying research and farm management options to further reduce the use of copper are just as important.

This is why IFOAM EU, BÖLW and the Julius Kühn-Institut invite you to take part in the European Conference on Copper in Plant Protection on 14-15 November. The Conference takes place at the Julius Kühn-Institut, Königin-Louise-Str. 19, 14195 Berlin, Germany.

Have a look at the [conference programme](#)! IFOAM EU's Policy Coordinator Isabella Lang will present the recently finalised policy briefing on the organic approach towards inputs, developed in the course of the [RELACS project](#).

Background

In 2018, the European Commission renewed the approval of the natural substance copper as an active substance in plant protection products for a period of seven years. Due to concerns of the potential negative effects of copper fungicides on soil and water organisms, the EU authorities reduced the maximum applicable dose of copper from 6 kg to 4 kg per hectare per year.

Copper has unique properties and it remains essential for organic and integrated farmers to combat fungal diseases. Yet, the negative aspects of copper need ambitious efforts to minimise its use. In most arable crops, farmers can regulate diseases and pests with clever crop rotation systems.

Growing permanent crops like apples, wine and/or hops without relying on synthetic pesticides presents a bigger challenge. Coherent strategies including the enhancement of functional biodiversity, selection of robust varieties and the application of natural substances against pests and diseases can keep plants healthy.

For more information and registration [visit BÖLW's website](#). We are looking forward to seeing you in Berlin!

The event is part of the project "At eye level: knowledge transfer between research and practice in organic and sustainable agriculture and the food sector" (2015-2019), funded by the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture on the basis of a resolution of the German Bundestag within the framework of the Federal Scheme for Organic Agriculture and Other Forms of Sustainable Agriculture. You can find out more about the project at www.boelw.de/wissenstransfer.

The Future of Organic Farming & the Common Agricultural Policy post-2020

20 November 2019, Finland, Härmän Rati

Join our high level political event with representatives of the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture, the Finnish Environmental Ministry as well as Finnish organic farming associations. Policymakers will cover key topics like the CAP post-2020, GMOs and regenerative carbon farming and will discuss them with the international audience.



[The detailed programme and the link for registration are available on the IFOAM EU website.](#)

Following the event, the IFOAM EU Interest Group of Organic Farmers will have a two days meeting. In case you are interested in the work of the Interest Group of Organic Farmers, please contact [isabella.lang \[at\] ifoam-eu.org](mailto:isabella.lang@ifoam-eu.org).

IFOAM EU Farmers Interest Group meeting

21-22 November 2019, Finland

The next meeting of the Interest Group of Organic Farmers will take place in Finland, 21-22 November. The farmers will meet one full-day to discuss current issues around the new proposal for the CAP post-2020. On the second day an excursion to a research farm will take place. The research farm is working on regenerative carbon farming. In case you are interested in the work of the farmers interest group please contact [isabella.lang \[at\] ifoam-eu.org](mailto:isabella.lang@ifoam-eu.org).

What can we learn from four years of interregional cooperation to design regional organic action plans? Lessons learnt at the SME Organics final event

2 December, Brussels, Belgium

The final event of the SME Organics project will feature the lessons learnt over the past four years of intense collaboration in designing regional organic action plans. The event will also highlight the role of European interregional cooperation for designing Regional Organic Action Plans. These plans support the growth of organic SMEs by combining of multiple policy instruments. [Are you interested in hearing more? Attend the event by registering.](#)

After a networking lunch, the event will kick off with a welcome speech by a representative of the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) of the Interreg Europe Programme; Eduardo Cuoco, IFOAM EU Director; and SME Organics Coordinator Natalia Bellostas.

After the welcome session Nicolas Lampkin, Organic Policy consultant from [Thünen Institute](#) will give a keynote speech in which he will provide an overview of the organic sector in the European Union. A representative of the JTS will then present the Interreg Europe Programme and how it can support policy learning amongst different regions of the EU. Afterwards, Natalia Bellostas will present the lessons learnt during the SME Organics project.

The event will close with two panel discussions. The first one will focus on the experiences of the project partners regarding the role of interregional cooperation, moderated by Eric Gall, IFOAM EU Policy Manager, and the second one will explore the impact of multi-funded Regional Action Plans for supporting the growth of the organic sector.

Background

The [SME Organics project](#) comes to an end on 2 December 2019. It allowed regional partners from all over Europe to develop Regional Organic Action Plans through tailored funding and policy mixes. By mobilising stakeholders in all participating regions and exchanging experience the project will stimulate the growth of organic Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), resulting in high quality food



production, job creation, environmental protection and animal welfare. All project partner regions and the expert supporting partner will participate in the event. [If you want to attend the event, register here.](#)

The SME Organics project was funded within the framework of the Interreg Europe Programme. The Final Event will be held in Brussels, as a pre-event to [TP Organics' Organic Innovation Days](#). The project partner regions are Navarre (ES), Puglia (IT), Lombardy (IT), New Aquitaine (FR), Aargau (CH), North-West (RO), Lodzkie Region (PL), Seinäjoki (FI). The expert supporting partner is IFOAM EU (BE).



Exchanging on the EU organic regulation, pesticide residue findings and more at IFOAM EU meets business

3 December 2019, Brussels, Belgium

IFOAM EU meets business is a platform in which IFOAM EU and companies interested in organic intersect. The agenda of this event foresees ample time to exchange on topics such as the organic regulation and its secondary legislation, the issue of pesticide residue findings in organic products, the impacts of Brexit in the organic sector, as well as certification and integrity of the food supply chain. Have a look at the agenda to get the full picture.

For more information, go to the [registration link](#) and [IFOAM EU's website](#). Feel free to forward the registration link to your members who might be interested to attend.

The second edition of 'IFOAM EU meets business - Bringing the organic food industry together' will take place on 3 December in Brussels, Belgium. IFOAM EU will be delighted to welcome you in the central venue L42, close to the metro station Arts-Loi. With this event, IFOAM EU continues its series of 'IFOAM EU meets business' events which bring together IFOAM EU and companies involved in organic.



Discuss research needs of organic at the Organic Innovation Days 2019

3-4 December, Brussels



The Organic Innovation Days gather the organic sector and policy-makers to celebrate innovations and discuss future research needs. The 5th edition of the event will create a space for exchanging on how to stay on the cutting edge of research and innovation. This will be illustrated by experiences and lessons learned from the [LIAISON and XFACTORs projects](#).

Other highlights of the Days are the [European Rural Innovation Contest](#) that will reward the most innovative organic initiatives, a high-level policy debate, and the launch of TP Organics' new Strategic Research & Innovation Agenda for Organics & Agroecology.

For a detailed programme, visit [TP Organics' website](#). Are you keen to attend? [Register now for the Organic Innovation Days 2019 on 3-4 December in Brussels](#).

This year's edition of the Organic Innovation Days is organised by TP Organics, in cooperation with the [LIAISON project and the XF-ACTOR project](#). [TP Organics is the only European Technology Platform \(ETP\) for organic food and farming](#). [IFOAM EU hosts TP Organics' secretariat](#).



The XF-ACTORS project received funding under grant agreement No 727987 and the LIAISON project under No 773418, from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme.



TP Organics is co-financed by the LIFE programme of the European Union, under the Executive Agency for Small and Mediumsized Enterprises (EASME). The sole responsibility lies with IFOAM EU. The EASME is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.

3.2 Review of events

IFOAM EU Vice-President Marian Blom at Tech&Bio

18-19 September 2019, Bourg-lès-Valence, France

On 18 September, our Vice-President, Marian Blom, attended the Tech&Bio fair. On the first day of this biannual conference on new organic and alternative farming techniques, she participated to a conference on the change of scale in organic organised by INRA. In her talk, Marian presented the development of the European organic regulation and organic production systems. She also introduced IFOAM EU's work and presented the organic movement's vision for the next phase of organic development both globally, with [Organic 3.0](#), and in Europe, with our Vision for 2030.

Tech&Bio targets all professionals involved in agriculture: from farmers to teachers, students, researchers, consultants etc. The themes of this year's edition spanned from farming to product promotion and involved technical, scientific and business operators, as well as local authorities.

Since its launch in 2007, innovation has always been the essence of this event: during the forum participants discuss and share experiences, techniques, practices and expertise. Thanks to more than 100 field demonstrations, farmer and business testimonials and farm visits, organic and conventional farming learned from each other. National and international experts create the conference and workshop programme with a focus on farming techniques and marketing. In this context, organic farming worked as a catalyst for the transition of farming and food systems.

To read more about the event, [visit Tech&Bio's official website](#), where you will find pictures and videos from this year's edition.

European Research & Innovation Days: TP Organics bringing in organic and agroecological farming *24-26 September 2019, Brussels, Belgium*

24-26 September, TP Organics took part in the [policy conference](#) of the European Commission's [European Research & Innovation \(R&I\) Days during which the Strategic Plan of Horizon Europe was discussed with stakeholders](#).

Transforming our food system is urgent!

We need to redesign the food system in an equitable way to face the current climate crisis. An integrated public policy and the European Green Deal should support this, rather than relying on consumers to make change. This was the key take-away from the co-design session "Transforming of food systems for people, planet and climate"

Agroecology & organic go hand in hand

The co-design session "Upscaling agroecology through open innovation" introduced the concept of living labs as a form of place-based innovation. Living labs will be set up by the European Partnership "Accelerating farming systems transition: agroecology living labs & research infrastructures".

Jannes Maes, President of the European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA) emphasised farmers' needs for knowledge, support and appreciation, and stressed that every farm has the potential to become a living lab. Bram Moeskops, Senior Scientific Coordinator at TP Organics, commented that agroecology is closely connected to organic farming practices. When it comes to working with ecosystems, organic farmers possess the knowledge. "A lot can be learned from organic farmers to implement the transition to agroecology".

Soils are part of the solution to the climate crisis

10% of the funding of Horizon Europe will be allocated to 'Missions'. They are a key instrument in Horizon Europe

In the session on the **Mission on Soil Health and Food**, Commissioner for Agriculture & Rural Development, Phil Hogan pointed out the importance of soil carbon sequestration for combating climate change and of restoring soil health. He called soils a key asset to achieve the Paris Agreement. Participants discussed different soil functions, including productivity, climate, biodiversity, water regulation, nutrient cycling, and soil contributing to land systems as a whole, as well as challenges in improving soil health and expected research impacts. They stressed the need for an integrated policy approach and the transfer of knowledge into practice

The innovation principle: Industry's move to undermine the precautionary approach to our health and environment

Horizon Europe has introduced an "Innovation Principle" which risks undermining the Precautionary Principle, and hence social and environmental protections. Nina Holland from Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO) and Tom Wakeford, ETC Group, pointed out that the Innovation Principle was one-sidedly pushed by high-risk industries, namely the fossil fuel, chemical, tobacco industries, into Horizon Europe. The Innovation Principle does not define safe or sustainable innovation and is not needed to support innovation.

Are you interested in the recordings in the event? [All the video recordings of the policy conference sessions are available on the European Commission's website.](#)

Kick-off of the IFOAM EU Interest Group on Certification and Integrity

26 September 2019, Brussels, Belgium

On 26 September, IFOAM EU officially launched its Interest Group on Certification and Integrity (IGOC) at a kick-off meeting in Brussels. IFOAM EU members ranging from certification bodies, processors, farmers, research institutes to umbrella organizations joined the kick-off meeting.

At the kick-off, participants examined the future of certification, its main challenges and how to tackle them. Simultaneously, another group discussed on how to ensure the integrity of the supply chain in the organic sector succeeded. Following these workshops, there was a plenary discussion on the impact of private standards. Participants talked about improving certification and integrity of the supply chain. IFOAM EU's certification bodies shared some examples of the requirements that have impact on certification and integrity.

The IGOC aims to create a new platform between certification bodies and operators. It will allow them to exchange and stay up-to-date on all information related to organic controls, certification and integrity.

IFOAM EU would like to thank all attendees for the fruitful meeting and their interest on improving the certification and integrity of the organic sector.

For further information on the IGOC's activities, please contact [meriam.ghedira \[at\] ifoam-eu.org](mailto:meriam.ghedira@ifoam-eu.org).

Production of organic seeds: A business case - LIVESEED cross-visit to the Netherlands

30 September – 3 October 2019

The colourful programme of the third LIVESEED cross visit led the team to various stations along the value chain of organic seeds. The four-day business case started at the [Centre for Genetic Resources](#) at Wageningen University where participants got an insight into the latest research on optimising seed storage conditions. The staff at the Centre presented the national organic seed situation and the legal and institutional framework for producing and using organic seed in the Netherlands.

Day two addressed vegetable seed production. At [Vitalis](#), one of the world's leading companies in organic seed production, participants learned about [Germains](#) organic seed treatment services, visited the fields of Vitalis' with a wide diversity of seed crops, and explored different technologies for seed cleaning. At [De Bolster](#), participants learned how a family business produces seeds from

more than 370 varieties on 400 hectares. These seeds are destined for professional growers, seed companies, retailers and hobby gardeners.

The third day was dedicated to seed potato production. [NAK](#), the Dutch inspection service of seed potatoes, clarified how they carry out disease testing and the process of certification. [Agrico](#), supplier of organically grown seed potatoes and ware potatoes under the brand Bioselect, opened the doors to their potato assessment centre for the LIVESEED partners. The participants were guided through the various steps from breeding to production to trade to ensure high-quality potatoes.

The last day of the visit led the group to [Naktuinbouw](#), the Netherlands Inspection Service for Horticulture. Challenges of setting up organic DUS (distinctness, uniformity, stability) trials for registration purposes were discussed during the visit of Naktuinbouw's greenhouses and fields.

The 3rd LIVESEED cross-visit was hosted by the [Louis Bolk Institute](#) in cooperation with [Bionext](#), and focused on organic seed production of vegetable crops and potatoes. From 30 September to 3 October 2019, a multi-actor expert team, consisting of farmers, breeders, seed producers, researchers, and trainers participated from across Europe, especially from countries where organic seed production is less developed and/or has particular needs.

LIVESEED would like to thank LBI and Bionext for the wonderful organisation of the cross-visit; WUR, Vitalis, De Bolster, NAK, Agrico, Naktuinbouw for their presentations, hospitality, and valuable insight from their work. We would also like to thank all participants for sharing their expertise with the host companies/organisations and each other. We hope that the visit contributed to the mutual learning process and equipped the participants with the knowledge on organic seed production to multiply the gained knowledge in their country as change agents."



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Joint session with AqualIMPACT and iFishIENCy at the EAS conference

9 October 2019, Berlin, Germany

On 9 October 2019, [FutureEUAqua](#), [AqualIMPACT](#) and [iFishIENCi](#) held a joint half-day session at the [European Aquaculture Society \(EAS\)](#) conference. All three projects provided an overview on their activities and some of the results available so far. The joint session highlighted the synergies and complementarity between the three [Horizon 2020](#) sister projects. Project Coordinator Åsa Maria Espmark, Senior Scientist at the [Norwegian Institute of Food, Fisheries and Aquaculture Research \(Nofima\)](#) introduced FutureEUAqua.

The event took place in Berlin and more than 2,700 participants from 85 different countries attended it. [Watch this video](#) and [visit the conference website](#) to learn more.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 817737.

Successful first edition of Poland's first organic fair: BIOEXPO Warsaw 2019 *11-13 October 2019, Warsaw, Poland*

On 11-13 October the premiere of the fair for the organic industry in Poland took place: the first edition of BIOEXPO Warsaw, the International Trade Fair for Organic Food and Non-Food Products. With nearly 220 exhibitors and 9,000 visitors, the first edition of the fair was a success!

IFOAM EU's Capacity Building Manager Joanna Wierzbicka presented the mission and activities of IFOAM EU as well its work on the topic of the Common Agricultural Policy at the BIOEXPO Congress.

220 exhibitors from across the supply chain

Over 9,000 people visited the fair, most of them representatives from the industry. Many of them participated to the Hosted-Buyers programme. The dedicated zone for business to business (B2B) talks for exhibitors, organised by LIDL, the main partner of the fair, was very popular. [Meetings](#) many exhibitors had may soon translate into a real extension of the range of organic products in this discount network in Poland.

A large part of the exhibition was targeted at organic farmers, who were present in the halls of the PTAK trade fair centre. Owners of specialty stores from all over the country, representatives of the mass catering industry, as well as consumers looking for new products also attended the fair.

Nearly 220 exhibitors from Poland, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh gathered at the largest trade fair and congress center PTAK WARSAW EXPO in Nadarzyn near Warsaw. The six thematic zones – food & drink, beauty & cleaning, biolife, ekotech, bioagro and supporting bodies – offered a wide range of interesting products and solutions. Manufacturers and distributors presented only certified products.

In-depth discussions at the BIOEXPO Congress

The fair was accompanied by a rich BIOEXPO Congress covering agriculture and organic food, organic and natural cosmetics and cleaning products. Experts and practitioners discussed health issues, the threat of consumerism to our planet and much more. Among the speakers were representatives of IFOAM EU, SGGW, IMAS International, the Ministry of the Environment, the University of Warsaw as well as representatives of business, media and non-governmental organizations. IFOAM EU's Capacity Building Manager Joanna Wierzbicka presented the mission and activities of IFOAM EU as well its work on the topic of the Common Agricultural Policy.

New trends in the Novelty Zone

The latest trends were present in the Novelty Zone. Exhibitors showed their selected products and the visitors chose the winners. They are the following for each category:

1. Food & drink: a line of organic broths 'Get inspired by the taste!', presented by LOGICO.PL Damian Darowski;
2. Beauty & cleaning: ARKADI washing agents, presented by iSTART Sp. z o.o. from Greece;



3. Biolife: PATCH STRIPS PLASTERS FROM NATURAL BAMBOO FIBERS, presented by APOLLODOM Sp. z o.o.;
4. Bioagro: BIOgarden Professional Lawn by NaturalCrop Poland Sp. z o.o.;
5. Ekotech: Flexible compostable packaging, with water-based flexo printing, certified in accordance with the EN13432 standard from SILBO Sp. z o.o.

The organizers of the fair, Agata Szczepaniak - Project Director and Katarzyna Drobińska - Exhibition Director, showed that certified organic food as well as natural cosmetics and zero waste products are topics deserving an independent fair event in Poland.

Lidl was the main partner of this year's edition, and Katarzyna Bosacka, Katarzyna Jankowska and Grzegorz Łapanowski were the ambassadors of the show. The fair was supported by IFOAM EU and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Poland. BIOEXPO Warsaw was supported by the Polish Chamber of Ecological Food and the editorial offices of Biokurier.pl and Ekodostowcy.

The second edition of BIOEXPO Warsaw is scheduled for 8-10 October 2020. Registration opens at the beginning of December 2019 on bioexpo.pl/en/.

Strong IFOAM EU representation at the European action days for Good food Good farming
 22 October 2019, Strasbourg, France

On October 22, IFOAM EU demanded good food and good farming at the European days of action in Strasbourg, France. Lena Brisset, Policy Officer on CAP and our one-year ESC volunteers, Berenice, Kaja, Katerina, Molly and Thomas, took to the streets, alongside organic farmers, including members of the French organisation FNAB (Fédération Nationale d'Agriculture Biologique). Together with more than 1,000 others they called for better support for organic farming through both pillars of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Demonstrators carried a giant bee to remind the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) that over 20 years, flying insect populations have collapsed by 80%. The demonstration sent a strong signal to the Parliament and the Commission and the Member States that there is a crucial need for a paradigm change in EU's food and farming policies. Farmers played a key role in the demonstration, leading the protest with four tractors with hopeful consumers and activists. Farmers, beekeepers, civil society organisations and citizens from all over Europe called for an ambitious reform of the CAP with fewer direct payments going to large industrial farms and better remuneration of the public goods delivered by farmers.

The protest marked the peak of the [European Days of Action](#) for [Good Food Good Farming](#), an alliance of seven environmental and agricultural organisations. After marching on the streets of Strasbourg, thousands gathered outside the European Parliament to demand urgent action to address the current climate and environmental crises in the ongoing reform of the CAP.

At the end of the colourful and music-filled demonstration, the Good Food Good Farming coalition met with Members of the Parliament to hand-over an [open letter](#), signed by 23 organisations, and thousands of protest postcards sent from all over Europe.



The day ended with a reception on "Mapping the Present and Future of Farming" co-hosted by MEPs Tilly Metz (Greens) and Maria Noichl (S&D), a good occasion for participants to meet MEPs and discuss the priorities for the future CAP. In the words of Aurélie Catallo, representative from the French platform "Pour une autre PAC": "We are facing a climate and social crisis which can only be solved by a CAP Reform."

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.



5 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

14-15 November 2019

[4th European Conference on Copper in Plant Protection](#)

Berlin, Germany

20-22 November 2019

IFOAM EU Farmers Group meeting

Helsinki, Finland

2 December 2019

Interest Group of Organic Processors (IFOAM EU members only)

Brussels, Belgium

2 December 2019

[SME Organics final event](#)

Brussels, Belgium

3 December 2019

[IFOAM EU meets business](#)

Brussels, Belgium

3-4 December 2019

[Organic Innovation Days 2019](#)



Brussels, Belgium

12-15 February 2020

[BIOFACH 2020](#)

Nuremberg, Germany

21-27 September 2020

[Organic World Congress](#)

Rennes, France



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