

Contents

WELCOME NOTE.....	2
POLITICAL HOTSPOT	4
1 NEWS FROM IFOAM EU WORKING FIELDS.....	5
1.1 Policy.....	5
Common Agricultural Policy	5
1.2 Food, farming and environment	7
1.3 EU Research & Innovation Policy / TP Organics	9
2 IFOAM EU DEVELOPMENTS	14
3 EVENTS	16
3.1 Preview of events	16
3.2 Review of events	17
4 MAKING EUROPE MORE ORGANIC – SUPPORT IFOAM EU	21
5 CALENDAR OF EVENTS	22

WELCOME NOTE

Dear readers,

From 17 to 20 February, the 2020 edition of BIOFACH took place in Nuremberg, Germany. With about 300 visitors at our [Policy Day on the new Organic Regulation](#) and the [organisation of more than 10 sessions](#), it was a huge success for the organic movement. Among others, we talked about [how the new Common Agricultural Policy \(CAP\) can benefit organic producers](#), [the digitalisation of the organic food chain](#) and [the current implementation of EU law and future perspectives on new genetic engineering techniques](#). Also, our Science Day on 'Horizon Europe – Innovation opportunities for organic companies' attracted a large number of participants. Together with a representative from the European Commission they discussed how Horizon Europe can help solving challenges of organic companies related to food safety and packaging waste. Last but not least, the launch of our new mobile-responsive and interactive [member extranet](#) was another highlight. It allows our members to interact with one another and IFOAM EU, read about the latest policy developments and stay updated about our upcoming events.

One of these events is [IFOAM EU's General Assembly](#) on 30 June 2020 in Berlin, Germany. It will be followed by the Council meeting on 2 July 2020. [For more information, visit our member extranet](#) and [register by 19 June 2020](#). During the General Assembly, IFOAM EU will elect its new Board for 2020 to 2022. Candidatures will be open until 15 April 2020. The Nomination Committee is working hard to ensure suitable candidates are put forward. Candidates can also be nominated by

- an IFOAM EU Council member
- OR at least five IFOAM EU member organisations.

[Read more and register here to candidate for the next IFOAM EU Board 2020 - 2022.](#)

Being in Berlin already, IFOAM EU's General Assembly will be followed by our [European Organic Congress 2020](#), taking place from 1 to 2 July 2020. Under the title 'Organic in action', we will discuss an organic action plan on climate change and biodiversity as well as the reform of the CAP. We will also dedicate time to diving into the Farm to Fork strategy put forward by the European Commission. Furthermore, we will collect input on the upcoming European Organic Action Plan from congress participants. Are you interested in joining us and discussing in panel sessions and workshops with different representatives of the organic sector from all over Europe? [Have a look at our congress website that is constantly updated with the latest developments.](#)

Besides the organisation of a range of events, [we will be working on ensuring a favourable environment for organic operators within the framework of our first 'Developing Organic' project](#). Over the past few decades, pesticide use and contamination have become a major issue in the EU. In 2016, almost 400,000 tonnes of pesticides were sold in Europe, the majority used in the agricultural sector. Given the dominance of intensive agriculture that employs these substances, there is a substantial risk of contamination for farmers who do not use those substances and for the environment in general. This raises a significant problem for the organic sector, where the use of synthetic pesticides is prohibited. [Read more here](#) and help us to develop organic further by supporting our project. This would allow us to go beyond our regular work on pesticide use and contamination.

In a time of uncertainty in Europe and around the world due to the [COVID-19](#) pandemic, the organic movement would like to express its solidarity with all those involved: doctors and nurses on the front

line in hospitals, patients and responsible people taking great measures to prevent the massive spreading of this virus. We encourage you to proactively take personal safety measures if your country hasn't ruled so yet. Let's support our health system and protect the most vulnerable citizens.

Also during this crisis, the organic sector will make sure it remains operational to satisfy the EU citizens' demand for healthy and environmentally friendly produce.

Yours Organically,
Eduardo Cuoco

POLITICAL HOTSPOT

The organic movement calls for ambitious targets to increase organic land and consumption in the EU ahead of the publication of the [Farm to Fork](#) and [Biodiversity](#) strategies planned for 25 March.

The new [Commission's Green Deal](#) highlights the need to increase the environmental ambition of the EU and to move towards sustainable food systems. According to IFOAM EU, the Farm to Fork strategy should build on the success of organic farming and its potential to transform agriculture to provide EU citizens with a credible and engaging vision for a sustainable food production system in 2030.

Organic farming is well known by citizens all over the EU, it is a legally-defined and certified sustainable agri-food production system with proven benefits for the environment and animal welfare, and a well-established and profitable business model for farmers, processors and retailers. In line with IFOAM EU Vision for 2030, a strong dynamic organic farming sector should be part of a broader transition of the whole agriculture sector, half of which should be managed according to the principles and practices inspired by agroecology by 2030.

To make these ambitions a reality, the organic movement suggest the Farm to Fork Strategy to combine supply-push (CAP conversion and maintenance aids) and demand-pull (public procurement, promotion) policies. Having the right policies in place would contribute to a balanced growth of organic production and demand and develop the whole organic supply chain.

The Farm to Fork strategy should therefore include quantitative targets to increase both organic land and consumption of organic products in the EU, and to reduce the use of pesticides and antibiotics. IFOAM EU calls for **a target of 20% organic land by 2030** (on average in the EU), which is both ambitious and achievable (considering that organic farming currently covers around 8% of EU land) provided it is linked to the CAP. Member States should include a national target for organic land in their CAP strategic plans, and provide the adequate support for organic conversion and maintenance, to allow full use of agri-environmental measures under rural development (pillar 2) and of innovative mechanisms like eco-schemes (in pillar 1).

IFOAM EU also calls for an EU target of 20% of organic products in public kitchens by 2030, in line with the push-pull approach which has been successful in Denmark. This could be achieved through Green Public Procurement (GPP) and promotion policies. It is an effective way to develop the whole organic production chain and to give a prominent role to local authorities in the Farm to Fork strategy.

IFOAM EU is part of the **EU food policy coalition**, which supports shifts to more sustainable diets with more plant-based products, less intensive animal production, and innovative governance models for the Farm to Fork strategy. This highlights the important role to civil society at all levels as well as local authorities.

The organic movement calls for synergies between the [Farm to Fork strategy](#), the [Biodiversity strategy](#) and the CAP reform to acknowledge the contribution of organic farming to the EU objectives of the [Green Deal](#) and support it accordingly.

1 NEWS FROM IFOAM EU WORKING FIELDS

1.1 Policy

Common Agricultural Policy

Charles Michel's MFF proposal puts second-pillar budget at risk

Ahead of the extraordinary Council on EU's long-term budget, the Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF), Council President Charles Michel presented the current negotiating box.

In 2018, the European Commission proposed an overall budget worth 1.11% of the EU's gross national income (GNI), the European Parliament asked for 1.3% and Member States are not willing to go beyond 1.074%.

The CAP budget has decreased sharply over the past 25 years, and this trend is now accelerating with the gap of €75 billion caused by Brexit and the need to finance new priorities like defence, research and innovation and migration. The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) seems to be the most affected.

In the budget battle, there is a clear divide between 'frugal' Member States, like Austria, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands. They want to keep the budget at 1.0% of the GNI and want less money for agriculture and cohesion. This is opposed to many eastern and southern countries that are willing to safeguard agriculture and rural development spending.

Michel has put forward a €256.7 billion budget for the first pillar (in 2018 constant prices), representing a €2.5 billion increase compared to Finnish presidency's proposal. However, money allocated to the second pillar is cut by €7.5 billion and is now capped at €72.5 billion.

The organic movement cannot accept such a decrease in the second pillar of the CAP, which is the most environmentally ambitious and ensures job creation and dynamism in rural areas. This proposal is not in line with the new challenges faced by the agricultural sector, neither with the ambitions of the Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy.

To support this ambition, the post-2020 CAP budget should at the very least be maintained at the current level. Moreover, IFOAM EU strongly encourages to set a mandatory minimum requirement for each CAP Strategic Plan to dedicate at least 70% of the budget to climate action, environment and animal welfare.

On 20 and 21 February, Heads of State and Government had intense negotiations but did not reach an agreement on the MFF. *"We have worked very hard to try to reconcile the different concerns, the different interests, the different opinions on the table. But we need more time"* concluded President Charles Michel.

New IFOAM EU report highlights the role of CAP Eco-schemes to incentivise sustainable farming practices

The recently introduced [CAP Eco-schemes](#) have great potential to drive the transition towards more sustainable farming systems. This is stated in a new report by the research institutes [FiBL](#) and [IEEP](#), commissioned by IFOAM EU.

The EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is currently under negotiations in the EU institutions. At the same time, Member States started to define their priorities through the CAP Strategic Plans. The Eco-scheme is one of the main innovations in the new CAP proposal. Yet, many uncertainties remain about its content, funding and implementation.

Jan Plagge, IFOAM EU President states that “if adequately programmed, Eco-schemes would represent a huge opportunity for farmers to be remunerated for the public goods they provide. This success depends on financial incentives, which go hand in hand with IFOAM EU's first recommendation to ringfence 70% of the CAP budget for environmental and climate action”.

IFOAM EU's new guide '[Using Eco-schemes in the new CAP](#)' provides support to policy-makers, Member State officials and other public and private stakeholders involved in developing CAP Strategic Plans. It allows for gaining a better understanding of this new policy tool. Among others, it

- Provides a thorough analysis of the policy's strengths and weaknesses;
- Highlights technical details for its implementation, such as choosing the right payment model;
- Presents a wide range of interventions that could be eligible for Eco-schemes, including systems-based approaches such as organic farming, conservation agriculture, the protection and maintenance of High-Nature Value (HNV) farmland areas or agroforestry;
- Gives recommendations on how to identify the main problems and barriers to develop effective and efficient measures;
- Provides guidance on the monitoring and evaluation of Eco-schemes.

Dr. Matthias Stolze, Head of the Department of Socio-economics at [FiBL](#) and co-author of the report said: “The full potential of Eco-schemes has not yet been recognised. There is a scope to use sustainability assessment tools to focus actions on real needs and to monitor outcomes on farms. For Eco-schemes to achieve their full potential, there is a need to ensure the allocation of sufficient resources and political support for the implementation of innovative approaches.”

Overall, Eco-schemes could increase the uptake of system-based and agroecological approaches substantially. To do so, their planning needs to take other policy developments into account. These include the [Green Deal](#), the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#), the [EU Strategy for Biodiversity](#) and a new Organic Action Plan.

1.2 Food, farming and environment

Help us save bees and farmers

The European Citizens' Initiative '[Save bees and farmers](#)' wants to phase out synthetic pesticides by 2035, support farmers, and save bees and nature. If the initiative gathers one million signatures by September 2020, the EU Commission and Parliament must consider turning the campaign's demands into law.

You can contribute by signing and spreading the word by sharing the initiative widely within your networks. To do so, we have collected a range of communication materials, which you can find below.

Help spread the message: Communication materials

Have a look at the '[Save bees and farmers](#)' website and browse the [initiative's communication materials](#). Information about the initiative is available in [more than 20 languages here](#).

Feel free to share the initiative on your **social media channels** using

- #SaveBeesAndFarmers, and/or
- the tweets we prepared with one of the images you can find at the bottom of this section and the tag @IFOAMEU.

Tweets

- General: #OrganicFarming is one of the solutions suggested by the new #ECI #SaveBeesAndFarmers. Sign the petition <https://www.savebeesandfarmers.eu/>, demand an agricultural model based on health, ecology, fairness & care for farmers, #environment, animals & consumers. #OrganicsPartOfTheSolution
- French: #SauvonsLesAbeilles #SauvonsLesAgriculteurs! Nous provenons de toute l'UE pour demander une agriculture respectueuse des abeilles, pour le bénéfice des agriculteurs, de la santé et de l'environnement! Signez aujourd'hui <https://www.savebeesandfarmers.eu/fra/> #SaveBeesAndFarmers  
- German: #BienenUndBauernRetten! Aus ganz Europa kommen wir für eine bienenfreundliche Landwirtschaft und eine gesunde Umwelt zusammen. Werde Teil der Bewegung, unterzeichne die Europäische Bürgerinitiative <https://www.savebeesandfarmers.eu/deu/#SaveBeesAndFarmers>  
- Italian: Salviamo Api e Agricoltori! Da tutta l'UE ci siamo uniti per chiedere un'agricoltura favorevole alle api, a vantaggio di agricoltori, salute e ambiente! Firma ora <https://www.savebeesandfarmers.eu/ita/> #SaveBeesAndFarmers  
- Spanish: ¡Salvemos a las abejas y a los agricultores! Pedimos, desde muchos rincones de la UE, una agricultura que sea respetuosa con las abejas, en beneficio de los/las agricultores/as, la salud y el medio ambiente. ¡Únete ahora! <https://www.savebeesandfarmers.eu/spa/> #SaveBeesAndFarmers  

For additional background information about the initiative, [have a look at our website](#). IFOAM EU members can visit the [member extranet](#) or contact isabella.lang@ifoam-eu.org for more details and images for the tweets.

The organic movement and the International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association (IBMA) call for better regulation of natural origin plant protection technologies

IFOAM EU and the International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association (IBMA) published [a five years roadmap for collaboration to promote the uptake of safe, environmentally friendly and efficient biocontrol technologies of natural origin suitable for organic farming.](#)

IBMA and IFOAM EU welcome the European Green Deal's recognition of the role of organic farming and of new innovative techniques to improve the sustainability of the food system. Therefore, IBMA and IFOAM EU ask for concrete targets and actions in the "Farm to Fork strategy", the zero-pollution action plan as well as the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy. DG SANTE Commissioner Stella Kyriakides, highlighted the need for "ambitious targets on pesticides and fertilisers to substantially reduce the risks associated with them." Hence, to make the Green Deal a reality we need concrete actions to reduce the use of synthetic pesticides.

One concrete solution to achieve this is to promote the faster registration and uptake of biological plant protection technologies from natural origin. IBMA and IFOAM EU believe that biocontrol technologies are an important part of the solution. As these products are usually specific to one pest, they origin from nature or are identical to nature when synthesized so the unknown risk is low, and resistance to a product is very rare. These technologies are commonly used to complement preventive and indirect plant protection measures which form the basis of sustainable and organic farming systems. Only if farmers and gardeners have an adequate number of alternatives to synthetic inputs, an ecological transformation of the food and farming system can be successful.

IFOAM EU and IBMA have identified seven areas for potential collaboration for the years to come. These include advocating for a dedicated and proportionate regulatory framework for biocontrol solutions and building knowledge and competence on natural origin plant protection in registration authorities and among farmers.

Very successful examples of natural origin plant protection technologies exist for glasshouse pests, particularly for vegetables. While biocontrol technologies for arable crops are already efficiently used in some European countries, there is an urgent need for more solutions adapted to outdoor crops. The biocontrol industry is investing in research and development of biocontrol technologies that fit organic farming principles.

IBMA and IFOAM EU support increased knowledge sharing and cooperation among farmers, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), policymakers and stakeholders to fill the gaps in pests and diseases control.

[Read IFOAM EU and IBMA's roadmap.](#)

1.3 EU Research & Innovation Policy / TP Organics

Priority challenges for the first Work Programme of Horizon Europe – Position paper published by TP Organics

In view of the preparation of the first Work Programme of Horizon Europe, TP Organics has developed a [Position Paper](#). It describes priority challenges for organic and agroecological research & innovation. These challenges are based on TP Organics' [Strategic Research & Innovation Agenda](#) and were selected according to the following criteria:

- Relevance for EU policy, in particular the [European Green Deal](#) and the [Farm to Fork strategy](#)
- Relevance and urgency for organic and agroecological food and farming

For each challenge, a portfolio of actions is presented. TP Organics elaborated these portfolios together with experts from the different fields of research. They correspond to two intervention areas of Cluster 6 of Horizon Europe, “Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment”.

The portfolios under intervention area **Agriculture, forestry and rural areas** are:

1. Better farming policies for diverse and vibrant rural areas
2. Organic plant health
3. Organic approaches to sustainable animal production
4. Strengthening organic knowledge and innovation systems
5. Circular and climate-resilient organic farming

Intervention Area **Food Systems** includes the following portfolios:

1. Towards a European Market Observatory for organic food and farming
2. Safe and sustainable organic food

To leverage the potential of organic food and farming and agroecology to lead the way in the transition towards a more sustainable future for all, research and innovation in organics and agroecology are indispensable. The challenges put forward in this paper need to receive appropriate support at EU level. Of particular importance in this regard are Horizon Europe, the European Partnerships and Missions as well as the Innovation Partnership [EIP-AGRI](#).



This communication is co-financed by the European Union, under the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME). The sole responsibility for this communication lies with IFOAM EU. The EASME is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided

The BIOFRUITNET project: Bridging gaps between science and practice

On 16-17 December, the project BIOFRUITNET has been officially launched at its kick-off meeting in Hamburg. Focusing on organic pome, stone and citrus fruits, this projects aims to strengthen the competitiveness of European organic fruit production by:

1. Collecting and synthesizing existing practical and scientific knowledge on organic fruit-growing to distribute it widely among the EU countries through easy formats like e-learning, podcasts, videos and short articles;
2. Strengthening the established networks in organic fruit growing and establish links between them to create strong networks of organic fruit producers and stakeholders with a good flow of information.

The International farmers association Naturland coordinates the project that is carried out in collaboration with 15 partner organisations representing 11 countries in total. They will work together during three years to provide information to the farmers in a practical way to tackle the challenges of pests and diseases in fruit crops.

For more information on the project activities and expected results, please contact: Sophie Hédon, [s.hedon \[at \] naturland.de](mailto:s.hedon@naturland.de).



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation program under Grant Agreement No 862850.

OK-Net EcoFeed and Organic Farm Knowledge – A unique resource with tools for farmers across Europe

The [online Organic Farm Knowledge platform](#) presents scientific and practical knowledge tailored to practitioners. The platform allows for easier sharing and access of knowledge, helping farmers and advisors to become more innovative and advance towards best practices.

The core of the platform is the "toolbox", including factsheets, guides, online calculation tools and videos. Every tool is described by metadata that helps users to find the most relevant tool addressing their needs. Metadata include the problem the tool addresses, the solution(s) it offers, a description of the tool, the theme(s) covered, the language(s) it is available in, year of release, the country of origin and information about the issuing organisation.



The platform currently compiles more than 200 tools and tackle a variety of themes. It was first launched in October 2016 by the OK-Net Arable project and extended to [OK-Net EcoFeed](#) in 2018. OK-Net Arable gathered tools on arable crops, soil quality and fertility, nutrient management, pest and disease control. OK-Net Ecofeed focusses on pigs, broilers, laying hens, feeding and ration planning and the handling of harvested feed.

Within the OK-Net EcoFeed project, ITAB recently published a video about [outdoor system for fattening pigs](#) using various combinations of forage crops.

Several European projects have expressed interest or are already committed to supplying tools on themes such as seed, plant breeding, fruit production and inputs used for organic plant protection, animal production and fertilisation. These tools will be available soon.

Find Organic Farm Knowledge at organic-farmknowledge.org



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 773911. This communication only reflects the author's view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.

From Italy to Japan - Findings on behavioural manipulation as an alternative to the use of paraffin oil in greenhouse whitefly control presented in Japan

The RELACS project just published its third news story, focusing on the experience of Valeria Fattoruso, researcher at RELACS' partner [University of Trento](#).

Her research aims at finding environmentally sound solutions to control the population of one of the most harmful insect pests, namely the greenhouse whitefly, to replace the common use of paraffin oils. Her outstanding work on the vibrational communication of this insect and on the use of vibrations to control its behaviour led her to Japan.

Read the news story "[Behavioural manipulation as an alternative to the use of paraffin oil in greenhouse whitefly control](#)" to find out more and follow other developments of the RELACS project 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.



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.



Reducing Vitamin B2 supplementation in laying hens – Read the second RELACS project’s practice abstract

The RELACS project is proud to announce the release of its [second Practice Abstract, focusing on the reduction of Vitamin B2 supplementation in laying hens in organic systems](#). 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 feed mills.

Vitamin B2 (Riboflavin) from GMO-free sources is a necessary supplement in organic poultry feeding. Recently a serious delivery gap occurred, unveiling the need to develop new ways of GMO-free Vitamin B2 production.

The [RELACS project partners](#) decided to go one step further and explore the idea of decreasing the recommended levels of Vitamin B2 supplementation for various types of animals. This would reduce feed production costs and dependency on external sources simultaneously.

Read more about the results of the controlled experiment carried out by [the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture \(FiBL\)](#) in [RELACS’ second Practice Abstract](#) and follow other project developments 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.



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.

EUREKA project kick-off & EURAKNOS mid-term review

From 27-29 January, the two-year Horizon 2020 project [EUREKA](#) was officially launched in Bruges. IFOAM EU will contribute to this project with its expertise on organic farming and experience with multi-actor projects in the organic sector.

EUREKA will develop an easily searchable and open-source database called FarmBook. This database will ensure the longevity and better sharing of the end-user material produced by 120 multi-actor projects. IFOAM EU will make sure that the FarmBook suits the needs of organic actors, and will engage the organic sector in its development. By greater circulation of innovative knowledge and best practices across Europe, EUREKA will enhance the sustainability and productivity of the agricultural and forestry sectors in Europe in the long term.

The second half of the week was dedicated to the mid-term review of the Horizon 2020 project [EURAKNOS](#). This project has similar objectives as EUREKA but is dedicated to Thematic Networks as specific multi-actor projects. IFOAM EU presented the report on the added value and feasibility of an electronic knowledge reservoir platform for which IFOAM EU investigated similar existing initiatives on national and international level from an end-user point of view – including knowledge reservoirs for organic agriculture such as [Organic Farm](#)

[Knowledge](#) and [Organic Eprints](#). In a next step, IFOAM EU will organise two of fifteen planned cross-visits that will gather the experience from other Thematic Networks.



The projects have received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No 817863 (EURAKNOS) and Grant Agreement No. 862790 (EUREKA).

FOODSHIFT2030 project kick-off

The transformation of the European food system has started!

The 1st of January 2020 not only marked the beginning of a new decade, but also the start of the new EU Horizon 2020 project: FoodSHIFT2030. FoodSHIFT2030 is setting the ambitious goal of transforming European food systems by means of groundbreaking mechanisms for maturing, combining, upscaling and multiplying sustainable food system innovations.

Christian Bugge Henriksen from the University of Copenhagen is coordinating the FoodSHIFT2030 project and says: "Our house is on fire and the youth has called upon us to act. I am really happy to see that the EU is leading the way by committing to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions between 50% and 55% by 2030. Currently, the food system accounts for 20% to 30% of global GHG emissions. The FoodSHIFT2030 project will contribute to reducing these emissions and thereby supporting the Farm to Fork Strategy recently introduced in the European Green Deal".

Dirk Wascher from SUSMETRO, the Innovation Manager of the FoodSHIFT2030 project, who will be guiding the food system transition in the FoodSHIFT Accelerator Labs, explains: "We are now starting the establishment of the FoodSHIFT Accelerator Labs in the nine front-runner city-regions: Avignon in France, Bari in Italy, Brasov in Romania, Barcelona in Spain, Berlin in Germany, Greater Athens in Greece, Greater Copenhagen in Denmark, Oostende in Belgium and Wroclaw in Poland. Each of these Labs has its own innovation focus which has been developed bottom-up by the local food system stakeholders. Together they are covering a range of major themes within food system transition and are expected to generate high synergy with substantial EU-wide impacts".

Dirk Wascher continues: "During the next four years we are going to support the Labs in increasing the technological and societal readiness levels of existing food system innovations in order to maximize their impact. Knowledge will be transferred between the nine front-runner city-regions and subsequently to twenty-seven follower city-regions through the establishment of FoodSHIFT Enabler Labs. By connecting with city-region networks this knowledge transfer will continue beyond the project lifetime and contribute to the required fast transition of the food system by 2030".

"We have to acknowledge that reducing GHG emissions in the entire food value chain will be crucial for achieving the commitments under the Paris Agreement and keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees" says Christian Bugge Henriksen: "This means that we now have 10 years to transform the European food system towards a low carbon circular future. In order to succeed we need to support the transformative power of citizens already engaged in developing sustainable food system solutions. We need to work together on making the necessary transition towards less meat and more plant-based diets. And we need to strengthen urban and rural cohesion by making both cities and rural areas more livable".

A total of 30 project partner organizations, including local governments, SMEs, NGOs, universities, research institutions and network partners are contributing to the FoodSHIFT2030 project. For more information about the FoodSHIFT2030 project see www.foodshift2030.eu. For more information about the European Green Deal see https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No 862716.

2 IFOAM EU DEVELOPMENTS

IFOAM EU members now have access to member-only information on the new IFOAM EU member extranet

We have launched [our new IFOAM EU member extranet](#). IFOAM EU members will now be able to access the new member extranet using their computer, mobile phone and tablet.

This new space offers IFOAM EU members:

- Information on key political processes and our work on them;
- Increasing transparency of IFOAM EU's work; for example, by providing an overview of all internal working groups, who is involved and how to take part;
- "members-only" information;
- All the information about [the upcoming General Assembly](#) in one place;
- A platform for exchange and collaboration;
- More user-friendly workspaces for our interest and expert groups.

As an IFOAM EU member, you will now be able to access the new member extranet using your computer, mobile phone and tablet

For your convenience, the old links and login information stay the same. [Check out the new space!](#)

Are you accessing the IFOAM EU member extranet for the first time? [Read the instructions on logging in](#) and contact [communication \[at \] ifoam-eu.org](mailto:communication@ifoam-eu.org) to request access and receive your login information.

Are you not an IFOAM EU member (anymore)? Contact [IFOAMEU_membership \[at \] ifoam-eu.org](mailto:IFOAMEU_membership@ifoam-eu.org) and hear what's possible.

Do you need help accessing the member extranet? Do note that the old links that you have bookmarked are still the same. Your login information is also the same.

Background information

Help with access:

- Your user information & password have remained unchanged. If you forgot this, [this is how you can recover it](#);
- Do note that if your organization is using SharePoint, you either have to open the IFOAM EU extranet in a different browser, or log out of the other environment;
- Email [communication \[at \] ifoam-eu.org](mailto:communication@ifoam-eu.org) or contact +32 (0) 2 416 52 32.

Gain experience at the heart of the European organic movement – Apply to work with IFOAM EU as an ESC volunteer!

IFOAM EU is looking for **five volunteers** to join the team for 11 months, **from September 2020 to July 2021**.

- Do you want to learn more about **organic food and farming**?
- Are you between **18 and 30**?
- Are you legally residing in a **European country** other than Belgium?
- Do you have no (or no more than 3 months of) previous volunteering experience with the **ESC** or **EVS** (European Solidarity Corps or European Voluntary Service)?

Apply by **15 April** or share this opportunity with your network on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or [LinkedIn](#). To apply, fill in the Online Application Form available on the [IFOAM EU website](#). For more information about the programme, please visit the [European Solidarity Corps website](#).



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The volunteering project is funded by the European Solidarity Corps programme of the European Union. The sole responsibility of the content lies with the author and communication reflects only the author's view. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.

Saying goodbye to our colleagues:

Kata Gocs

Kata joined IFOAM EU in 2016, as a volunteer in the Research & Innovation Unit where she took care of the secretariat of TP Organics. IFOAM EU was happy to hire Kata as an employee in 2017. Kata contributed to the thematic network OK-Net Arable and played an important role in the coordination of the follow-up project OK-Net EcoFeed. Kata was also involved in advocacy work, mainly following the developments of the agricultural European Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI). In 2019, Kata took a break to write a thesis and obtain her master's in environmental agricultural engineering at the University of Szent Istvan in Gödöllő. At the beginning of 2020, she decided to leave IFOAM EU. We would like to thank Kata for her commitment and her outstanding attitude! We wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

3 EVENTS

3.1 Preview of events

Next farmers group replaced by an online meeting

Because of travel restrictions linked to Covid-19 concerns, IFOAM EU decided to cancel the Farmers Group physical meeting, initially planned on 18-19 March 2020 in the Netherlands. It will be replaced by an online meeting on 18 March. More detailed will be sent to the participants.

Access to farmland for organic farming and animal welfare and the current CAP developments were supposed to be at the core of the next meeting of IFOAM EU organic farmers. We will also elect a new steering committee for the group and the nomination of a farming sector representative for the upcoming IFOAM EU Board election in June.

Are you interested to join the meeting? [Please register here.](#)



With the support of the
Erasmus+ Programme

8th Symposium in Slovakia: Going local [postponed]

Agriculture needs to change. Its contribution to the climate and biodiversity crisis cannot be neglected, and farmers do not get a sufficient income from their work.

To be part of the change you can join the [8th Symposium on Pesticides Reduction](#) at the [Slovakian Agriculture University](#) in Nitra on 7 April. There, EU policies and regulations to on-field agronomic practices and alternative technologies will be discussed. Speakers will present solutions to effectively reduce pesticide use for an agricultural model which is safer both for environment and our health, and which can provide a more stable future for farmers.

For eight years, the [Pesticide Action Network \(PAN Europe\)](#), the [International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association \(IBMA\)](#) and the [International Organisation for Biological Control \(IOBC\)](#) have been organising symposia on pesticide reduction in Brussels. In 2020, their symposium is going local!

If you are interested in the event, [have a look at the programme](#) and [register here](#).

Register now for the Organic World Congress

21-27 September, Rennes, France

Registration for the 20th [Organic World Congress 2020](#) (OWC) is open!

To benefit from the [early bird discount](#), we invite you to register by March 25. Held in France for the 2020 edition, the OWC is the largest organic gathering and is organized in cooperation with one or more national organic organizations: an event by the organic movement, for the organic movement.

Visit owc.ifoam.bio/2020 for more information.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement N°818182

3.2 Review of events

How to adapt cultivar testing to the needs of the organic sector?

4-6 February, Brussels, Belgium

In most of the EU, cultivar testing takes place under conventional conditions and testing criteria are adapted to the needs of the conventional system. This hampers the release of cultivars specifically bred for the organic system and organic farmers cannot identify cultivars suitable for their agricultural system.

In the first week of February, LIVESEED organised workshops to discuss adapted cultivar trials for organic agriculture, considering official trials for variety release and unofficial trials to evaluate the regional suitability of a cultivar.

The first workshop, organised in cooperation with Horizon 2020 project [INVITE – INnovations in plant Variety Testing in Europe](#), focused on the impacts of the new organic regulation [\(EU\) 2018/848](#), more specifically of the definition of organic heterogeneous material and organic varieties suitable for organic production. At the workshop, organic and conventional breeders, representatives of national testing authorities and the Community Plant Variety Office, and policymakers discussed on the possibility to adapt DUS (Distinctness, Uniformity, Stability) and VCU (Value for Cultivation and Use) testing. The LIVESEED workshop directly fed into a meeting by the European Commission's Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) that took place on the following day, to develop implementing acts for the temporary experiment on organic varieties suitable for organic production.

The second LIVESEED workshop was led by [INRAE – National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment](#) (France). During the workshop experts discussed and designed innovative cultivar testing models for organic agriculture.

The [full article](#) is available on [LIVESEED's website](#)



LIVESEED has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 727230 and by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation under contract number 17.00090.

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Next generation of organic leadership graduates at BIOFACH 202

June 2019 – February 2020

IFOAM EU's Silvia Schmidt and Isabella Lang participated to the Organic Leadership Course June (OLC) 2019 - February 2020. The participants with various professional backgrounds from across the world graduated at the international trade fair Biofach.

One of the highlight of this years' event was a training session where participants shared personal and professional stories on the concept of organic leadership with Louise Luttkholt, Director of IFOAM – Organics International, and three of their female board members.

The Organic Leadership Course is a flagship training program by IFOAM – Organics International. It takes place in various regions across the globe. This holistic course empowers participants to assume greater responsibility in finding organic solutions to address the world's environmental and social challenges.

Are you interested in the manifold activities of the IFOAM Organic Academy? [Check out the course they offer.](#)

Farmers group goes international

14 February 2020, Nuremberg, Germany

We were glad to welcome our colleagues from the international IFOAM Farmers group (INOFO) at our annual breakfast IFOAM EU Farmers Interest Group breakfast at Biofach. The visiting farmers from India, South Africa and Brazil exchanged with their European counterparts. Talks centered around structural questions such as how to make sure that the voice of organic farmers is heard and taken up in the policy process. The farmers also talked about agronomic principles and practices and economic and social questions.

We will continue this conversation will continue at the [Organic World Congress](#) in Rennes.



Farmers Interest Group is co-financed by the LIFE Programme of the European Union, under the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME). The sole responsibility for this communication lies with IFOAM EU.

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TP Organics' Science Day 2020: Horizon Europe – Innovation opportunities for organic companies

14 February 2020, Nuremberg, Germany

On 14 February, TP Organics' Science Day on innovation opportunities for organic companies in Horizon Europe, to address the urgent challenge of packaging waste, in particular plastic waste, in the food sector at [BIOFACH 2020](#) in Nuremberg, Germany.

Peter Wehrheim, Head of Unit for Food Systems & Bioeconomy, DG Research & Innovation, European Commission, introduced Horizon Europe, the EU's new research & innovation programme. Support for organics and agroecology is seen as an important element to future-proof agricultural production and food systems.

Raffaele Zanoli, expert of TP Organics' Advisory Board and professor at [Università Politecnica delle Marche](#), presented [TP Organics' new Strategic Research & Innovation](#)



[Agenda for Organics & Agroecology](#) and stressed the importance of meeting the consumer demand for minimal processing, and of supporting innovations for reducing food and packaging waste.

Patrick Gerritsen from [Bio4Pack](#) and Lucy Cowton from [FUTAMURA](#) presented their solutions for sustainable packaging. Karin Müller from the organic biscuit company [SOMMER](#) gave insights into their experience with bioplastic.

The panel debate discussed how Horizon Europe can help solve the innovation challenges of organic companies. Hans-Joerg Lutzeyer from the European Commission, DG Research & Innovation, joined the other speakers to present the new European Partnership on Safe and Sustainable Food Systems for people, planet & climate.

All speakers' presentations and the [full event review](#) are available on [TP Organics' website](#).



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BIOFACH session on organic seed and organic heterogenous material in the New EU Organic Regulation

14 February 2020, Nuremberg Germany

On 14 February, IFOAM EU organized [a session on Organic Seed and organic heterogenous material in the new EU Organic Regulation](#) at the BIOFACH congress.

Visitors were able to gain an insight into recent developments regarding organic seed in Europe. These were based on facts and the perspectives of farmers and seed companies that were collected through surveys within the framework of the [LIVESEED project](#). Martin Sommer, Policy Coordinator at IFOAM EU explained the importance of including organic heterogenous material (OHM) into the New Organic Regulation for the organic sector. OHM is an additional category of plant reproductive material available for organic farming. It offers a high level of genetic diversity and resilience. When the audience raised concerns whether this new category might disturb the seed market, the panel emphasized that OHM should be seen as an additional tool with the potential to diversify the possibilities in organic farming rather than a threat to current practices.

Gebhard Rossmanith from [Bingenheimer Saatgut](#) talked about the definition of organic varieties suitable for organic production in the Organic Regulation. He also explained how the 'seven years temporary experiment' could facilitate market access for organic varieties by developing prototypes of alternative protocols for variety testing. Those protocols could then be adopted to allow for more flexibility concerning uniformity and stability during registration and the introduction of new characteristics that are particularly relevant for organic. The experiment is to be conducted by the EU Commission in cooperation with the Member States.

Finally, Freya Schaefer from [FiBL](#) presented the results of a survey among farmers, seed companies and breeders. They show that the highest share of organic seed use per farm can be found on farms that predominately grow vegetables as well as in Northern and Central Europe. A substantial

increase in organic land area has led to an increased demand for organic seed. Yet, non-organic seed is still commonly used for most crops. Fundamental challenges that need to be overcome are

- the increasing but still low demand for organic seed
- and the difficulty for farmers to obtain organic seed for all the crop (sub)species and varieties needed.

Consequently, it is crucial to improve the availability of organic seed for locally adapted varieties, which goes hand in hand with increased efforts in breeding for organic farming. The prospects concerning breeding activities are, however, positive. At the moment, more than half of the European seed companies are planning to increase investments in breeding varieties suitable for organic production over the next 5 years.



LIVSEED received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement Liveseed (No 72723)

BIOFACH2019

into organic

How much and which natural inputs does the organic sector need? – A lively debate during BIOFACH 2020

15 February 2020, Nuremberg Germany

A lively discussion on [natural inputs suitable for organic farming](#) as well as future obstacles and opportunities for the sector's development took place during the BIOFACH congress 2020. Also, participants discussed the first results of [the European research project RELACS](#), such as [a highly innovative vibrational tool to disturb the mating behavior of pest insects](#) or the [future of fertilisation](#) in organic farming.

Together with the national partners, IFOAM EU will organize a series of science-practice-policy dialogues in 10 different countries. The first one will take place at the [Organic World Congress](#) in Rennes (France) in September 2020. A broad dialogue with the whole organic movement will be initiated to discuss future strategies concerning inputs for plant protection, fertilization, animal health and feed additives. Among others, we will discuss

- how to reduce or phase out contentious inputs in organic farming;
- how to promote the uptake of alternative tools and technologies;
- how to make sure that all relevant stakeholders are involved in the discussion and
- which regulatory changes would benefit the uptake of natural inputs.

If you are interested in the process, please contact [Isabella Lang](#).



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.

Organic fruit growers gather in Germany for the 19th Ecofruit conference

17 – 19 February 2020, Stuttgart, Germany

IFOAM EU is glad to be the patron of this important biennial event on the future of organic fruit growing. This year it brought together 100 scientists, advisors and regulatory experts from 17 different countries.

The [Ecofruit conference](#) was happy to welcome a representative from the Pesticide Unit of the European Commission's DG SANTE. This offered the opportunity to discuss the obstacles of authorisation of natural substances, such as botanicals or metal compounds. A collection of inputs of the conference will be available [on the website of the event](#) within a few weeks.

Ambra de Simone, Project Coordinator at IFOAM EU presented a poster of the recently launched [European BIOFRUITNET project](#), which aims at bridging the gap between science and practice in European organic fruit production. [For more information, see here.](#)



4 MAKING EUROPE MORE ORGANIC – SUPPORT IFOAM EU

IFOAM EU KEY SUPPORTER 2020

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

10-12 March 2020 - POSTPONED

[Global Symposium on Soil Biodiversity](#)
Rome, Italy

18-19 March 2020

The IFOAM EU Interest Group on Organic Farmers meeting (initially planned in the Netherlands) is replaced by an online meeting.

LIVESEED regional workshop North-Western Europe
(initially planned 19-20 March 2020 in
Warmenhuizen, Netherlands) is postponed to June 2020.

30 June 2020

[IFOAM EU General Assembly](#) (for IFOAM EU members only)
Berlin, Germany

1-2 July 2020

[European Organic Congress](#)
Berlin, Germany

21-27 September 2020

[Organic World Congress](#)
Rennes, France

27 October 2020

OK-Net EcoFeed final conference
Brussels, Belgium

24-25 November 2020

Organic Innovation Days, LIVESEED final conference & LIVESEED European workshop
Brussels, Belgium



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