

Working for Organic Farming in Europe



Annual Report 2009

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Letter from the President

Dear reader,

Welcome to this comprehensive report of the activities of the IFOAM EU Group during 2009. It shows the wide range of work we have completed. I hope that you will find it both informative and inspiring.

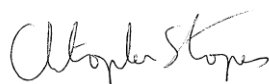
The IFOAM EU Group is part of the global IFOAM family working for organic food and farming in Europe. To deliver our promise we rely upon the commitment and support of our members and the effective work of our excellent team in Brussels guided by an active, well informed Board. In 2009 our team and our work has increased to meet the urgent need for a change in direction of food and farming policies and practices in Europe towards an organic future. We understand the diverse needs of the organic sector throughout Europe, and we are confident that we can support its development to meet the challenges ahead in a way that is consistent with the principles of organic food and farming.

Our increased activity in 2009, presented in this report, was made possible by a DG Environment Life+ grant to the IFOAM EU Group. This has supplemented our core income from membership fees, sponsorship and projects and has been crucial in allowing us to build on our past success. Together, this support has allowed us effectively to communicate our vision for organic food and farming as a realistic solution to the many challenges we face. It has allowed our work to continue to contribute to the effective delivery of this organic vision by the many farmers, businesses, organisations and individuals that together make organic food and farming a day-to-day reality for people throughout Europe.

We work on many fronts, ranging from detailed implementation of the organic regulation, to promoting organic farming as a tool for fighting global challenges, for example climate change and biodiversity loss. We lobby for agricultural and environmental policies in Europe that make the most of the opportunity that organic food and farming presents. We have continued to campaign for a GMO free Europe. We have been active partners in several research and development projects and we have worked in partnership with a wide range of interested organisations and individuals to define organic research priorities and present a strategic research agenda to influence EU research funding policy. We maintain a constant presence within the European Commission and Parliament holding meetings and conferences that are attended by key stakeholders including our own members.

All of this has been achieved by a growing and rapidly developing organisation. We are getting stronger and more effective in delivery. The tireless work of the dedicated team of staff in Brussels is our strongest asset and our members our biggest resource. Please join me in thanking the IFOAM EU Group team in Brussels and all our members in the vital work for organic farming in Europe.

Yours sincerely,



/Christopher Stopes, President/



1. IFOAM EU Group: overview of activities in 2009

In 2009 the IFOAM EU Group expanded its work areas, its staff, its overall scope of projects and activities and with this enhanced its current results and further ambitions. Thanks to strengthening its financial and organisational standing in the year of 2009, IFOAM EU Group developed the capacity to both enlarge and elaborate its policy and regulation advocacy work, formulating and presenting the interests of the organic movement on national and above all EU level. The Group was also able to follow more closely on new issues of growing relevance to the organic food and farming sector in Europe and elsewhere.

In 2009 the work and the development of IFOAM EU Group was focused on:

› Continuing its core work on the Organic Regulation

IFOAM EU Group continued its work on the recently adopted EU Regulation for Organic Food and Farming – Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 - and its Implementing Rules – Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008, especially, but by far not only, in the areas which throughout the year required more focus - organic aquaculture and wine.

IFOAM EU Group published in 6 languages a **Regulation Dossier** to provide to the organic operators a framework for assessment and interpretation of the new legal arrangements on an EU level; it contributed to the **formulation of the Implementing Rules** for Organic Wine and Organic Aquaculture; it took part, by way of expressing the views of the organic processors, in the discussion on the new **EU organic logo**; it also integrated into its work newly arising issues like the revision of the clauses on organic poultry and greenhouse production among others.

› Further enhancing its lobby impacts

IFOAM EU Group increased its lobby power not only for its aforementioned core regulation work, but also – significantly – in the broader areas of the agricultural and environmental policies, with their numerous crossing points with the interests of the organic producers and consumers in Europe.

If measured by the numbers: in 2009 IFOAM EU Group took part in more **Commission and parliament meetings** and joined more meetings within Brussels and Europe on current agricultural or environmental topics than ever before. It took positions and publicised these positions through numerous press releases, letters sent to the European institutions, position papers and other policy publications – from Dossiers giving an in-depth expert examination of an issue to lobby materials and studies.

Last, but far not least, the lobby impact of the Group was effectively increased through **direct meetings with key decision-makers**: during the year delegates of IFOAM EU met twice with the EU Agriculture and Rural Development Commissioner Fischer Boel and members of her cabinet, with the cabinet of the EU Environmental Commissioner Stavros Dimas and a

number of DG Environment officials as well as with high- to mid level officials, responsible for topics of interest to the organic movement and the IFOAM EU Group, in DG SANCO, DG Research and in the European Parliament.

Representatives of IFOAM EU Group participated in **significant events throughout Europe** to present the standpoints of the organic movement: those include high-profile events like the United Nation's Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, the Climate Change Conference in Lund and the conference of the Czech Presidency in Prague on quality production.

Throughout the year IFOAM EU Group participated in the work of nine **Advisory Groups of the European Commission**. In DG AGRI IFOAM EU was represented in the Advisory Groups on Organic Agriculture, Rural Development, Fruits and Vegetables, Quality of Agricultural Production, Agriculture and Environment and since 2009 – also in the Advisory Groups on Common Agricultural Policy and Wine-Growing; in DG SANCO – IFOAM EU took part in the Advisory Group on Food Chain and Animal and Plant Health; and in DG MARE – in the Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture.

➤ ***Promoting organic farming as a tool for fighting global challenges, increasing its scope of work and range of outputs***

IFOAM EU Group designated time and effort to achieve political and public recognition of the fact that in the face of aggravating global problems from climate change to biodiversity loss and food crisis, organic farming with its environmentally sustainable practices of production is an **effective tool for fighting current challenges** and shaping sustainable and responsible solutions – therefore it must be recognised for its public benefits and should be part of any policy towards meeting these problems on European and global level.

To enhance its impact in affirming organic farming as a model of modern, sustainable agriculture with valuable potentials for solving some of the biggest problems of today, IFOAM EU Group both organised and took part in high-profile events – first to mention would be the **Second European Organic Congress** 'Organic Food and Farming in times of Climate Change, Biodiversity loss and Global Food Crisis' held by IFOAM EU in December 2009 – and popularised its positions through regular communications to members and wider circles.

IFOAM EU Group generally **expanded the scope of its policy work** by putting more focus not only on the topics of climate change and biodiversity, but also by contributing with the organic point of view and line of argument to the current discussions on: CAP post-2013, animal cloning, eco-labelling, nanotechnology, organic public procurement and the external costs of agriculture.

➤ ***Increasing its outreach to broader public, branding its name, spreading the word for the benefits of organic farming***

As an additional toolbox for its lobby work, but also as a way to achieve broader outreach, the IFOAM EU Group developed for the first time in 2009 a full set of **promotion campaign tools** - lobby folder, post card series, paper block, pens. The promotion items were used at the Second European Organic Congress, organised by IFOAM EU, and will continue to be of good use in the years to come.

As in previous years IFOAM EU Group **took every opportunity to present its work and the benefits of organic farming** not only to experts but also, as much as that was possible with the available time and resources - to broader public. The Group organised discussions and/or presented its work through its already traditional participation at events like BioFach, Organic Marketing Forum, Bioacademy, Green Week and BioWeek in Brussels – with audiences varying from specialised experts to people unacquainted with organic food and farming. Workshops and discussions were organised mainly for the benefit of experts and others involved in the organic sector, information tables with information material and IFOAM EU staff present, ready to answer queries, were available at all of the above regular events as well as at various other, non-regular events and occasions to be able to cater to the needs and level of knowledge of those less involved.

During the year the IFOAM EU Group also **increased the quantity and quality of its communications** to members, expert lists and media and by the end of it registered the highest number of press clippings than ever before.

➤ ***Working towards advancing organic research***

After extensive consultations with hundreds of stakeholders (more than 300) the Technology Platform Organics, launched in 2008 with the active participation of IFOAM EU Group as a founding member, prepared and published in 2009 a '**Strategic Research Agenda for Organic Food and Farming**'. The purpose of the document was to identify in detail the needs for organic research and to influence the relevant EU policies to this end.

➤ ***Developing as an organisation***

Thanks to the substantial operational grant received from DG Environment in 2009, the IFOAM EU Group managed to strengthen its organisational capacity considerably. That involved **increased human capacities** of the Brussels office of the Group allowing for a narrower specialisation and closer focus on an expanding range of policy topics and better communication of positions and outputs.

With growth comes need for restructuring. Another side of the IFOAM EU Group's development was the adoption of new **Working Methods**, agreed by the IFOAM EU Board in 2009 in order to define roles and mechanisms for coordination, for developing positions, for decision-making and external

representation. In 2009, the IFOAM EU Group also held its **4th General Assembly**.

➤ **Implementing EU projects in the field of organic farming**

In 2009 IFOAM EU Group implemented for the first time an extensive work agenda under the Life+ Programme of the European Commission/DG Environment and as a result had the majority of its activities in 2009 co-funded by Life+. During the year it also successfully finalised the EU-funded research project ORWINE (where IFOAM EU Group was a partner), a CAP information measures project (IFOAM EU Group was a main contractor), which financed the seminar organised in April in Romania, and an EVS project financing volunteer's support for the Brussels office of the Group. As with previous projects (ORGAP, Revision, previous CAP and EVS projects), IFOAM EU Group implemented its 2009 project activities diligently and with success.

2. IFOAM EU Group's work on the Organic Regulation 834/2007 and its Implementing Rules

The current Organic Regulation (Council Regulation 834/2007) with its Implementing Rules (Commission Regulation 889/2008) came into force on 1 of January 2009 after a long process of revision of the old regulation 2092/91. Having been following the revision process since its inception back in 2004 and 2005 (with the publication, respectively, of the European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming and the Commission's proposal for revision), in 2009 the new task of the IFOAM EU Group was, first, to provide an useful interpretation of the new provisions laid down by the regulation and, second, to serve as best as possible the interests of the organic movement by monitoring the actual implementation process and problems arising from it and by influencing the decisions that were still to be taken in two remaining areas – organic wine and aquaculture. IFOAM EU also kept close focus on the process of designing the EU organic logo, which continued in 2009, and other specific issues, mostly related to the technical annexes of the regulation.

2.1 Regulation Dossier



As early as February 2009 – within a month or so of coming into force of the Regulation – IFOAM EU Group prepared and published a Regulation Dossier. At that point it was too early to have a full picture of the implementation of the regulations 834/2007 and 889/2008 throughout the 27 Member States. The Dossier however, although abstaining from fully assessing the implementation process - which was taking place at that moment with a different pace in the different countries, succeeded in giving a comprehensive overview of how the new regulation will impact different areas of the organic sector. With this the Dossier contributed to an improved understanding of the new legal framework and its implications in specific fields of organic production.

The Regulation Dossier – with full title “The New EU Regulation for Organic Food and Farming: (EC) No 834/2007 Background, Assessment, Interpretation” - was launched on February 19 during BioFach 2009 at the booth of the Czech Agriculture Ministry (in view of the Czech Republic holding the EU Presidency at that time) with speeches of the EU Agriculture Commissioner Fischer-Boel, the Minister of Agriculture of the Czech Republic Mgr. Petr Gandalovic, and Jiri Urban, Deputy Minister of Agriculture of the Czech Republic. It was translated and published into Czech, Greek, French and German in 2009 (two other language versions - Spanish and Polish – were finalised and published later, in 2010), printed in about 50,000 paper copies and disseminated free of charge among organic companies, farmers’ associations, certifiers, researchers as well as interested institutions, universities and organisations from all over Europe. The electronic versions of the Dossier in all languages were available for free download throughout the year.

2.2 EU organic logo

In 2009 the European Commission re-launched the process of selecting a design for new organic logo (made obligatory by the regulation for all packaged organic products produced in the EU) after recognising problems around the previously proposed design (similarities with another logo that was already on the market). An open competition was announced in the first half of the year and continued for the rest of it; the process was still open in December when 3 selected final options (out of the initial 3,422) were offered for public vote.



Throughout this process, the IFOAM EU Group made known its opinions and recommendations, based on internal consultations with its members, part of which expressed marked dissatisfaction with the pace of the process and the 3 final logo proposals. During its annual meeting with the Organic Unit in DG AGRI of the European Commission, representatives of IFOAM EU handed over a [Letter on the new EU logo](#) stressing the importance for the organic operators to have the new logo approved and published in time (for them to prepare for the new labelling requirements) and proposing transition period if that condition is not met. Earlier in the year IFOAM EU ongoingly informed the organic sector about the different stages of the selection process.

2.3 Organic aquaculture

The work on the Organic Aquaculture Implementing Rules required attention for most of the year 2008 and continued well into the first half of 2009. Already in 2008 the IFOAM EU Group formed an Organic Aquaculture Expert Group in order to be ready to coordinate expert and stakeholder input, provide representative views of the sector and thereby a credible contribution to the process of establishing the aquaculture rules.

In the beginning of 2009 the Organic Aquaculture Implementing Rules were still underway – the rules had to be agreed and added to the general Implementing Rules, laid down in Regulation (EC) 889/2008, as an amendment. The Commission renewed the discussion in 2009 by publishing a [working document on aquaculture](#) (rev06/01) in January and presenting its revision (of January 27th) to the SCOF meeting on January 28-29. The Commission draft was then further discussed at the next SCOF on March 3-4.

After consultations with its network of experts, the IFOAM EU Group communicated its comments and corrections to the draft aquaculture rules through series of letters to the responsible institutions (see letters from [12/01/2009](#), [27/02/2009](#), [30/03/2009 annex](#), [12/05/2009](#), [25/05/2009](#)) and via press releases to the broader public ([13/05/2009](#), [30/06/2009](#)). IFOAM EU Group's biggest concern was that the draft did not sufficiently reflect the organic principles as laid down in the Organic Regulation 834/2007. The Group commented in detail on issues like high stocking densities and allowed substances for cleaning – points in which the aquaculture rules resembled the conventional aquaculture practices too closely.

After more than a year and a half of discussions, SCOF adopted the Organic Aquaculture Implementing Rules on 29 of June. The IFOAM EU Group welcomed the fact that the Member States found a compromise and defined EU-wide rules for organic aquaculture for the first time, but pointed out that further development of the regulation is needed. The Group then initiated a debate among the sector to come up with a concrete proposal for further adjustments, e.g. regarding sustainable seaweed practices. The proposals will be used for further input for developing the rules (it is anticipated that the Commission will make a review of the aquaculture rules by 2013).

2.4 Organic wine

▶ **ORWINE policy recommendations**

IFOAM EU Group made its first major contribution to the work towards regulating the production of organic wine on EU level as part of the partner consortium of the EU-funded project [ORWINE](#), which after three years of work involving wine experts and organic production experts from around Europe, ended in the middle of 2009 with the delivery of [Final Recommendation for EU Rules on Organic Wine](#) - "Proposal and recommendations for elaborating rules for organic wine in EU Regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products (Commission Reg. EC 884/2008 based on Council Regulation EC 834/2007 repealing Regulation EEC 2092/91)". This comprehensive document contains a compilation of stakeholder and expert views, results from experimentation and on-farm testing, and a wealth of data relevant for the elaboration of the new EU rules for organic wine that had to be worked out.

▶ **Organic Wine Implementing Rules**

The Implementing Rules for Organic Wine was one of the issues left out of the general Implementing Rules (known also as NIROF) laid down in Commission

Regulation 889/2008. In preparation for the forthcoming work on rules and specifications for organic wine, IFOAM EU Group established in the first half of the year an internal Organic Wine Task Force with the aim to formulate positions and put them forward to the decision-making bodies; the task force was co-chaired by Otto Schmid from FiBL and Monique Jonis, ITAB.

Starting from June when the Commission circulated its First Working Document on Organic Wine-making – with the idea to discuss it at the Standing Committee on Organic Farming (SCOF), hammer out agreement and come to Organic Wine Implementing Rules (as it was planned) by the end of 2009 - the IFOAM EU Task Force examined proposals, compiled input from the organic movement on all discussed elements of organic wine production and processing, and issued positions to SCOF and the responsible officials in the European Commission. The IFOAM EU Group submitted a [Detailed Position on Organic Wine Processing](#) in September, to be taken into account in the October SCOF meeting. In October, The IFOAM EU Wine Task Force worked out two further reactions to the political discussion – a [Position on Sulphites, Oenological Practices and Processing Aids](#) and [Letter on Organic Wine Making](#).

The most controversial topic was to what extent the IFOAM EU Group can be in favour of a limitation of SO₂ levels in organic wine as the opinions on that issue differed significantly among different segments of the membership. However, the IFOAM EU Group was able to agree on some key points in its October [Letter on Organic Wine Making](#). In the following months IFOAM EU submitted several further contributions to the political discussion: [Amendments from November 19](#); [Letter on Sulphites](#); [Amendments from December 11](#). These timely inputs explained in more details the position of IFOAM EU Group and provided further recommendation on permitted techniques, enrichment, additives, and processing aids.

In addition to its continuous work on written positions, IFOAM EU Group brought up the wine issue in direct meetings in the European Commission as well as before the members of SCOF during the evening reception organised by IFOAM EU in November. Throughout the second half of the year, when the wine discussion was most intensive, the IFOAM EU Group informed on all developments through its special website section: [IFOAM EU -webpage on organic wine](#). In December, however, it became clear that the wine rules could not be agreed on by the end of 2009, as there were serious disagreements between the Member States, and the discussion had to continue in 2010.

2.5 Ongoing monitoring work

Besides its work in the specific areas of organic wine and aquaculture, in 2009 the IFOAM EU Group took up the role of monitor and watch-dog for the interests of the European organic movement in issues arising in the process of implementation of the new regulations. The Group worked out positions and held meetings alongside this process whenever necessary.

As part of this ongoing work in May the IFOAM EU Group sent a [Letter on Certification of Organic Additives](#). The letter, addressing the Head of the Organic

Unit of the European Commission, expressed concerns over the rising problems of interpretation with regards to ingredients mentioned in article 27 of the Implementing Rules (EC 889/2008) and Annex VIII. These problems involved the noted tendency in some countries to exclude from certification the substances from article 27 and Annex III (e.g. organic lecithin, organic guar, organic locus bean gum, organic citric oil, organic flavour extracts). The IFOAM EU's letter appealed to the Commission to inform the Member States anew on the issue.

On 14 of September IFOAM EU Group asked for a [revision of the technical annexes](#) to the new Organic Regulation 889/2008. In its letter to the European Commission IFOAM EU pointed to the need for reconsideration and update of Annex IX of the Regulation, authorising the use of non-organic substances in organic food. It also brought to the attention of the Commission a list of products which are already available in organic quality and should therefore be removed from Annex IX.

On October 5 the IFOAM EU Group submitted a letter to the European Commission on the [legal definition of flavours](#), pledging that flavours should be considered foods and as such can be certified as organic.

In November IFOAM EU Group called for more consistency in the new requirements for labelling of origin. In a [Letter on Labelling of Origin](#) to the EU Agriculture Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel and a [Letter](#) to Jean-François Hulot, Head of the Organic Farming Unit in DG Agriculture, IFOAM EU pointed to problematic issues related to the requirements in the Organic Regulation 834/2007 (under article 24) for the indication of origin of ingredients.

The Brussels office of the IFOAM EU Group coordinated throughout the year the participation of IFOAM EU experts in the Advisory Group on Organic Farming within DG AGRI of the European Commission. Representatives of IFOAM EU participated in all 4 meetings of this Advisory Group held in 2009. It also organised and successfully held two regulation-related workshops (on the new Organic Regulation and the Imports Regulation) at BioFach, the biggest organic trade fair in Europe.

As already mentioned, the IFOAM EU Group organised a reception for the members of SCOF on November 19, during which it introduced its work on the Organic Regulation. This took place at the premises of the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Brussels. Around 20 SCOF members came to the reception and had the opportunity to meet some of the board members and members of IFOAM EU as well as its Brussels office staff.

3. Environmental and agriculture policies

Thanks to the financial support under the Life+ programme in 2009 and through it the employment of a full-time Policy Coordinator and Food Legislation Coordinator, the IFOAM EU Group was able to devote more work and produce better results in areas and topics which have always been within its range of interest but only now took a more prominent position in its work

priorities. That fully applies to the time and effort spent on: climate change, biodiversity and soil protection, GMO free food and feed, CAP and rural development, animal welfare and cloning, food labelling and food safety and the quality of food production. IFOAM EU organised its Second European Organic Congress - a high-profile and well-attended event which put some of these issues in the spotlight, and discussed in direct meetings with the responsible EU officials the organic farming approach to meet global challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss while producing healthy food.

3.1 Organic farming as a solution to global challenges – the work of IFOAM EU Group on climate change and biodiversity

► Second European Organic Congress

On 1 of December 2009, after extensive preparation work, IFOAM EU Group held its Second European Organic Congress, gathering more than 200 participants from all over Europe, experts and policy makers. The congress, which focused on “Organic food and farming in times of climate change, biodiversity loss and global food crisis”, featured a number of high-level speakers, among them Hans Herren, President of the Millenium Institute, Julien Mousnier, member of the Cabinet of Commissioner Fischer Boel, and Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, Co-Chair of the International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management. It ended with an evening reception in the European Parliament which was opened by Paolo de Castro, Chairman of the European Parliaments Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, and had as keynote speaker Percy Schmeiser, winner of the Right Livelihood Award 2007, member of the International Commission on the Future of Food, and a world-known anti-GMO activist. Both the core programme of the congress and the evening reception attracted significant attention.



The Second European Organic Congress, organised by the IFOAM EU Group on December 1 in Brussels, gathered more than 200 members of the organic movements, businesses and experts, and EU policy-makers.

The Second European Organic Congress of IFOAM EU Group was designed and implemented as a high-level political event, exceeding in ambition and scale the expert meetings held by IFOAM EU throughout the year. It brought to the attention the fact that while conventional agriculture has been part of the reasons for aggravating global environmental problems like climate change

and loss of biodiversity, organic agriculture is and must be recognised for being part of their solutions. Organic agriculture can contribute to long-term food security by careful use of natural resources, promoting a holistic approach towards sustainability in food production and ecologically sound innovation. Being attended by officials from DG Environment, Agriculture and Research, in addition to representatives of NGOs, members of the organic movements and researches, it is well justified to say that it managed to give more prominence to the issue of the important potentials of organic farming to deliver public goods as well as to bring this point forward to the EU policy makers.

► **Climate change**

In addition to the Second European Organic Congress, which put strong focus on the issue of organic farming and climate change, IFOAM EU Group paid continuous attention to this topic through various other events and works.

IFOAM EU produced a [Climate Change Study](#), collecting case studies in the EU which underpin the scientific evidence of the contribution of organic farming to the mitigation of climate change. The study, entitled "The Contribution of Organic Agriculture to Climate Change Mitigation", was co-produced with IFOAM, and contained 5 case studies demonstrating the contributions of organic farming to mitigating one of the world's major concerns. It was launched at the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference (COP 15) in December 2009, widely disseminated among stakeholders in Europe and since then used and distributed in all events of the IFOAM EU Group. A second study by the IFOAM EU Group – the study "High Sequestration, Low Emission, Food Secure Farming: Organic Agriculture – a [Guide to Climate Change and Food Security](#)" – presented a compilation of training manuals on organic agriculture and low carbon practices. It was co-produced with IFOAM and covers the topics of mitigation, adaptation, food security, poverty alleviation and health.

During 2009 representatives of IFOAM EU Group spoke at various events with a focus on climate change. In September the Vice President of IFOAM EU Thomas Dosch spoke at the EFFAT conference "Fight Climate Change! Save Jobs in Agriculture, Food and Tourism". Later he also participated in the United Nation's Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen as part of a delegation of IFOAM representing the organic movement. In November the Director of IFOAM EU Marco Schluter participated in the "Climate Smart Food" conference in Lund held by the Swedish EU Presidency.

The IFOAM EU Group also issued a [press release on mainstreaming climate-friendly practices in EU policies](#) and on the [need to consider the climate in food decisions](#) (on the occasion of the "Climate Smart Food" conference in Lund).

► **Biodiversity**

Through its policy work in 2009 the IFOAM EU Group covered the issue of biodiversity in many cross-cutting activities (the Second European Organic Congress, GMOs versus biodiversity discussion, strategy meeting in June 2009) and prepared for the Year of Biodiversity 2010 by planning a publication and a

conference. IFOAM EU Group was also a member of the [Countdown 2010](#) campaign for saving biodiversity.

3.2 GMO

GMO, GMO-free farming, the labelling threshold for GMO in seed were high on the agenda of the IFOAM EU Group in 2009.

In February IFOAM EU Group joined like-minded organisations in sending a [Letter to Oppose Two New GM Varieties](#) and removal of national bans. The letter, sent to agriculture and environment ministers (in charge of the national GM dossiers) was a timely voicing of concern for the then forthcoming votes on the Commission proposals to allow two new GM maize varieties (Bt11 and 1507) for cultivation and to remove the French, Greek and Hungarian national bans on Monsanto's MON810 maize. It pointed out that the proposal to authorise the cultivation of the two GM varieties is inconsistent with the recognised stance (including the December 2008 EU Environment Council conclusions) that the current GMO risk assessment must be improved. With regards to France, Hungary and Greece's bans, it states that provided that the re-assessment process in the EU for MON810 is currently ongoing, it is inappropriate to even consider lifting of national bans.

At the end of February, during BioFach 2009 in Nuremberg, IFOAM EU Group organised a protest action against lifting the national bans and a group of IFOAM EU active members handed over a petition to the German agriculture minister Ilse Aigner. The Group issued a [press release](#) on this occasion.



February 19, Nuremberg Messe (BioFach). Rudi Vierbauch (left), Chairman of Bio Austria, and Thomas Dosch (center), President of Bioland and German board member of IFOAM EU Group, handed a petition to Ilse Aigner (right), Minister of Agriculture of Germany, in support of the Austrian, French, Greek and Hungarian members of the IFOAM EU Group, which strongly protested against the Commission's plan to remove their countries' national bans on GMO cultivation.

In March IFOAM EU Group took part in a [European cyber action](#) against cultivation of GM maize in Europe. In June IFOAM EU joined the GMO-free march that took the long way from Berlin to Brussels - a journey made in 30

days to demonstrate against GMOs. The Director of IFOAM EU Marco Schlüter made a speech at the march's closing public event in Brussels (see [press release](#)). In September The IFOAM EU Group participated in the [stakeholder survey](#) as part of the evaluation the EU legislative framework in the field of cultivation of GMOs (under Directive 2001/18/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003) conducted by DG Environment. The Group emphasised that precautionary measures to prevent contamination must be implemented more strictly and called for full liability for contamination. Later IFOAM EU also took part in the general stakeholder consultation on the "best practice document – maize", which was under preparation by the European Bureau for Coexistence (ECOB), and addressed the issue in a Letter to the European Commission, criticising the way co-existence is being treated, with contamination cases and the economic costs for organic farmers for staying GMO-free not being sufficiently taken into account. IFOAM EU also took part in the DG SANCO stakeholder survey on GM food and feed.

IFOAM EU Group also met with the Cabinet of the Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas and discussed among other things the issue of establishing a labelling threshold for GMO in seed. IFOAM EU maintains its position of zero tolerance and establishing the threshold at the detection level for adventitious presence of GMO in non-GM seed. Later, in December, IFOAM EU held a meeting on the same issue in Directorate 'Nature' of DG Environment. The issue was also part of the discussion at the European Organic Congress on 1 of December and the anti-GMO press conference which IFOAM EU organised on 2 of December. The press conference with guest speakers Percy Schmeiser, Canadian farmer and well-known anti-GMO activist, and Charles Benbrook, Chief Scientist in the USA's Organic Center, stressed that GMO is no solution to climate change, biodiversity loss and global food crisis (see [press release](#)).

Towards the end of the year IFOAM EU Group produced a study assessing the impacts of labelling thresholds on organic food production. Throughout the year it also participated in DG SANCO's Advisory Group on Food Chain, Animal Health and Plant Health where GMO problematics were discussed.

3.3 CAP and rural development

The work of IFOAM EU Group on the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) and rural development has been strengthened in 2009 through the continuous work of the internal CAP Expert Group and since August the employment of a Policy Officer. During the year representatives of IFOAM EU met with the EU Agriculture Commissioner and other EU officials; CAP and rural development were important part of the agenda of the IFOAM EU events; positions were formulated and studies produced.

In April IFOAM EU Group organised in Romania a seminar on "Organic food and farming in Europe and its political framework". The mid- and long-term development of the CAP, as a major part of the regulatory environment in which the organic sector operates, was consequently a major part of the discussions (see [press release](#)). In June IFOAM EU held in Vienna a workshop

of agricultural experts which, amongst other strategic decisions, initiated the work on a CAP position paper.

In October IFOAM EU-delegated representatives held a meeting with the Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Mariann Fischer Boel in which the future development of the CAP was prominently discussed. Other political meetings throughout the year include a meeting with the Director for Sustainability and Quality of Agriculture and Rural Development in DG Agriculture and officials in DG Environment and the European Parliament. Also in October IFOAM EU Group through its Vice President Thomas Fertl took part in the Commission's Advisory Group on Rural Development. At this meeting the IFOAM EU addressed the issues of the objectives of the rural development policy and the role and resources it should be given within the future CAP.



October 15 – meeting with the Agriculture Commissioner. From left to right: the IFOAM EU Group Director Marco Schlüter, the EU Agriculture and Rural Development Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel, the then new President of IFOAM EU Group Christopher Stopes and the Group's Vice President for Policy Thomas Fertl.

Starting in July IFOAM EU, together with other NGOs, worked out a proposal for a new CAP (CAP post-2013), which was launched in December, and issued its own position paper. The joint proposal, prepared in cooperation with Birdlife, WWF, EFNCP and EEB, focused on the need to shape the CAP to a policy that delivers a high output of public goods, with a special focus on the sustainable farming systems High Nature Value and Organic Farming. The joint proposal was presented at Commission meetings and at every other relevant opportunity. The IFOAM EU [Position for a Sustainable CAP After 2013](#) was launched during the Second European Organic Congress on December 1. The paper summarises IFOAM EU's key demands for a sustainable future CAP, a CAP which through a system approach of taking into consideration the public interest should be brought up to higher environmental standards.

In 2009 the IFOAM EU Group produced a [Rural Development Study](#) which was then made available in English, Italian, Spanish, French and Polish. The study, entitled "The Future of Organic Farming: How Do European Rural Development Programmes Support Organic Farming?", examined the use of the EU Member States' rural development programmes as instruments for support of organic farming. It was brought to the attention of EU officials, distributed through the CAP NGO network (of which IFOAM EU is an active member) as well as at the evening reception of the European Organic Congress which took place in the European Parliament in December 1.

3.4 New Organic Action Plan

Following the announcement of Agriculture Commissioner Fischer Boel, made during BioFach in February 2009, that she is open to discussing a review of the EU Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming (as the existing plan, launched in 2004, was expiring), IFOAM EU Group worked out in 2009 a proposal for a new action plan. The discussion started with an expert hearing held by the IFOAM EU Group in Vienna in June to start the process of defining priorities for the future development of organic farming and the needed consistent EU policies, taking into consideration the interests of the organic sector and the current challenges facing the EU agricultural and environmental policies. The meeting resulted with a first draft Strategic Action Plan whose first public presentation was made at Bioacademy in the Czech Republic; it was further presented at a conference in Mallorca in September. In the meantime the review of the 2004 EU action plan was also discussed in meetings with DG Agriculture of the European Commission. In December the process culminated in the finalisation of a Strategic Action Plan containing recommendations for the further development of the EU policies relevant to organic food and farming and how to use its potentials for meeting the environmental objectives of the EU. The full endorsement of the IFOAM EU action plan was left for the next year in view of the forthcoming new mandate of the European Commission.

3.5 Eco-labelling

The IFOAM EU Group followed the development of the Commission proposal for a revised EU Ecolabelling scheme closely. In April 2009 the proposal was agreed by the European Parliament and was forwarded for approval to the Council. IFOAM EU Group expressed on this occasion an utter disappointment with the outcome of the Parliament's vote and presented its arguments that EU Ecolabelling – if extended to food products, has the potential to lead to unacceptable 'green-washing' of conventional products and confusing the consumers. IFOAM EU called on the EU institutions to "stop interfering in functioning markets through inconsistent labelling attempts" (see [press release](#)).

The IFOAM EU Group brought the issue to the attention of the responsible officials at a number of meetings in DG Environment and DG Agriculture. It also followed the discussions in DG MARE and participated as observer in the Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture.

The question whether to include processed foods in the EU Ecolabelling scheme was left open until a study was completed in 2010; the study was to add expertise as to whether the Ecolabel should be extended to food and aquaculture products.

3.6 Nutrition (traffic light) Labelling

Nutrition labelling was another topic in the spotlight of attention. In continuation of its work from 2008, when the Commissions' proposal for a new EU Regulation on Nutrition Labelling (proposing a mandatory nutritional labelling scheme including the so called 'traffic light system') was brought to the EU legislative

agenda, IFOAM EU Group kept its focus on the issue also in 2009 and made known the organic viewpoint.

In March the Environment Committee of the European Parliament postponed its decision on the highly controversial report on the nutrition proposals. The IFOAM EU Group's arguments against the nutrition labelling proposals concerned in particular the so called 'traffic light system' (mandatory declaration at the front of the product pack of the levels of energy, fat, saturates, sugar and salt, expressed as colour-codes) as simplistic and in practice misleading. IFOAM EU discussed the issue within its Processors Group and at board meetings.

3.7 Organic catering

The IFOAM EU Group placed more stress in 2009 on its objective of increasing the share of organic food in public procurement in the EU. The Group held meetings with organic caterers and established an expert network to create resource for further work on the issue. It studied the Commission Communication on 'Public procurement for a better environment' and analysed the possibilities for increasing the percentage of organic foods. The issue was also part of the IFOAM EU October discussions in DG Environment and the expert meeting of DG Agriculture on the "promotion of organic agriculture". In December IFOAM EU sent a [Letter to DG Environment](#) regarding green public procurement.

3.8 Animal welfare

The work of IFOAM EU Group in this policy area intensified in the second half of the year alongside the initiated institutional steps towards animal welfare labelling scheme, but it also covered throughout the year the problems of cloning of animals and of raising awareness about its connection with food safety.

In March IFOAM EU took part in the meeting of DG SANCO's Advisory Group on the Food Chain, Animal and Plant Health; later in the year, in December, it participated in the second meeting of this advisory group in order to contribute to and stay up-to-date with the legislative process in the area.

In May it issued a [press release](#) on the occasion of the then presented Communication on Food Quality, stating that sustainable agriculture needs more than food labelling rules and the multiplication of these must not jeopardise the organic label which already indicates for the consumer high-quality food, produced with the highest standards of production and processing: from best practices in animal welfare, to conservation of biodiversity, to responsible handling of natural resources and low impacts on the climate.

In June the IFOAM EU Group strongly criticised the agreement of the Agricultural Council to pave the way for possible authorisation of meat from cloned animals and its offsprings in the EU (see [press release](#)).

In October The European Commission approved [a report](#) on animal welfare labelling and launched a consultation on Animal Health Strategy. The IFOAM EU Group did not consider a new labelling scheme to be a solution to the problem and stated this position in a [press release](#), a [Letter](#) to the Head of Unit Animal Welfare in DG SANCO and another [press release](#), commenting on the implications of increasing number of food labelling schemes. The IFOAM EU Group had three meetings in DG SANCO on the issue as well as contact with the Cabinet of the Agriculture Commissioner. In these direct or written communications IFOAM EU Group reiterated that organic farming already delivers higher animal welfare standards and therefore a new labelling scheme specific to animal welfare can only be confusing and thus counterproductive.

In November IFOAM EU addressed the issue of cloning of animals in a [Letter on Novel Foods](#) to DG SANCO.

3.9 Food safety and quality of food production

The IFOAM EU Group closely followed DG SANCO's policies on food safety and contributed to the work of its Advisory Group on the Food Chain, Animal Health and Plant Health and its Working Groups.

In March IFOAM EU participated with a delegation headed by its president Francis Blake in the high-level conference of the Czech Presidency on quality production. In his speech at the conference President Blake stressed that organic production is an innovative and modern approach to sustainable and high quality food production; the President also met at this occasion with DG Agriculture officials to discuss the latest Commission initiatives on food labelling. IFOAM EU issued a [press release](#) on the topic of quality production stating that organic production is the most successful EU food quality scheme and urging the policy makers to use its full potential through a proper, quality-minded policy.

To create an understanding for the potential of organic farming in the area of quality production, the IFOAM EU Group raised the issue in its direct meetings with DG Agriculture officials and participated in the Advisory Group on Agriculture Quality Production.

3.10 Nanotechnology

To enhance its work on the topic, the IFOAM EU Group set up a special Task Force in 2009, which coordinated IFOAM EU's input to the ongoing discussion on nanotechnology and its impacts on the environment and the human health. The concerns of the organic movement with the latest developments in nanotechnology and the associated risks were expressed during IFOAM EU Group's meeting with the Deputy Director General Testorri Coggi, DG SANCO, and via written communications. In September IFOAM EU Group participated in the Scientific Hearing on the Risk Assessment of Nanotechnologies organised by DG SANCO. In November, in response to the ongoing revision of the Novel Foods Regulation, IFOAM EU sent a [Letter on Novel Foods](#) to DG SANCO asking for more research and a knowledge-based decision on the use of nanotechnologies in the agri-food sector.

3.11 Soil

The IFOAM EU Group's objective in this policy area has been to push for an EU Soil Framework Directive ensuring proper protection of soils. IFOAM EU's work toward this continued in 2009 by monitoring the process in the Council and the European Parliament, direct meetings with EU officials and contributions to policy meetings, and the formulation of a position communicated to the Commission President and EU environmental ministers.

Throughout the year the IFOAM EU held meetings and discussed the need for an EU-wide protection of soils in meetings with the responsible staff from the Czech and the Swedish Presidencies, and in talks held in DG Environment. Close cooperation was established with the European Environmental Bureau to add credence and increase lobby power in trying to bring the Soil Directive back onto the EU policy agenda.

In May IFOAM EU Group participated at the policy seminar "Sustainable Agriculture and Soil Conservation". In July it sent a [Letter on the Soil Directive](#) to the President of the European commission Barroso and the environmental ministers of Sweden and Spain (the countries holding the current and future EU Presidencies). The letter expressed concern about the slow progress of the negotiations on the directive and stressed the urgent need for a common EU framework for soil protection.

4. EU research policies

4.1 TP Organics

Starting with the launch of '[TP Organics](#)' - a Technology Research Platform on organic food and farming - and the production of a Research Vision 2025 back in 2008, IFOAM EU Group continued its research line of work in 2009 through its active participation in TP Organics and its further activities. A significant upgrade on what was already achieved in the previous year was the preparation of a Strategic Research Agenda - a comprehensive document on the priorities and needs for organic research, detailing and adding substance to the points given with the Research Vision. In 2009 TP Organics further developed its collaboration with the ERA net CORE Organic, with national platforms in Italy, Hungary and the Czech Republic, and with renowned organic scientists which joined the TP Organics network.

In July TP Organics presented the first draft of the Strategic Research Agenda at its Stakeholder Forum in Brussels (see [press release](#)). Later in the year TP Organics staff (IFOAM EU Group's office in Brussels hosts the Platform's coordinator) and representatives of IFOAM EU met with DG Research, DG SANCO and DG Agriculture officials to discuss and promote TP Organics.

In the beginning of December TP Organics held a 1-day seminar, hosted by DG Research, to present the Strategic Research Agenda to the political establishment and stakeholders - the seminar was the final public hearing of 'the Agenda' before it was finalised and officially launched. The seminar proved to be a success and was attended by around 40 representatives of stakeholder

organisations - enterprises, consumer associations, farmers' associations and NGOs, as well as 10 representatives of the European Commission (DG Research, Agriculture and SANCO). By the end of the year the [Strategic Research Agenda](#) was produced and its wider dissemination planned for the following year.

4.2 ORWINE

After three years of work involving wine experts and organic production specialists from around Europe, the EU-supported research project ORWINE (in which IFOAM EU Group was involved as a partner) ended with the delivery of [Final Recommendation for EU Rules on Organic Wine](#) (full name of the document: "Proposal and recommendations for elaborating rules for organic wine in EU Regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products (Commission Reg. EC 884/2008 based on Council Regulation EC 834/2007 repealing Regulation EEC 2092/91).” The document contains the compilation of all relevant stakeholder and expert views as well as main results from experimentation and on-farm testing, and from consumer and market research, relevant for the elaboration of the new EU rules for organic wine.

5. Outreach

5.1 Promotion of organic food and farming

In 2009 IFOAM EU Group made a good step further in promoting organic food and farming to policy makers and the broader public through the production of a carefully prepared set of publicity material which can be widely used at events and publications as well as lobby material.

The promotional set included: four postcards, a folder and a series of ten fact sheets on the topics:

- 1) Organic's contribution to tackling EU policy challenges
- 2) Biodiversity: powering natural systems
- 3) Climate change: agriculture at the epicentre
- 4) Animal Welfare: what's good for the animal is good for humans too
- 5) Rural Development: rediscovering rural livelihoods
- 6) Water: organic farming makes every drop count
- 7) Soil: the living resource under our feet
- 8) Food security: sustaining productivity and livelihoods
- 9) Food Quality & Safety: nontoxic and nutritious
- 10) Externalities: the true price of a product

The materials (www.ifoam-eu.org under publications/positions) were put to good use already in 2009 during the Second European Organic Congress .

5.2 Presentation of IFOAM EU

The IFOAM EU Group used every opportunity to increase its visibility at relevant public events, including through its strong presence at BioFach in Nuremberg in February 2009 and the Green Week organised in Brussels by the European Commission, as every year, in June. In addition, in April IFOAM EU held a public presentation in Bucharest, Romania, to increase public awareness

about the standpoints of the organic movement towards critical issues within the current debates around the EU agricultural and environmental policies. The presentation discussed the results of the IFOAM EU expert seminar “Multifunctional agriculture in Europe – the role of organic food and farming and its political framework”, co-funded by Commission’s project on CAP information measures. IFOAM EU Group was also notably present at high-level events, including at the conference of the Czech Presidency on Quality Production in March and the UN Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen in December. The Group continued in 2009 its patronage over two ‘organic events’: the [Organic Marketing Forum](#) in Warsaw and the [Bioacademy](#) in the Czech Republic.

6. Finance

In 2009 IFOAM EU Group’s main sources of income were membership fees, project grants, sponsorship and donations. Thanks to these income sources and a careful financial management, the IFOAM EU managed to go through economically difficult times with liquidity sufficient to maintain its expanding activities (requiring increased staff) and to deal with bigger projects. It also managed to increase its strategic reserves with about 60,000€.

- Membership fees: as in previous years the annual fees of the IFOAM EU Group members laid down the financial base of the organisation. Timely payment of the fees remained a challenge to be continuously dealt with, but the year ended with a high percent of collectability of the fees.
- Project grants: in 2009 the organisation received substantial co-financing of its activities under the DG ENVI Life+ programme of the European Commission. Further project income included grants for ongoing projects and remaining grants for projects concluded in previous years: European Volunteer Service (EVS, European Commission), CAP information measures (DG Agriculture, European Commission), grant from the Flemish Ministry of Agriculture, and from Software Foundation for the TP Organics Research Platform.
- Sponsorship: during the year IFOAM EU Group received the generous sponsorship of ARIZA BV, HiPP, Filikicert, Synabio, Bioinstitut, EKOGRANCJA PTRE, SEAE and CAEE for the preparation and publication of the Regulation Dossier in different language versions; and from Tradin, ARIZA, EOSTA, ALPRO and SIPAL for the organisation of the Second European Organic Congress in December 2009 and a board meeting in the Netherlands earlier in the year.
- Donations: IFOAM EU Group received support also through the donations of Software AG, Biokontroll, BioAustria and Demeter International.

7. List of board members

IFOAM EU Group board members (and substitutes) in 2009
Austria – Sabine Eigenschink (Thomas Fertl)
Belgium – Leen Laenens (Patrick Ruppol)
Bulgaria – Svetla Nikolova
Czech Republic – Karolina Dytrtova (Katerina Nesrstova)
Cyprus – Savvas Mouzakis (Marinela Sofokleous)
Denmark – Sybille Kyed (Birgit Ingvorsen)
Estonia – Merit Mikk
Finland – Visa Vilkuuna, (Esa Partanen)
France – David Peyremorte (Cecile Frissur)
Germany – Thomas Dosch (Alexander Beck)
Greece – Dimitrios Bilalis
Hungary – Acs Sandorné (Eva Cellerne Daroczi)
Iceland – Olafur Dyrmondsson (Gunnar Gunnarsson)
Ireland – Eveline Gill (Mary Linch)
Italy – Antonio Compagnoni (Riccardo Cozzo, Alessandro Triantafyllidis)
Latvia – Dzidra Kresimane (Aistara Guntra)
Lithuania – Antanas Svirskis
Luxembourg – Raymond Aendekerck
Malta – John Portelli (Mario Salerno)
Netherlands – Marian Blom (Maiike Raaijmakers, Bavo van Idsert)
Norway – Gerald Altena (Grete Serikstad)
Poland – Dorota Metera (Ewa Rembalkowska)
Romania – Ion Toncea
Slovakia – Zuzana Lehocka (Marta Klimekova)
Slovenia – Anamarija Slabe (Boris Fras)
Spain – Victor Gonzalvez (Jose Luis Garcia Melgarejo)
Sweden – Marianne Schönning (Kjell Sjödaahl Svensson)
Switzerland – Otto Schmid (Hans Ramseier)
United Kingdom – Christopher Stopes (Lawrence Woodward, Steve Belton)

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