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ANNUAL REPORT
➤ 2016

IFOAM EU 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR.....	3
ABOUT IFOAM EU.....	3
Representing the organic movement in the EU	4
VISION 2030	4
Continuing the vision process to transform food and farming in Europe by 2030	5
CLIMATE CHANGE	5
Ensuring agriculture contributes to the fight against climate change	6
Demonstrating organic farming’s potential to make Europe more climate-friendly	8
SAFEGUARDING EUROPE’S ENVIRONMENT	8
Improving efficient resource use in farming and boosting sustainable food consumption.....	9
Fighting the use of harmful substances in agriculture	10
BIODIVERSITY AND PLANT REPRODUCTIVE MATERIAL	11
Ensuring that EU legislation contributes to the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020	11
Contributing to the diversity and availability of genetic resources in agriculture & preventing patents on life	12
Safeguarding the EU’s food chain from GMO-contamination.....	13
Ensuring that new genetic engineering techniques are regulated as GMOs	15
THE COMMON AGRICULTURE POLICY (CAP)	16
Addressing environmental challenges by promoting organic farming and agroecology in the CAP.....	16
ORGANIC REGULATION	17
Ensuring the EU legal framework supports the development of organic food and farming.....	17
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION	18
Advocating for greater investment in research and innovation for organics and agroecology	18
GOVERNANCE.....	19
IFOAM EU 2016 Board.....	19
IFOAM EU 2016 Council	20
2016 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE	23

Commonly used terms

CAP: Common Agriculture Policy

CDG: Civil Dialogue Group

Commission: European Commission

Council: Council of the European Union

DG AGRI: Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development

DG CLIMA: Directorate-General for Climate Action

DG ENVI: Directorate-General for the Environment

DG GROW: Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs' financial support

DG SANTE: Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety

ESR: Effort Sharing Reduction

LULUCF: Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry

Parliament: European Parliament

Cover picture: © Triin Viilvere

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Christopher Stopes, IFOAM EU President, thanks Martijn van Dam, Minister of Agriculture of the Netherlands for his presence at the 10th European Organic Congress

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE DIRECTOR

In 2016, IFOAM EU continued to represent the interests of the organic movement at EU level. We were engaging with policy-makers to work for an organic regulation that meets the needs of organic farmers, processors, traders and consumers. We closely monitored policies that concern the organic movement; and developed common strategies and positions with our members in several key areas: the 2030 Framework for climate and energy, the climate change regulations – the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) regulation and the Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR); the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP), Green Public Procurement, the EU Birds and Habitats Directives as well as EU Biodiversity Strategy, GMO cultivation, Horizon 2020, the 7th Environmental Action Programme, and the European Innovation Partnership for Agriculture (EIP-AGRI).

We continue to work closely with our members. One of our goals in 2016 was to increase their capacity and expertise through workshops, webinars, publications, online communication and meetings. This resulted in an increased involvement of members from Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries in IFOAM EU's work.

To raise policy-makers', organic stakeholders', and the public's awareness of the benefits of organic agriculture, IFOAM EU produced visual materials to show the benefits of organic agriculture in a series of [multi-lingual infographics](#). In collaboration with the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), we created an [interactive infographic](#) of retail and market data.

IFOAM EU works closely with policy-makers and legislators from the European Parliament (Parliament) and the European Commission (Commission), especially Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI), Directorate-General for Environment (DG ENVI) and Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA). We provide them with targeted information on relevant issues: the organic regulation, rural development, climate and environmental. We have made clear recommendations for policy development and implementation through targeted meetings, letters, publications, press releases and conferences. IFOAM EU successfully established relationships with key policy-makers and raised their awareness regarding climate concerns, thereby highlighting the contribution of organic farming.

2016 saw many IFOAM EU events. We organised the 10th European Organic Congress and the 4th Organic Processing Conference as well as workshops, seminars and expert meetings, including two workshops as side events at the climate change negotiations (COP22).

The 10th European Organic Congress (held in Driebergen, the Netherlands 4-6 April 2016) took the theme "Transforming Food and Farming". More than 200 participants from 27 countries represented all areas, in the organic movement and beyond. The Dutch Minister of Agriculture, Martijn van Dam, opened the congress with praise for the organic movement and spoke of the need to continue the development of the sector. During the congress, leaders in multiple areas confirmed that organic is and can play a significant role in the transformation of food and farming. The congress was a success and was well covered in both Dutch and international media. The Congress marked several changes: right before it, [the IFOAM EU membership elected a new board at its 8th General Assembly](#), and following the Congress, [long-term IFOAM EU Director Marco Schlüter officially stepped down and Eduardo Cuoco was appointed as the new director](#).

You can find detailed information about all our activities and achievements during 2016 in this, our annual report. Enjoy the read!

Christopher Stopes
IFOAM EU President



Eduardo Cuoco
IFOAM EU Director



Organic in the EU

2015 was the first year after the 2008 financial crisis that showed a double-digit growth rate of the organic market of 12.6%. The EU single market is the second largest market for organic retail sales in the world, accounting for 27.1 billion EUR.

Although the growth of organic farmland continued to be slower than that of the market, it was considerably faster than in the previous years, increasing by 7.8% in the EU. With 11.2 million hectares – or 6.2% – of the total area of farmland dedicated to organic, the EU remains the second largest region when it comes to total land area dedicated to organic farming.

In 2015, the 11.2 million hectares of organic farmland were managed organically by more than 269,000 producers. More than 55,000 processors were active.

The EU continues to be a front-runner in organic agriculture with the financial support for it enshrined in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and a detailed EU organic regulation.

Source: Based on data compiled by FiBL based on Eurostat and national data sources. Taken from <http://www.ifoam-eu.org/en/organic-europe>. Last consulted on 16 August 2017



Alexander Beck, Executive Board Member, AÖL; Laurence Beck, Director Organic Expertise Centre, Quality and R&D, Wessanen; Eduardo Cuoco, Director, IFOAM EU; Francisco Javier Maté Caballero, Deputy Director at the Spanish Ministry for Agriculture and Fishing, Food and Environment, Rosa Isabel Ríos Martínez, Director of Processing and Agri-food Chains, Andalusian Region and Álvaro Barrera, President, Ecovalia at the 4th Organic Processing Conference's opening session

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ABOUT IFOAM EU

Representing the organic movement in the EU

Who are we?

Since 2003, IFOAM EU advocates for the adoption of ecologically, socially and economically sound systems based on the principles of organic agriculture – health, ecology, fairness and care.

As the European umbrella organisation for organic food and farming, we are the voice for the organic movement vis-à-vis the European Institutions. We represent over 190 member organisations, spanning the entire organic food chain and beyond: from farmers and processors, retailers, certifiers, consultants, traders and researchers to environmental and consumer advocacy bodies.

IFOAM EU hosts the secretariat of TP Organics – the European Technology Platform for organic food and farming research – playing a key role in highlighting where the focus of research and innovation funding should be placed.

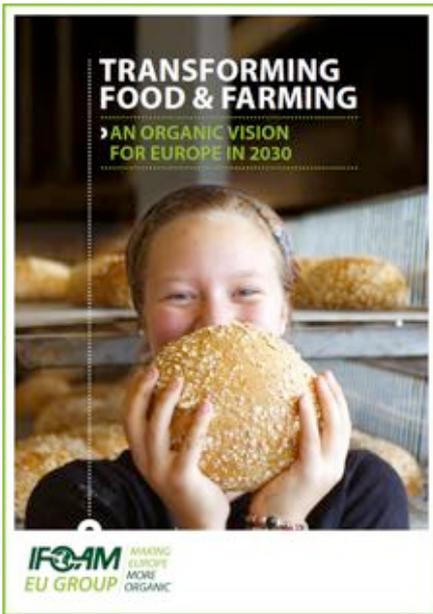
We have ties with key agricultural, environmental and technical decision-makers at local, national and European level. IFOAM EU is recognised by the EU Institutions as the leading advocate for organic food and farming on EU level.

We closely collaborate with IFOAM – Organics International, the global umbrella organisation for organic agriculture.

What topics are we working on?

IFOAM EU's work covers all policies impacting organic food and farming at EU-level:





The 2015 publication [Transforming food & farming – An organic vision for Europe in 2030](#) forms the basis of the development of the Vision 2030 work that continued throughout 2016



At the 10th European Organic Congress, participants from the European and global organic movement shaped the strategy to propel the European organic movement into 2030

© IFOAM – Organics International



Consult the global vision of the organic movement in the [Organic 3.0 publication](#) or on [IFOAM – Organic International's website](#)

VISION 2030

Continuing the vision process to transform food and farming in Europe by 2030

As organic has started moving beyond the niche, the organic movement is looking towards its future. As a front-runner, the movement continued to lead the change in the food and farming system by building on the participatory process that started at EU level in 2013.

Following the launch of the organic Vision 2030 [Transforming food and farming](#) at the 9th European Organic Congress in 2015, we started developing a mid-term strategy to propel the European organic movement into 2030.

The strategy has been developed via various consultation exercises – both during face-to-face meetings, as well as digitally. This happens in parallel to the development of the organic movement's vision on a global level – [Organic 3.0](#) – as performed by our colleagues at IFOAM – Organics International.

What did we do?

- Continued the participatory process to prepare the movement to proactively face the future
- Held workshops at the 10th European Organic Congress in the Netherlands to form a solid basis for developing the strategy
- Consulted the organic movement on the first draft of the mid-term strategy

What did we achieve so far and what are the next steps?

We received valuable insights of the European organic movement at interactive workshops at the 10th European Organic Congress in April 2016. Based on this input the organic movement was consulted to set priorities to achieve the Vision 2030. In 2017, we're continuing to build the final strategy which will be launched at the 11th European Organic Congress in Tallinn, Estonia.

THE VISION: TRANSFORMING FOOD & FARMING

Our vision for food and farming is of a fair, environmentally conscious, healthy and caring system widely adopted in Europe. The European organic movement continues to lead change, believes in holistic approaches and thrives on interactions with other like-minded initiatives, including fair trade, agroecology and urban agriculture.

Driven by the support of citizens and by building bridges with other stakeholders in the food and farming system, we are committed to achieving more than half of Europe's agricultural land managed according to organic principles of health, fairness, ecology and care, providing fresh, seasonal, fairly priced as well as minimally and carefully processed organic food to every European home, workplace and institution.

The European organic movement stimulates and rewards the further development of organic systems, improving the resilience and environmental performance of organic production systems, while innovative tools for upholding the integrity of the supply chain promote trust. Policy makers and citizens widely recognise and value the contribution of organic farming to the delivery and support of vital ecosystem services to society.

As we move forward towards our goal of being a model for sustainable farming and food systems, we support a culture of innovation based on holistic principles leading to more resilient and productive farming systems, greater biodiversity, better food quality, more appropriate processing and fairer supply chains. New and indigenous, locally adapted varieties and breeds suited to organic farming practices and local conditions are encouraged and preserved. Farm animals are healthy, live in stress-free conditions and contribute to the sustainability of organic farms.

European farmers and all workers in the organic supply chain are fairly remunerated for their contribution to the health of the environment, communities, local and rural economies, and for providing flavourful and abundant food to contribute to the welfare of our planet and the quality of life of all people. The organic movement works towards a paradigm shift in education and learning to strengthen the connection between environmentally and socially responsible food choices. People reconnect to food production by actively engaging with short supply chains.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ensuring agriculture contributes to the fight against climate change

In 2016, IFOAM EU successfully provided a stronger basis for evidence-based policy-making on climate change and positioned organic farming as a solution to combat climate change.

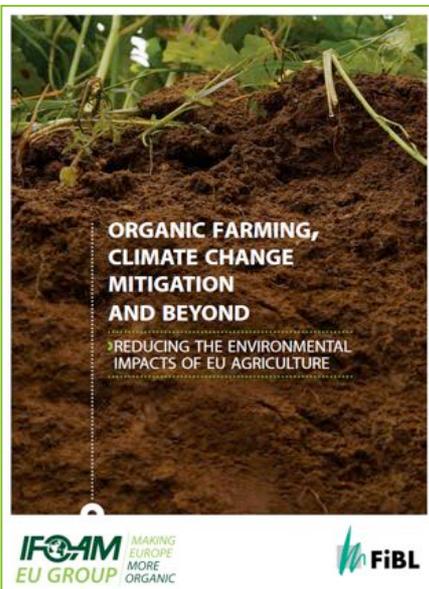
We advocated that the main EU climate regulations – the Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR) and the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) regulation – should not exempt the agriculture sector from efforts to reduce emissions. IFOAM EU specifically advocated for the ESR to be ambitious when it comes to emissions reductions; and for emissions accounted for under LULUCF not to undermine the environmental integrity of the 2030 Framework for climate and energy. Together with like-minded NGOs and civil society organisations, we particularly highlighted the need to limit the possibility for Member States to artificially offset agriculture emissions with afforestation in LULUCF.

IFOAM EU also contributed to the EU's international climate activities by ensuring that the position of the EU and other Parties to the agriculture negotiations in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process moves towards promoting agroecology as a way to meet mitigations and adaptation goals, and the needs of farmers. We specifically positioned organic farming practices in the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body of Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) negotiations.

What did we do?

STRENGTHENED THE EU'S CLIMATE AND ENERGY POLICY PACKAGE FOR 2030

- Published a report on organic farming's contribution to mitigating climate change [Organic Farming, Climate Change Mitigation and Beyond. Reducing the Environmental Impacts of EU Agriculture](#). The report was written in 2016 with the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), and launched in 2017
- Increased policy-makers' awareness on solutions for the EU to reach its climate objectives by designing communication tools such as a [video visualising the benefits of organic farming](#), and [infographics](#) explaining these benefits
- Co-signed a letter [Call for clean air](#), together with 76 public health, environmental, civil society, organic farming and animal welfare organisations on the opening of the trilogue negotiations on the National Emissions Ceilings Directive
- Organised an event in the Parliament on Soil Carbon sequestration in Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) and organic agriculture, hosted by Member of European Parliament (MEP) Paul Brannen
- Participated in several events on climate change and agriculture, such as the Commission's DG AGRI Outlook Conference, various events in the Parliament, such as Fern's "Land and Forests in 2030 Climate Package: Opportunities and Threats" event; and MEP, Sirpa Pietikäinen's "The Effort Sharing Decision post-2020: How to ensure that the EU's largest climate instrument is fit for purpose" event
- Mobilised and built capacity among IFOAM EU members by organising a workshop at BIOFACH and a webinar on the 2030 Framework for climate and energy
- Closely co-operated with NGOs working on the ESR and LULUCF, namely Carbon Market Watch, Fern, Climate Action Network, Greenpeace, the European Environmental Bureau and Birdlife Europe
- Tried to create synergies between organic and conventional farming movements, such as COPA COGECA and CEJA, within and outside DG AGRI's Civil Dialogue Groups



IFOAM EU & FiBL's report on [climate change mitigation and beyond](#) provides a stronger basis for evidence-based policy-making



IFOAM – Organics International President André Leu speaking at the "4 for 1000" event at COP22 climate talks
© IFOAM – Organics International

CONTRIBUTED TO THE EU'S INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE ACTIVITIES

- IFOAM – Organics International maintained a leading role at the Farmers' Constituency in the UNFCCC, enabling it to intervene at UN Climate Conferences COP22 and COP23, as well as during interim sessions and to participate in relevant workshops to ensure that sustainable views on agriculture are truly represented in agriculture-related negotiations
- Held two workshops on issues related to agriculture as part of [UNFCCC Standing Body 44](#) (SB44); one on adaptation issues and one on productivity
- Co-organised a preparatory workshop on agroecology for EU climate change negotiators ahead of the SB 44

What did we achieve?

IFOAM EU is seen as the main progressive voice among farmer organisations on the need for the agriculture sector to contribute to reducing emissions. Our efforts contributed to an increased willingness of policy-makers to plan efforts by the entire agriculture sector to be part of the solution to climate change, namely concerning the ESR. The new ESR proposal allows a limited level of flexibility and the LULUCF accounting has been kept as a separate pillar.

The positive role that organic agriculture and agroecology play in mitigating and adapting to climate change has been communicated to negotiators involved in the UNFCCC negotiations. The work of IFOAM – Organics International and IFOAM EU has increased the visibility and relevance of the organic movement in the climate change debate.



Figure 1: [Watch our video 'Transforming agriculture to combat climate change'](#) to learn how organic agriculture can contribute to mitigating GHG emissions. The video is available [in English](#) and [Spanish](#).



Demonstrating organic farming's potential to make Europe more climate-friendly

While organic farming already creates the right conditions for climate action, twelve organic farms in Sweden, Germany and Italy are applying and testing further climate-friendly practices. These practices – optimised on-farm nutrient recycling, optimised crop rotation, reduced tillage, and agroforestry – are adapted to the specific climatic area and farm conditions and are closely monitored by scientists. The farms implement these practices in the frame of the SOLMACC project.

SOLMACC stands for [Strategies for Organic and Low input farming to Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change](#). At the end of the project, the impacts of the techniques climate tested on the farms will be measured. Based on the findings of this five-year project, approaches transferable to both organic and conventional farms will be developed. SOLMACC is a demonstration project funded by the EU LIFE-programme and coordinated by IFOAM EU, and runs from 2013 to 2018.

What did we do?

- Gathered policy-makers, representatives of European regions and NGOs at an event at the Committee of the Regions on 9 November 2016 called "How can the CAP drive climate mitigation and adaptation in agriculture?"
- Issued two [SOLMACC newsletters](#)

What did we achieve?

The first results regarding the climate effects of the farming practices implemented during the SOLMACC project were presented at an event at the Committee of the Regions. The SOLMACC practices were implemented on the 12 demonstration farms and the farmers organised open field days.



Dr. Andreas Gatterer from FiBL presented first results regarding the climate effects of the farming practices at the seminar at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels

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The SOLMACC field day gave visitors the opportunity to learn about climate-friendly farming practices on the Gut Krauscha farm in Neißeaue, Germany

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Paolo Fontanabona explains the SOLMACC farming practices to the Open Field Day visitors.

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SAFEGUARDING EUROPE'S ENVIRONMENT

Improving efficient resource use in farming and boosting sustainable food consumption

IFOAM EU promoted solutions used in organic farming that can contribute to more sustainable land use to policy-makers. We did this by starting to put into practice our [Vision for organic food and farming](#), together with active stakeholders in organic across Europe.

We also boosted sustainable food consumption by promoting inclusive, resilient and fair local food systems through Green Public Procurement (GPP) policies, namely by providing input to the Review of EU voluntary Green Public Procurement Criteria for Food and Catering Services.

What did we do?

POSITIONED ORGANIC FARMING AND AGROECOLOGICAL APPROACHES AS A SOLUTION TO IMPROVE SUSTAINABLE LAND USE AND NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

- Engaged with the Commission
 - Participated in the Commission's Soil stakeholders' conference as a high-level speaker
 - Sought to influence the Commission's work on Land as Resource
- Engaged with civil society on ensured sustainable land use and access
 - Co-signed and actively promoted the European Citizens Initiative [People4Soil](#)
 - Together with Terre des Liens and European Coordination Via Campesina, IFOAM EU participated in the Parliament's Committee on Petitions for the presentation of the petition "Preserving and managing farmland as our common wealth", signed by over 80 organisations from across Europe

PROMOTED SUSTAINABLE FOOD CONSUMPTION

- Engaged with the Commission
 - Collaborated with cities involved in the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact as part input into DG AGRI's "EIP-AGRI Workshop on Cities and Food – Connecting Consumers and Producers"
 - Together with our member organisation, Bioforum Vlaanderen, participated in the 1st Ad-hoc Working Group on the Review of EU voluntary Green Public Procurement Criteria for Food and Catering Services
 - Wrote a [submission to the Commission Joint Research Centre on the Review of EU Voluntary Green Public Procurement Criteria for Food and Catering Services](#)
- Took part in the [International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems](#) (IPES-Food) on moving towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union
- Collaborated with [ICLEI](#) – Local Governments for Sustainability's INNOCAT network as part of joint efforts on the Review of the Green Public Procurement Criteria for Food and Catering Services

What did we achieve?

Our active support for a Petition on "Preserving and managing farmland as our common wealth" – led by Terre des Liens and European Coordination Via Campesina – ensured that the issue was put in the EU policy agenda including the link between sustainable land management and public goods delivery.

We demonstrated to policymakers the importance of sustainable soil and land management for improving efficient resource use in farming and boosting sustainable food consumption. The contribution that organic farming provides was also promoted.

IFOAM EU's input was considered as part of the Commission's latest technical report on the EU Green Public Procurement criteria, strategic alliance with civil society groups work on sustainable food were developed and strengthened, and the input given at the IPES-FOOD will be used to inform its [Towards a Common Food Policy for the EU](#) project.



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Fighting the use of harmful substances in agriculture

Organic farming prohibits the use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides and focuses on the use of natural resources and cycles to support sustainable crop production. This is beneficial for both human health and the environment. To this end IFOAM EU continued its work on highlighting the importance of using agroecological practices and organic farming to support ambitious implementation of environmental legislation such as Water Framework Directive and the Sustainable Pesticides Use Directive (SPUD). Furthermore, it works proactively to ensure a more supportive environment for the use of natural substances traditionally used in organic farming as well as that organic fertilisers based on renewable resources. This can also help to improve the protection of EU citizens and biodiversity against harmful substances.

What did we do?

- Published a [position paper on Plant Health Care in Organic Farming](#)
- Engaged with the EU Presidencies
 - Highlighted some of key priorities in Fertilisers to the Slovak and Maltese EU Presidencies in the context of the development of the Council's position, including strict limits on cadmium
 - Participated as a speaker to a high-level panel discussion during a Commission workshop on "Water and Agriculture" organised by the Slovak EU Presidency
- Engaged with the Commission
 - Participated in a high-level panel discussion at the Commission's workshop on Water and Agriculture
 - Provided written input to the Commission Draft Implementing Regulation amending the criteria of low risk substances under the legislation on the marketing of plant protection products
 - Participated in the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety's (DG SANTE) Expert group on Sustainable Plant Protection and provided written contributions to a further meeting of the Expert Group
 - Participated in the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs' financial support's (DG GROW) Expert Group on Fertilisers
 - Organised a meeting with Directorate-General for Environment (DG ENVI) to explore how investments in organic farming and agroecological approaches could be used to support the development of the EU's forthcoming Strategy on moving towards a non-toxic environment
- Engaged with civil society
 - Exchanged views with like-minded NGOs on how to ensure a straight-forward process for the registration of naturally occurring substances in view of the implementation of the legislation on the marketing of plant protection products
 - Moderated part of a workshop of the European Environmental Bureau on methane in the context of the Revision of the National Emission Ceilings Directive

What did achieve?

Ensured that policymakers recognise that naturally occurring substances traditionally used in organic are of high importance for supporting multi-functional approaches to plant health care and that it is critical that poor implementation of the current EU legislation does not lead to these substances disappearing.

Demonstrated to policymakers that agriculture is not only part of the problem in the use of harmful substances, but also part of the solution through the uptake of more sustainable farming practices as demonstrated by organic farming.

Raised-awareness amongst policymakers of the importance of the contribution that organic farming can make to support the development of more circular economy as well as highlight the special character of organic farming and the need to safeguard the health of citizens in the new legislation to develop fertilisers based on plant and animal matter.

BIODIVERSITY AND PLANT REPRODUCTIVE MATERIAL

Ensuring that EU legislation contributes to the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020

The EU Birds and Habitats Directives and the EU Biodiversity Strategy are the most important pieces of nature conservation legislation in Europe dealing with biodiversity in the European Union. These two pieces of legislation were under threat of being watered down in the framework of a 'fitness check' by the Commission.

To ensure that nature conservation in the European Union is safeguarded, IFOAM EU continuously worked on this topic, together with other environmental NGOs. The organic movement's commitment to contribute to the EU's biodiversity strategy also echoed in our work concerning the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP).

What did we do?

- Called on the EU Institutions and Member States to take clear and decisive action to improve agriculture's environmental performance
- Called on MEPs to make more efforts to conserve genetic diversity in agriculture and ensure better implementation of the Nature Directives ahead of a vote on a report by the Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety concerning the mid-term review of the EU's biodiversity strategy
- Participated to the Civil Dialogue Group (CDG) on Environment and Climate Change
- Worked with the European Environmental Bureau and COPA-COGECA, and developed a common stakeholders' resolution on biodiversity, setting out the common aspirations of the CDG for better implementation of biodiversity measures under the CAP

What did we achieve?

Thanks to mass-mobilisation by a large coalition of environment and civil society organisations, EU nature conservation legislation was not watered down. Moreover, IFOAM EU successfully liaised with policy-makers to raise their awareness about the contribution of organic farming to environmental concerns. This showed in the fact that many environmental priorities put forward by IFOAM EU have been integrated into the development of EU policies such as the EU Bird and Habitats Directive and the EU Biodiversity Strategy.



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Europe needs a new seed legislation. Our [brochure](#) explains why

Contributing to the diversity and availability of genetic resources in agriculture, and preventing patents on life

Seed and planting materials are the basis of farming in the EU. IFOAM EU wants to make sure the availability of seed in the EU is high and suppliers are not limited to a handful of companies owning the rights to plants and animals. That is why we engaged with the Commission to convince them to launch a revision of both the EU legislation on the marketing of Plant Reproductive Material (PRM or seed legislation) and of the Directive on the 'legal protection of biotechnological inventions', which de facto allows companies to be granted patents on seeds.

The revision of these Directives should enable the production and sale of seed and planting material of varieties that are adapted to specific local and to low-input conditions, thus contributing to biodiversity and to the increased availability of genetic resources for agriculture.

Besides working on the seed legislation, IFOAM EU also worked on strengthening the development of the organic breeding sector through tackling legal barriers beyond the seed legislation.

What did we do?

- Engaged with the Council
 - Participated in and presented the IFOAM EU position at the Symposium "Finding the balance" organised by the Dutch presidency and the Commission
- Engaged with the Commission
 - Sent a [joint NGO open letter](#) to Commissioner Elzbieta Bieńkowska and Director-General Lowri Evans signed by 22 organisations
- Engaged with the Parliament
 - Produced and disseminated a [brochure explaining why the seed legislation is not fit for plant varieties used in organic farming and agroecology](#) to Members of the European Parliament and the wider audience at several events
- Engaged with the European Economic and Social Committee
 - Together with the Demeter EU Liaison Office, we organised an event at the European Economic and Social Committee called [Who pays for seeds?](#), dealing with the funding streams for organic seed breeding. The workshop was attended by breeders, organic seed companies, NGOs working on seeds and researchers
- Engaged with civil society
 - Organised an IFOAM EU seed expert meeting, following which we published a position in the form of a [press release](#) ahead of the Symposium "Finding the balance"
 - Worked with the European coalition [No Patent on Seeds](#)
 - Supported national campaigns by our members to ensure the public is informed about the issues surrounding patents on life
- Together with research institutes, breeders, seed companies, and NGOs, we developed a project proposal for a project aimed at increasing the use of organic seeds and developing organic plant breeding

What did achieve?

Unfortunately, the Commission is still unwilling to launch a new revision of the seed legislation. However, the issue of patents on life is back on the political agenda. Although the Commission did not start a revision of Directive 98/44, it adopted a legal notice on the interpretation of the Directive, consistent with IFOAM EU's position, which acknowledges that "essentially biological processes" should be excluded from patentability.

IFOAM EU will continue to make sure that all breeding processes and breeding material, plants, animals, genetic resources, native traits and food delivered thereof will be clearly excluded from patentability in the European legislation.

Besides our advocacy work with the EU Institutions, IFOAM EU and the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) successfully developed and will lead a 5-year long project called LIVESEED focusing on organic plant breeding under Horizon 2020. This project starts in 2017.



IFOAM EU supported and promoted its members' experiences and resources, such as Bionext's successful public opinion campaign



Eric Gall, Policy Manager at IFOAM EU presenting on how organic and GMO-free agriculture and labelling can support each other, at the International GMO-free Labeling Conference
© ARGE Gentechnik-frei



Participants to the International GMO-free Labelling conference
© Harald Klemm / ARGE Gentechnik-frei

Safeguarding the EU's food chain from GMO-contamination

To protect biodiverse farming and ecosystems, the release of GMOs in the environment and throughout the food chain should be prevented. The best way of achieving this is by a total ban on GMOs. This avoids additional costs in both the organic and conventional food chain, as well as for public authorities. IFOAM EU and its members coordinated advocacy work to help national members convince their government to adopt a national ban on the cultivation of GMOs on their territories.

EU Member States can enact national bans on the cultivation of GM-crops. However, it should be up to the Commission not to allow GMOs for cultivation in the whole Europe. As the current voting system does not allow the Commission to reject a product authorisation, IFOAM EU has been calling for a revision of the voting rules on GMO authorisation.

Besides the existing legislation, we must also ensure that the organic movement has the capacity to protect the organic food chain from GMO-contamination. IFOAM EU worked with its members to increase the capacity of GMO-free food production actors – both of the organic and conventional sector – to protect themselves from contamination.

What did we do?

COORDINATED ADVOCACY WORK

- Highlighted the organic movement's concerns regarding GMOs to the Commission, MEPs and other NGOs
- Monitored the transatlantic trade deals CETA and TTIP as they have the potential to open the EU market to the import of GMOs
- Engaged with the Parliament
 - Asked Members of the European Parliament to vote in favour of objections against new authorisations for GMOs. All objections were adopted by the Parliament
 - Issued [a joint press release](#) with Friends of the Earth Europe, Greenpeace and Slow Food to welcome the Parliament's stand against the Commission
 - Sent [a press release to welcome the objection adopted by the Parliament](#)
- Engaged with the Commission
 - Together with other NGOs, wrote [a letter to experts of the Standing Committee which take part in the vote on new GMO authorisation](#) to underline the reasons to oppose new GMOs for cultivation
 - Sent [a letter to Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis](#) to alert him about the invasion of teosinte plants in Spain
 - Monitored potential new legislative developments on GMO labelling and contamination thresholds
- Engaged with civil society
 - Supported the development of other GMO-free labelling and regularly discussed with actors from the conventional GMO-free sector. A unified position and strategy on GMO-free labelling was presented to the GMO-free labelling conference organised by the Austrian government in Vienna on 25 April 2016
 - Presented our position on GMO-free labelling during a meeting of the European GMO-free Regions Network

INCREASED THE CAPACITY OF THE ORGANIC MOVEMENT

- Organised a strategic meeting to discuss the ongoing procedure in the European Court of Justice about the legal status of mutagenesis
- Held discussions with key experts to evaluate the feasibility of an EU-wide contamination database for GMOs

What did we achieve?

Thanks to the advocacy efforts by IFOAM EU and civil society, Members of the European Parliament adopted several objections against new authorisations for GMOs. On the Commission side, Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the Commission, promised to reform the “undemocratic approval system for GMOs” but instead proposed an “opt-out” system for GM food and feed products.

However, this reform has been blocked in the Council since 2015. IFOAM EU continued to have regular meetings with NGOs, the Commission – in particular with Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) – and Permanent Representations, and will continue these efforts.

IFOAM EU remains vigilant about potential developments within the Commission regarding the introduction of contamination thresholds for food and seeds. Allowing all conventional seeds to be contaminated by GMOs would put a massive burden on the organic sector, and would render GMO-free potential either impossible or very costly.

IFOAM EU participated to the GMO-free labelling conference organised by the Austrian government in Vienna on 25 April 2016. The conference led to the adoption of the [Vienna Declaration on GMO-free labelling](#), underlining the necessity for the development and implementation of a common European approach to GMO-free labelling.

Last, but not least, IFOAM EU’s national members regularly provided us with positive feedback about our work on GMOs and stressed the importance of receiving information from the European level.

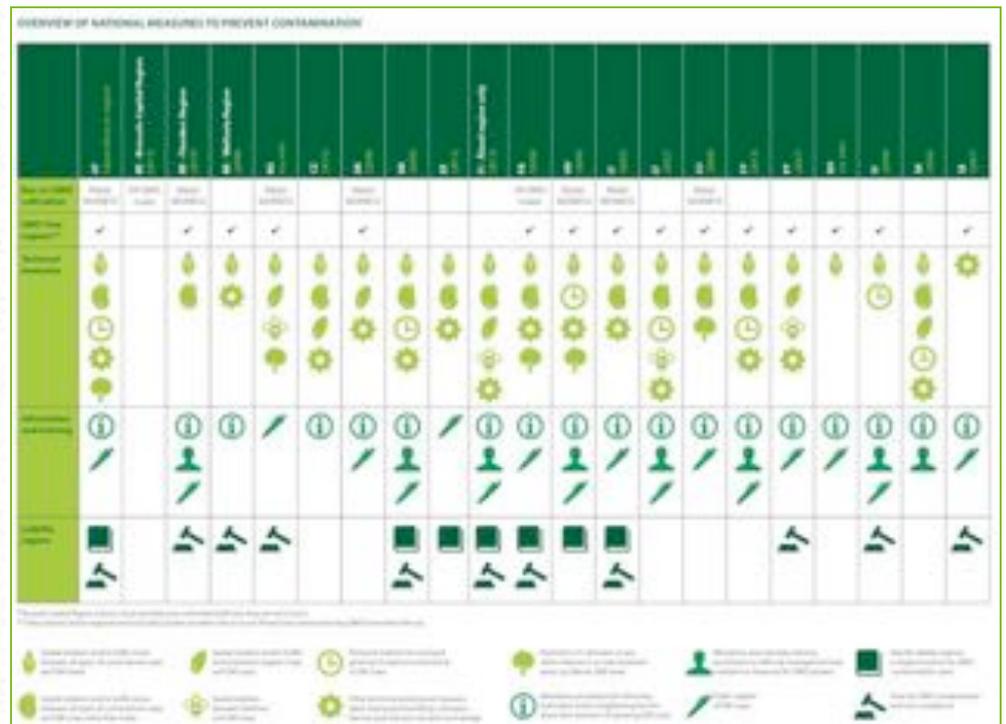


Figure 2: In our publication [Preventing GMO contamination](#) we provide an overview of national measures EU Member States take to prevent GMO contamination



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Ensuring that new genetic engineering techniques are regulated as GMOs

Since 2015, Europe has been waiting for the Commission to issue a legal interpretation on whether new genetic engineering techniques (NGETs) such as gene editing and cisgenesis fall within the scope of the GMO legislation and must be subjected to a risk assessment.

Research institutes and companies with economic interest in the deregulation of these techniques have been lobbying the Commission and the Parliament intensely to prevent these techniques from being governed by any specific regulation.

IFOAM EU believes that these techniques are GMOs and must be subjected to the precautionary principle, and to an adequate risk assessment and to the mandatory traceability and labelling requirements that apply to other GMOs (Regulation 1829/2003 and Regulation 1830/2003). It is important to know where or when these living organisms are released into the environment and the food-chain, as once released, they cannot be easily recalled. Together with our members and like-minded NGOs, we advocated to have organisms obtained through new genetic engineering techniques to be subjected to the same procedures as GMOs.

What did we do?

- Adopted [a position on new genetic engineering techniques](#), officially launched in January 2016
- Engaged within the organic movement
 - Organised an internal debate on NGETs
 - Contributed to IFOAM – Organic International’s work on the adoption of its own position on NGETs
- Engaged with the Commission
 - Conveyed the movement’s position and concerns to the Commission during various meetings with DG SANTE, and the Biotech Unit
- Engaged with the Parliament
 - [Sent a letter to Members of the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development](#) ahead of a vote on 26 April concerning “Technological solutions to sustainable agriculture in the EU”
- Engaged with civil society
 - Closely cooperated with environmental NGOs
 - [Co-signed a briefing paper](#)
 - Participated in different meetings on the topic, and in a project meeting (Synergene) on synthetic biology
 - Organised a roundtable on new genetic engineering techniques that gathered almost 30 different organisations from the organic sector

What did we achieve?

IFOAM EU activities contributed to raising awareness both within the organic sector and among civil society organisations on the need to urgently clarify the legal status of these so-called new breeding techniques, both at the EU and at the national level.



Carolin Grieshop, Director of the Kompetenzzentrum Ökolandbau Niedersachsen GmbH (KÖN); Hans Bartelme, member of the Naturland Board of Directors; Marco Schlüter, IFOAM EU Director (Director until April 2016); and Sebastian Mittermaier, Naturland Consultant on Agricultural Policy at the seminar “Organic opportunities for sustainable rural development 2020” organised by Naturland during the International Green Week in Berlin, 2016

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THE COMMON AGRICULTURE POLICY (CAP)

Addressing environmental challenges by promoting organic farming and agroecology in the CAP

In 2016, the Cork 2.0 declaration unofficially kicked-off the debate on the next CAP reform. It is fair to say that IFOAM EU played an active role in discussions on the future CAP. Together with its members and experts, IFOAM EU developed strategies for positioning organic farming and agroecological approaches as sustainable solutions for the mid-term review and the CAP post-2020 reform. IFOAM EU believes that the future CAP should put sustainability at the heart of the policy and better incentivise and reward farmers who are delivering public goods. The CAP should be better aligned with key EU environment and climate targets, including new commitments under the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement.

Next to our work on the CAP post-2020 reform, we continued working on improving the management of natural resources and ecosystem services under new Rural Development Programmes. In 2017, IFOAM EU will continue to take part in the conversation on the future of food and farming policy by developing a Vision for public goods.

What did we do?

- Raised awareness amongst policymakers on how to improve CAP implementation and future reforms: we liaised with Commission officials, participated in Commission Civil Dialogue Group meetings on the CAP, Direct Payments and Greening, Rural Development, the Commission’s structured dialogue with European Structural and Investment Funds, the European Rural Networks Assembly as well as participating to the Cork 2.0 Conference for Rural Development on 5-6 September
- Regularly exchanged with IFOAM EU members and experts on the CAP implementation and the CAP post-2020: at IFOAM EU Farmers Interest Group meetings in Sofia, Bulgaria, in June and in Munich, Germany, in December 2016, at a special meeting of IFOAM EU farming association experts, in Paris in March 2016, as well as various conferences such as the [10th European Organic Congress](#) and [BIOFACH 2016](#), and via regular correspondence
- Published a study led by the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) on [Organic farming and the prospects for stimulating public goods under the CAP 2014-2020](#). The study examined existing assessments of the new greening component under Pillar 1 direct payments, as well as the latest data on organic farming payments offered under Measure 11 of Pillar 2 Rural Development Programmes (RDPS)
- Developed a Vision Paper on public goods under the CAP post-2020 with IFOAM EU farming associations members. This included workshops for farmers and other relevant stakeholders to develop strategies for mainstreaming organic farming and agroecological approaches and exchange with strategic partners from civil society in the content of the next reform

What did we achieve?

Thanks to our active engagement at EU level on the need to put the delivery of public goods at the heart of the next Common Agricultural Policy reform, the [Cork 2.0 Declaration on Rural Development: A Better Life in Rural Areas](#), ratified by over 300 stakeholders from across the EU-28, reaffirms the need for greater investment in environmental public goods. Generally, knowledge among policy-makers and stakeholders about the CAP has improved, thanks to IFOAM EU’s and its members’ work.

IFOAM EU was successful in strengthening its strategic alliances with civil society organisations across a wide of different sector ahead of discussions on the CAP reform, which will intensify in 2017. Through our partnerships, we advocated for the uptake of the principle ‘public money for public goods’ in the discussions of the upcoming reform of the CAP. Furthermore, we enhanced organic stakeholders’ understanding of the opportunities available to supporting organic cooperative approaches production under new Rural Development Programmes as well facilitating discussions on the CAP reform post-2020.



Dorota Metera, BIOEKSPERT; Sebastian Mittermaier, Naturland; Stephen Meredith, IFOAM EU and Matthias Stolze, FiBL, at the session ‘Is the new CAP capable of supporting sustainable farming or just continuing business as usual’ at BioFach

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Matej Hudec, Head of Unit of the Agriculture and Fisheries at the Permanent Representation of the Slovak Republic to the European Union, and Luis Martín Plaza, Policy Coordinator at the Organics Unit of DG AGRI at the plenary session on the organic regulation and environmental performance at the 4th Organic Processing Conference

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Moderator Raffaele Zanolì - Professor, Università Politecnica delle Marche; Robert Kaukewitsch - Policy Officer, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission; Jenny Teufel - Senior Researcher on Sustainable Products & Material Flows, Oeko Institute; Alexander Beck - Chair of the Interest Group for Processors and Traders, IFOAM EU & Executive Board Member, AÖL and Eva-Lena Rådberg - Acting Quality Manager, KRAV at the session 'EU policies for market growth: Assessing benefits & risks' of the 4th Organic Processing Conference

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ORGANIC REGULATION

Ensuring the EU legal framework supports the development of organic food and farming

Organic food and farming in Europe is regulated by regulation (EC) No 834/2007. In 2014, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) presented a new legislative proposal to replace the current regulation. Since the beginning, IFOAM EU has been closely following the progress of this review process.

In 2016, the new text has been under negotiations between the three EU Institutions – the Commission, the Parliament and the Council – respectively under the Dutch and the Slovak Presidencies. Our efforts mainly focussed on giving political and technical input to the continuously-developing new text in order to ensure the best outcomes for the EU and global organic movements.

Together with its members, IFOAM EU provided and will continue to represent the European organic movement to ensure the European legal framework supports the development of organic food and farming.

What did we do?

FOLLOWED THE REVISION OF THE ORGANIC REGULATION

- Continuously advocated towards the Council, Commission and Parliament during the trilogue negotiations
- Closely cooperated with the Dutch and the Slovak Council Presidencies
- Informed our members and the wider organic movement about the development of the legislative process of the new organic regulation and its possible impacts via emails, the IFOAM EU extranet, newsletters, events and conferences, namely at Policy Day at Biofach 2016, at the International Green Week, at the [10th European Organic Congress](#), and at the [4th Organic Processing Conference](#)
- Participated in and chaired two meetings of the CDG on organic farming of the Commission's DG AGRI
- We issued [press releases](#), [an official letter](#) and many advocacy letters and technical inputs to the Commission, Member States and Members of the Parliament

TOOK OTHER ACTIONS REGARDING THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF ORGANIC FOOD AND FARMING

- Consulted with experts among the IFOAM EU members on production rules regarding livestock, crop and algae production, aquaculture, food and feed processing and trade and retail
- Brought together over 140 sector representatives to address the environmental challenges of organic processors and traders regarding climate change and biodiversity at the [4th Organic Processing Conference](#) in November in Seville, Spain
- Developed an important interpretation note on Art. 91 of regulation (EC) No 889/2008 which can be used as voluntary harmonisation tool
- Established internal task forces on organic textile and organic cosmetics to guarantee the same level of environment-friendliness, credibility and transparency for these as in organic foods

What did we achieve?

Thanks to the work done by IFOAM EU and its members, we prevented the premature adoption of a new legal framework for organic food and farming. The technical input we provided and the advocacy work towards the EU and national institutions aim at ensuring that the next legal framework adequately supports the development of organic food and farming in Europe.

Advocating for greater investment in research and innovation for organics and agroecology

To ensure that organics and agroecology get higher on the political agenda of EU's Research and Innovation policy, IFOAM EU actively worked on Horizon 2020, ERA-Nets and Joint Programme Initiatives (JPIs). IFOAM EU mostly did this work through contributing to the [European Technology Platform – TP Organics](#) – of which it hosts the secretariat.

As coordinator of the Horizon 2020 project OK-Net Arable, IFOAM EU also promoted and continues to promote knowledge exchange within the organic sector. OK-Net Arable aims to improve the exchange of knowledge among farmers, farm advisers and scientists to increase productivity and quality in organic arable cropping all over Europe. The project involves 17 partners, covering 12 countries from all corners of Europe and runs from March 2015 to February 2018.

What did TP Organics do?

- Together with its National Technology Platforms, it developed a position paper with [priority topics for the Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2018/2020](#). This position paper included two topics that were developed in collaboration with the European Technology Platform "Food for Life"
- Organised the second edition of Organic Innovation Days at the Representation of the Emilia Romagna region in Brussels, where several innovations of organic farmers and businesses were presented. These addressed the challenges of animal welfare, increasing productivity of arable farming and transparency in the organic value chain. The conference also looked at innovations developed outside the organic sector, dealing with food waste, social economy, agri-food start-ups and cosmetics. At the last day of the Organic Innovation Days, TP Organics organised a brokerage event to help researchers find partners and participate in the CORE Organic call for projects
- Organised BioFach Science Day with the International Technology and Innovation Platform (TIPI) to discuss Research and Innovation needs with organic food companies
- Published a position paper [Research & Innovation for Our Future Food Systems](#)
- Participated in the event [FOOD 2030: Research & Innovation for Tomorrow's Nutrition & Food Systems](#) and contributed to the discussions of this new initiative of Directorate-General for Research & Innovation

What did IFOAM EU do?

Partnered in the [AgriSpin](#) project and [compiled an overview of the cases with an organic and agroecological focus](#) that were explored through the project's thirteen [cross-visits](#).

Coordinated the OK-Net Arable project. A major milestone in 2016 was the launch of the [OK-Net Arable knowledge platform](#) that provides access to a wide range of tools and resources that can help improve production, and a virtual meeting place for cross-border learning

What did we achieve?

- ERA-Net [CORE organic](#) launched a new call for research projects. Topics of the call topics that were based on TP Organics' [Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda](#)
- Strengthened the position of organic and agroecological farming in Horizon 2020 and transnational research programmes
- Improved the capacity of the organic movement and sector to participate in European and transnational research and innovation projects
- Strengthened the engagement of the industry and SMEs in TP Organics
- Recognised the French Research Organic Group (FROG) as the French National Technology Platform of TP Organics



Simona Caselli, Minister of Agriculture of the Emilia Romagna Region welcomes participants to the second edition of the Organic Innovation Days

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The winning projects of the organic innovations awards for 2016 were represented by Pasquale De Vita, CREA (Innovative cereals sowing system for weeds control); Kate Still, Soil Association (AssureWel); Gerald Herrmann, Organic Services (Check Organic and Federbio)

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GOVERNANCE

IFOAM EU 2016 Board

The Board is the executive body that is elected by the General Assembly according to sector-related and regional criteria. In 2016¹, the Board members were:

Christopher Stopes

President
EcoS Consultancy

Sabine Eigenschink

Board Vice President for Regulation & Certification
Austria Bio Garantie

Jan Plagge

Board Vice President for Policy
Bioland

Bavo Van Den Idsert

Board Treasurer & Rapporteur for Processing and Trade
VBP Biologisch

Thomas Fertl

Board Member & Rapporteur for Farming
Bio Austria

Évelyne Alcázar Marín

Board member
Ecovalia

Sybille Kyed

Board Member
Organic Denmark – Økologisk Landsforening

Jiří Lehejček

Board Member
Czech Technology Platform for Organic Agriculture

Sylvie Dulong

Board Member
FNAB

¹ In April 2016, the IFOAM EU membership elected a new board at its 8th General Assembly

IFOAM EU 2016 Council

The Council consists of nationally elected representatives and substitutes from 31 countries that make up the IFOAM EU Council, which brings together national interests and specificities at the European level. In 2016, the Council members were:

 Austria	Sabine Eigenschink Council Member & Board Vice President for Regulation & Certification Austria Bio Garantie	Thomas Fertl Deputy Council Member & Board Member & Rapporteur for farming Bio Austria
 Belgium	Lieve Vercauteren Council Member BioForum	Muriel Huybrechts Deputy Council Member Le Collège Des Producteurs
 Bulgaria	Albena Simeonova Council Member Bulgarian Organic Products Association	Stoilko Apostolov Deputy Council Member Bioselena
 Croatia	Jelena Petrov Council Member Dalmatia EKO	Marko Sever Deputy Council Member Croatian Organic Agricultural Association Andrea Vugrinović Deputy Council Member Lokvina Ltd
 Czech Republic	Jiří Lehejček Council Member & Board Member Czech Technology Platform for Organic Agriculture	
 Denmark	Sybille Kyed Council Member & Board Member Organic Denmark – Økologisk Landsforening	Per Kolster Deputy Council Member Organic Denmark – Økologisk Landsforening
 Estonia	Merit Mikk Council Member Estonian Organic Farming Foundation	Airi Vetemaa Deputy Council Member Estonian Organic Farming Foundation
 Finland	Mikko Simola Council Member Kymi Organic	Aira Sevón Deputy Council Member ESVY ry Marika Auersalmi Deputy Council Member MaBio Oy
 France	Sylvie Dulong Council Member & Board Member FNAB	Jean-Marc Lévêque Deputy Council Member Triballat-Noyal
 Germany	Peter Röhrig Council Member BÖLW	Kirsten Arp Deputy Council Member BNN Antje Kölling Deputy Council Member Demeter
 Greece	Kostas Dritsas Council Member DIO	Elias Mavrias Deputy Council Member Attiki Association of Organic Farmers Markets Andreas Georgakakis Deputy Council Member Biohellas

 Hungary	Éva Sándorné Ács Council Member Kishantos Rural Development Centre	Lea Bauer Deputy Council Member Biokontroll Hungária Nonprofit Kft
 Iceland	Olafur Dyrmondsson Council Member BiRala Farmers Association Iceland	Stefán Gíslason Deputy Council Member Vottunarstofan Tun ehf.
 Ireland	Gillian Westbrook Council Member IOFGA	Grace Maher Deputy Council Member IOFGA Eveline Gill Deputy Council Member Organic Trust Ltd.
 Italy	Antonio Compagnoni Council member ICEA	Riccardo Cozzo Deputy Council Member BioAgriCert Livia Ortolani Deputy Council Member AIAB
 Latvia	Gustavs Norkārkļis Council member ALOA	Līga Lojina Deputy Council Member Ekoprodukti
 Lithuania	Edita Karbauskiene Council Member Lithuanian Association of Organic Farmers – Gaja	Antanas Svirskis Deputy Council Member Lithuanian Association of Organic Farmers – Gaja
 Luxembourg	Daniela Noesen-Steiger Council Member Bio-Lëtzebuerg	
 Malta	Mario Salerno Council Member Malta Organic Agriculture Movement – MOAM	Joe Sciberras Deputy Council Member Malta Organic Agriculture Movement – MOAM
 The Netherlands	Bavo Van Den Idsert Council Member & Board Treasurer & Processing-trade Sector Rapporteur Bionext	Marian Blom Deputy Council Member Bionext Paulien Veerman Deputy Council Member Bionext
 Norway	Gerald Altena Council Member DEBIO	Grete Serikstad Deputy Council Member Bioforsk Organic Food and Farming
 Poland	Dorota Metera Council Member BIOEKSPERT Ltd.	Tomasz Sakowski Deputy Council Member Institute of Genetics and Animal Breeding of the Polish Academy of Sciences Ewa Rembalkowska Deputy Council Member Faculty of Human Nutrition and Consumer Sciences
 Portugal	Jaime Manuel Carvalho Ferreira Council Member Agrobio	Alexandra Maurer da Costa Deputy Council Member Agrobio

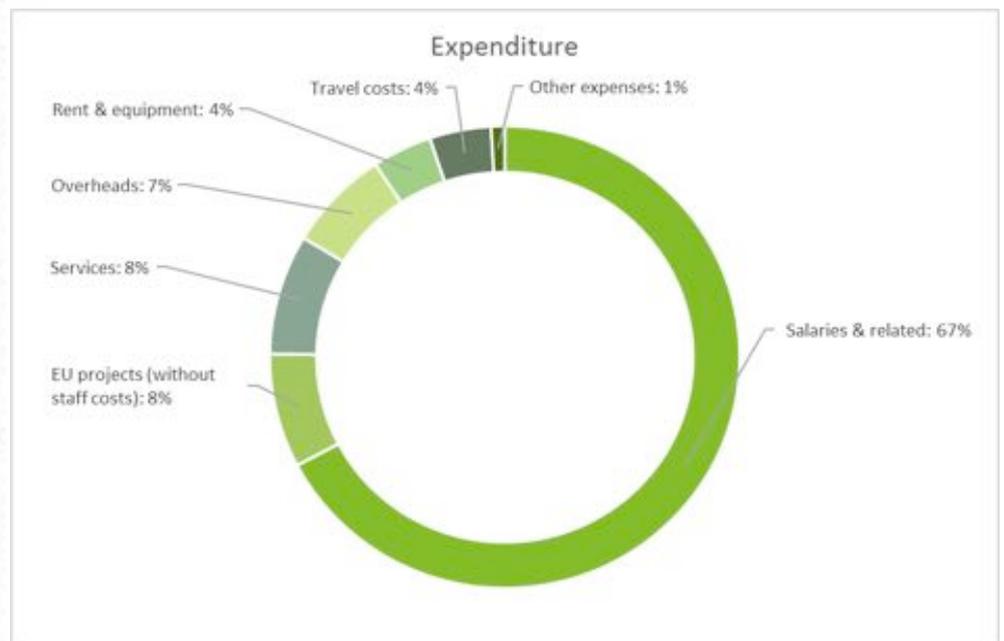
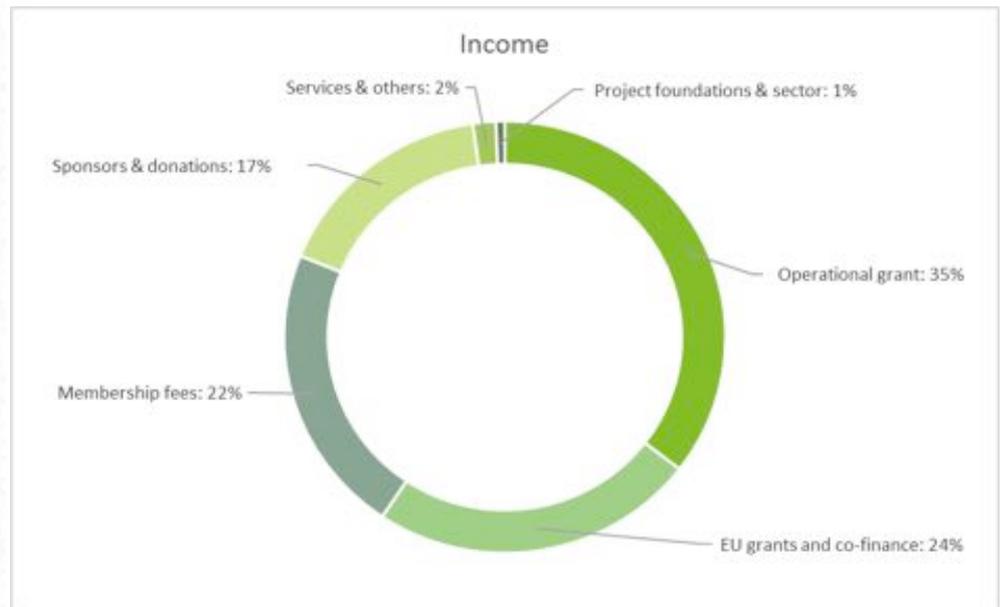
 Romania	Marian Ciocanu Council Member Bio Romania Association	
 Slovakia	Milos Homola Council Member Ekotrend Slovakia	
 Slovenia	Anamarija Slabe Council Member Institute for Sustainable Development	Boris Fras Deputy Council Member Biodar, Union of Slovenian Organic Farmers Association
 Spain	Évelyne Alcázar Marín Council Member & Board Member Ecovalia	Víctor González Council Member SEAE Isidre Martínez Deputy Council Member SEAE
 Sweden	Marianne Schönning Council Member Swedish Ecological Farmers Association	Maria Wivstad Deputy Council Member Swedish university of Agriculture (SLU) Paula Quintana Fernandez Deputy Council Member KRAV
 Switzerland	Barbara Früh Council Member FiBL	Hans Ramseier Deputy Council Member Bio Suisse
 United Kingdom	Christopher Stopes President & Board Member EcoS Consultancy	Chris Atkinson Council Member Soil Association Lawrence Woodward Deputy Council Member Beyond GM

2016 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Total income: 1,312,387.01 EUR

Total costs: 1,296,119.98 EUR

Result: 16,267.03 EUR



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