

## Contents

<b>CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>WELCOME NOTE</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>POLITICAL HOTSPOT</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1 NEWS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
1.1 POLICY .....	4
Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) .....	4
Organic Regulations .....	5
Food Policy .....	6
Seeds .....	7
Plant Health Care .....	8
Biodiversity, soil and water .....	9
Food, Farm and Environment.....	9
1.2 RESEARCH AND INNOVATION.....	11
Research and innovation advocacy / TP Organics.....	11
Knowledge for organic .....	13
<b>2 IFOAM ORGANICS EUROPE DEVELOPMENT</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>3 EVENTS</b> .....	<b>24</b>
3.1 PREVIEW OF EVENTS.....	24
3.2 REVIEW OF EVENTS .....	27
<b>4 MAKING EUROPE MORE ORGANIC – SUPPORT IFOAM ORGANICS EUROPE</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>5 CALENDAR OF EVENTS</b> .....	<b>32</b>

## WELCOME NOTE

Dear readers,

It is spring, a period I associate with birth and budding blossoms, the energetic execution of gardening plans I have been brooding on during winter and a wonderful harvest in mind. Not unlike the European organic movement, who plans activities, sows ideas and is looking forward to a few busy and crucial seasons.

One of our focal points are 'new genomic techniques'. Following the publication of the Commission's study, we will mobilise you, our members, and the movement, to continue protecting the organic food system and the precautionary principle. For an in-depth reading, have a look at our [political hotspot](#) and [press release of 29 April](#).

Another focal point is the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The Portuguese Presidency is committed to concluding the CAP reform by May 2021. Member States are developing their CAP Strategic Plans that will be submitted to the Commission within the coming months. [In an article you can read about the state of play and our work](#).

Those interested in the CAP can discuss, learn and exchange how to align the CAP Strategic Plans with the EU Green Deal at our [European Organic Congress](#) from 16-18 June 2021. The Congress will take place online, live from Lisbon and is organised in collaboration with our partner Agrobio. As you can expect from us, we will also cover the changes in the new EU Organic Regulation, organic's contribution to climate change mitigation and the transition towards sustainable food systems and rural development. You can discover the fascinating work being done on the ground in Portugal, linking organic farming with health and biodiversity. [Have a look at the programme](#) and stay tuned for the registration opening in May.

Another highlight will be our [Organic Food Conference](#), from 30 September-1 October 2021 in Warsaw, Poland. Under the motto 'The future of organic food' sector representatives and policymakers will talk about the new EU Organic Regulation, the European Organic Action Plan, organic market trends and much more. The conference is organised together with our partner, the Polish Chamber of Organic Food (PIZE). More information will follow soon.

Did you know that the new EU Organic Regulation, replacing the current one from 2002 on, has 23 implemented and delegate acts? It means that reading and understanding the new regulation will be challenging for organic operators. I am really pleased that [IFOAM Organics Europe is drafting an interpretation to guide our members and organic stakeholders](#). More information will follow in the coming weeks.

On behalf of the European organic movement, I wish you a healthy spring, lots of inspiration and good harvests ahead.

Organic regards,  
Marian Blom  
IFOAM Organics Europe Vice President



## POLITICAL HOTSPOT

On Thursday, 29 April, the Commission released their long-awaited [in-house study](#) on the ‘status of new genomic techniques under Union law and in light of the Court of Justice ruling in Case C-528/16’ and an accompanying [press release](#). What is evident from this report is that the Commission appears to be convinced that new genetic engineering techniques are an important part of their wider sustainability agenda and in line with the EU Green Deal and the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies.

According to IFOAM Organics Europe, this report by DG Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) is largely based on assumptions on the future “benefits for society” of new genetic engineering techniques and does not contain solid arguments to back up its conclusion that the current GMO legislation is “not fit for purpose” for the new techniques. Based on these assumptions, the Commission is seeking to propose new legislation to promote new genetic engineering techniques and launch a wide-ranging consultation with stakeholders and Member States to discuss a future legal framework. If the Ministers of the Member States go along with the line of the Commission and give their green light, a new legal framework could create a challenging situation. This is because on the one hand, the Commission seeks to increase organic land and agroecological production, and on the other hand they also intend to promote farming systems relying on GMOs.

Currently, and in line with the ruling of the European Court of Justice, varieties developed using these new techniques can only be marketed and/or cultivated if they go through the same approval process as other GMOs, including risk assessment, traceability along the production chain and labelling. In a [press release](#), IFOAM Organics Europe expressed the concern that weakening the rules on using genetic engineering in agriculture and food is worrying news and could leave organic food systems unprotected – including the ability to trace GMOs throughout the food chain to avoid contaminations that lead to economic losses and to live up to organic quality standards and consumer expectations.

Furthermore, the EU organic movement’s press release calls on the EU Commission and Member States to maintain the existing regulatory framework and seriously consider the impact of the proposed regulatory scenario on organic food & farming, consumer choice and access to agrobiodiversity.

While consumer groups and environmental NGOs would like to see the current regulation maintained and properly implemented, the farming lobby of the conventional sector (Copa-Cogeca) calls on the Commission to speed up the process of developing new legislation. While impacts on the organic sector are mentioned several times in the Commission study, no concrete solutions are proposed on how the Commission would intend to preserve the integrity of the organic supply chain in case they went ahead with plans to take the new genetic engineering techniques out of the current legal framework applying to GMOs. This includes the question of how and whether traceability of these organisms would be maintained for (organic) food producers and seed producers and enabling them not to use products from genetic engineering in their production process.

In the next step, the Commission will present their plans to the Ministers of the Member States at an Agriculture Council meeting on 31 May, to members of the European Parliament and stakeholders. National positions on how new genetic engineering techniques should be regulated will be crucial in the coming months to decide whether the Commission will go ahead with its suggested plans to

develop a new and specific legal framework for “novel genomic techniques”. IFOAM Organics Europe will be heavily involved in this policy debate, representing the European organic movement’s voice.

For more information on GMOs and IFOAM Organics Europe’s work on this issue, please contact [martin.sommer@organicseurope.bio](mailto:martin.sommer@organicseurope.bio). Please do note that we prioritise our members’ requests.

IFOAM Organics Europe members can find more information on the member extranet. For information about what you can gain from being a member, read [our membership page](#) and contact [membership@organicseurope.bio](mailto:membership@organicseurope.bio).

## 1 NEWS

### 1.1 Policy

#### Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

##### Co-legislators discussing green architecture

During the trilogue meeting on Friday 30 April, dedicated to the “green architecture” of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the three institutions agreed on the need to reach a political agreement soon (most probably by the end of May).

The Council accepted the Parliament’s suggestion of having eco-schemes for animal welfare and, therefore, on having payments per livestock unit. On the ring-fencing for eco-schemes, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) appreciated the Portuguese Presidency’s offer of a progressive increase of the percentage from 22% to 25% but will be rediscussed this next meeting.

Co-legislators approved the principles that transfers between pillars should not lead to a decrease of funds for the environment and climate, but still need to find a compromise on the rates.

They also agreed on a slight amendment to Article 5 - suggested by the Parliament - clarifying that the new CAP should also contribute to the EU’s commitments stemming from the Paris Agreement.

Further discussions are also needed on climate-tracking, investments, and the social conditionality. This last item is one of the key priorities of the Portuguese Presidency, but co-legislators underlined the “practical difficulty in incorporating this dimension to the CAP” even if they agreed that worker’s rights in agriculture need to be respected.

In parallel to CAP discussions, IFOAM Organics Europe is conducting a questionnaire to gather information on the quality of the national consultation process on CAP strategic plans, the level of involvement of organic associations and on the envisaged content of CAP strategic plans in Member States.

IFOAM will prepare written feedback for the European Commission about the organic movement’s involvement (or lack thereof) in the design of the national strategic plans, and on whether the level of ambition to develop organic farming in the different Member States is in line with the EU target to reach 25% organic land by 2030. Moreover, we will develop communication tools to support our members in their national advocacy work on the CAP strategic plans.



For more information on the CAP and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please contact [lena.brisset@organicseurope.bio](mailto:lena.brisset@organicseurope.bio). Please do note that we prioritise our members' requests. For information about what you can gain from being a member, read [our membership page](#) and contact [membership@organicseurope.bio](mailto:membership@organicseurope.bio).

## Organic Regulations

### New Organic Regulation published

The sixth secondary regulation to the new EU Organic Regulation (EU) 2018/848 has been published. It is [Delegated Regulation \(EU\) 2021/642](#) about labelling of feed and seed mixtures.

You find all published secondary acts to the new EU Organic Regulation and all current organic regulations on [our website's EU Organic Regulations page](#).

IFOAM Organics Europe's members can contact [emanuele.busacca@organicseurope.bio](mailto:emanuele.busacca@organicseurope.bio) for questions on the EU Organic Regulation. Please note that we will not answer to non-members' requests.

For information about what you can gain from being a member, read our membership page and contact [membership@organicseurope.bio](mailto:membership@organicseurope.bio).

### Coming up for organic operators: Guide on new EU Organic Regulation

New Organic Regulation (EU) 2018/848 will apply from 1 January 2022. The basic regulation published in June 2018 will be accompanied by around 23 acts of secondary legislation, most of them not yet published.

Additional acts of secondary legislation will be published in the following months and years, making reading, and understanding the new EU organic regulation very challenging for organic operators and other stakeholders.

IFOAM Organics Europe is working on a guide to the new organic regulation, which will help its members (and other interested parties) navigate the labyrinth of the new legal framework.

The guide will simplify reading the regulation by grouping content areas, highlighting the main changes compared to the current regulations and providing recommendations for the implementation of unclear requirements and/or requirements with room for interpretation.

The objectives are:

- 1) Simplifying the reading for operators and other stakeholders, so they will not need to navigate the numerous legal acts and cross-references with difficulty.
- 2) Possible harmonization of the new rules in the different Member States and Third Countries, through recommendations for implementing certain requirements which may give room for different interpretations.

Stay tuned, we will provide further details in the next weeks.



IFOAM Organics Europe's members can contact [emanuele.busacca@organicseurope.bio](mailto:emanuele.busacca@organicseurope.bio) for questions on the EU Organic Regulation. Please note that we will not answer to non-members' requests.

For information about what you can gain from being a member, read our membership page and contact [membership@organicseurope.bio](mailto:membership@organicseurope.bio).

# THANK YOU

**GOLDEN SPONSORS OF OUR PROJECT**

**DEVELOPING ORGANIC: PESTICIDE USE AND CONTAMINATION**



## Food Policy

### Ten NGO priorities for the European Parliament report on the Farm to Fork strategy

On 20 April, IFOAM Organics Europe was one of 24 non-governmental organisations to co-sign "10 priorities for the Farm to Fork INI [report](#)". In this document, NGOs share their views on what the European Parliament's own initiative report on the Farm to Fork (F2F) strategy should prioritize.

The 10 priorities identified by the signing organisations focus, among others, on translating the European Green Deal's initiatives, targets, and priorities into reality and on transitioning towards a more sustainable food system for people and the planet.

The 10 priorities are:

1. Recognise the need for urgent and bold action
2. Endorse the F2F strategy targets
3. Unlock the transition to agroecology for nature and climate-friendly farming
4. Make the healthy and sustainable food choice the easy one
5. Launch a transition to less and better animal farming and meat, dairy and eggs consumption
6. Align EU agri-food policies with the European Green Deal
7. Promote precaution and farmers' rights before technological innovation
8. Commit to a socially just economy
9. Step up for higher animal welfare



## 10. Promote global transition

The draft Parliament report on the F2F strategy [is available on the European Parliament's website](#). Political parties within the European Parliament have already submitted their desired amendments to this report... more than 2,000 of them!

A vote on this European Parliament report is expected in June 2021.

### **Take part in the public consultation on promotion policy and contribute to support sustainable consumption**

This year the European Commission earmarked an unprecedented share of €49 million to promote organic production and consumption in the promotion policy budget. This is an important and concrete step in the right direction and needs to be maintained in the following years to achieve the goals set out by the European Green Deal. Indeed, promotion policies for organic food products are likely to play a decisive role in reaching Europe's goal of 25% organic land in 2030.

#### **Help shape the future of promotion policies**

The European Commission has recently published its [public consultation](#) on promotion policies. It is a questionnaire and follow up to the roadmap on the same topic. Both initiatives strive to receive as much feedback as possible from relevant stakeholders (to gather feedback from stakeholders and citizens on a certain topic, the European Commission first publishes a rather generic roadmap, and then a more specific public consultation with a questionnaire).

The deadline to fill in the questionnaire of the public consultation is 23 June. IFOAM Organics Europe's feedback to the roadmap is [publicly available on the Commission's website](#).

#### **Submit a proposal**

IFOAM Organics Europe encourages a wide participation to the call for proposals on promotion policies to ensure a continuous and increasing promotion of organic and sustainable agricultural practices.

This year's [call for promotion policy proposals](#) is **still open until 11 May, 17:00 CEST**. IFOAM Organics Europe's members find all the important info on our [member extranet](#). For information about what you can gain from being a member, read [our membership page](#) and contact [membership@organicseurope.bio](mailto:membership@organicseurope.bio).

If you have any questions on proposals or the public consultation on promotion policies, please do contact [silvia.schmidt@organicseurope.bio](mailto:silvia.schmidt@organicseurope.bio). Please do note that we prioritise our members' requests.

## **Seeds**

### **EU Commission presents options to review the common seed legislation**

Following a request from Member States in 2019, the Commission has published a study on the [options to update the existing legislation](#) on production and marketing of seed and other plant reproductive material.



The study summarizes that the (partly) decades old legislation is incoherent and not implemented in a harmonised way among Member States. It further notes that the existing legislation does not provide a good basis to introduce adapted testing requirements for the development of organic varieties suitable to organic production.

This is also one of the issues that IFOAM Organics Europe highlighted in the stakeholder consultation performed in the context of the study. Based on these and other assumptions, possible options to update the legislation are presented, two of which propose new amendments to the existing Directives.

We will provide you with a more detailed analysis of the different options in the next edition of this newsletter. Members can read it earlier on our [member extranet](#).

For more information on the seed legislation and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please contact [martin.sommer@organicseurope.bio](mailto:martin.sommer@organicseurope.bio).

Please do note that we prioritise our members' requests. For information about what you can gain from being a member, read [our membership page](#) and contact [membership@organicseurope.bio](mailto:membership@organicseurope.bio).

## Plant Health Care

### Public consultation on the revision of the Sustainable Use of Pesticides (SUD) legislation closes

While the European Commission is revising the Directive for a sustainable use of pesticides (the so-called SUD), IFOAM Organics Europe is fully involved to promote organic agriculture as the most efficient option to reduce pesticide use.

### The EU organic movement's contribution to the public consultation...

IFOAM Organics Europe's contribution to the public consultation on the revision of the SUD calls for prioritising organic agriculture in the Member States' National Action Plans implemented under the directive. This will contribute to achieving the Farm to Fork strategy's targets on pesticide reduction. As organic movement we want these targets to be enshrined in the SUD so that they become legally binding. We also call the Commission to develop a coherent set of indicators to measure pesticide reduction taking into account the specificities of organic agriculture. As the current SUD suffers from a lack of implementation by Member States, its revision should be an opportunity to consider new provisions to ensure its application on the ground.

Our members can read our [full contribution](#) to the public consultation on the member extranet.

### ... and our contribution to targeted interviews

In parallel, IFOAM Organics Europe is one of the key stakeholders the Commission identified to participate in more targeted interviews on the SUD. We have already provided our expertise on the evaluation of the SUD in a one-hour interview in March. In the second half of the year, we will provide input to a similar interview, this time on the impact assessment of the revised SUD.

Please contact [mathilde.calmels@organicseurope.bio](mailto:mathilde.calmels@organicseurope.bio) for questions on pesticides and natural inputs. Do note that we prioritise our members' requests. For information about what you can gain from being a member, read our membership page and contact [membership@organicseurope.bio](mailto:membership@organicseurope.bio).



## Biodiversity, soil and water

### Towards a new framework for EU soils?

Soil is a non-renewable resource key to all growing and living on it. Part of the EU Biodiversity strategy for 2030, the new soil strategy 'Healthy Soils', will update the current strategy to address soil degradation and preserve land resources across Europe. The adoption of the new strategy is planned for the second quarter of 2021.

Between February and April 2021, the Commission opened a public consultation on soils. IFOAM Organics Europe contributed to this consultation and emphasized organic farmers' key role.

In parallel, the [European Parliament just adopted a resolution](#) calling on the Commission to design an EU-wide common legal framework for the protection and sustainable use of soils. In this resolution, MEPs ask Member States to introduce coherent soil protection measures in their national CAP Strategic Plans. They also call for measures to promote organic farming, and the use of organic matter additions to soil.

For more information on soils and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please contact [lena.brisset@organicseurope.bio](mailto:lena.brisset@organicseurope.bio). Please do note that we prioritise our members' requests. For information about what you can gain from being a member, read [our membership page](#) and contact [membership@organicseurope.bio](mailto:membership@organicseurope.bio).

## Food, Farm and Environment

### How can Europe rise to face agroecological transition? Nyéléni Europe's policy report

How can the European Green Deal, the EU Farm to Fork Strategy, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and land policies rise to the European challenges on food production, decent work, economic prosperity and climate change?

Land politics – who controls what land, how it is used, for how long, for what purposes and to whose benefit – is a central pillar of the debate. As politicians across Europe struggle to balance the urgent need for climate action with the need to strengthen equity and popular support for new policies, the risk of societal discord looms large protests fuelled by farmers, perceptions of 'Agri-bashing,' and long-running tensions between conservation movements and agricultural communities.

Each year on 17 April, the International Day of Peasants' Struggle, we celebrate and demand more rights for the small-scale farmers who feed us and stand up for a fair and democratic land control as access to land still is an issue for many farmers. The price of agricultural land is increasing in many European countries and land is more and more concentrated in the hands of a few agro-conglomerates. Only a few countries use the 'capping' mechanism to set a ceiling for payments to the biggest farms and 20% of farms get 80% of payments.

Land must not be treated as a commodity but as a shared and multifunctional good and European policies must ensure access to land for agroecology and organic farming, for the benefit of all. The EU Farm to Fork's targets must be realised in the different European policies concerned, in particular the CAP, in order to support a real transition towards sustainable food systems.



Interested in learning more about land policies and access to land? A collective of organisations, coming together under the banner of the [Nyéléni Europe Food Sovereignty](#), have released a policy report [Roots of resilience: Land policy for an agroecological transition in Europe](#). It offers policymakers recommendations to counter these unfair and unsustainable trends and take the goal of increasing access to land for agroecology in Europe seriously. The report is now available in [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#) and [Romanian](#).

For more information, visit [www.accesstoland.eu](http://www.accesstoland.eu) or contact [Lena.Brisset@organicseurope.bio](mailto:Lena.Brisset@organicseurope.bio). Please do note that we prioritise our members' requests.

IFOAM Organics Europe members can find more information on the member extranet. For information about what you can gain from being a member, read [our membership page](#) and contact [membership@organicseurope.bio](mailto:membership@organicseurope.bio).



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

A collective of organisations, coming together under the banner of the Nyéléni Europe published this report. This report was co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

### Sign the European Citizens' Initiative to save bees and farmers!



To all our members, newsletter subscribers & website visitors who have not signed the European Citizens' Initiative to 'Save bees and farmers' yet, [you can still do so until the end of June 2021!](#)

After Austria, Belgium, France, Germany and Romania, Hungary is the 6<sup>th</sup> country to reach the signature threshold and join the European Citizens Initiative (ECI) hive in calling on the European Commission and Parliament to phase out synthetic pesticides by 2035, support farmers and save bees and nature.

#### Why is this important?

If the initiative gathers one million signatures by 30 June 2021, the European institutions must consider turning the campaign's demands into law. To achieve that goal, add your signature, help us spread the word and share the initiative widely within your network – on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) & [Linktree](#).

#### Help spread the message: Communication materials



Rue du Commerce 124 – 1000 Brussels – Belgium – Phone: +32 2 280 12 23 – Email: [info@organicseurope.bio](mailto:info@organicseurope.bio)

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

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

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

### Tweets

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

For additional background information about the initiative, have a look at [our website](#). IFOAM Organics Europe members can visit the [member extranet](#) or contact [verena.mitschke@organicseurope.bio](mailto:verena.mitschke@organicseurope.bio) for more details and images for the tweets.

## 1.2 Research and innovation

### Research and innovation advocacy / TP Organics

#### New Organic Action Plan: Focus on research & innovation

The new Organic Action Plan (OAP) published at the end of March 2021 recognises that research will be key for achieving the Farm to Fork strategy’s objectives. At least 30% of the budget for research and innovation (R&I) actions in the field of agriculture, forestry and rural areas are to be dedicated to topics specific to or relevant for organic.

#### Support through the Common Agricultural Policy...

To support implementation, the new OAP foresees mobilisation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Financial support for organic will continue through rural development commitments, with an additional stream of funding through Eco-schemes. CAP support will also include technical assistance and exchange of best practices and innovations in organic. Farm advisory services will be strengthened



to promote relevant knowledge exchange, notably as part of Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS).

### **... and Horizon Europe**

Organic farming is knowledge intensive. To make it even more sustainable and productive, the Commission intends to dedicate at least 30% of the budget for research and innovation (R&I) actions in the field of agriculture, forestry, and rural areas to topics specific to or relevant for the organic sector. Specifically, this would be 30% of the next calls related to Intervention Area 3 'Agriculture, forestry and rural areas' of Cluster 6 of Horizon Europe. Among others, research shall cover changing farmers' and consumers' behaviours, increased crop yields, genetic biodiversity, and alternatives to contentious products.

The Commission equally foresees to strengthen the coordination of national organic food R&I programmes and provide new opportunities through the Mission on Soil health and food (part of Horizon Europe) and the new partnerships, in particular those on agroecology and food systems. The dissemination of R&I results will be fostered through [EIP-AGRI](#) and AKIS to promote a general increase of organic in all Member States.

### **Assessment of TP Organics: The pros of the Organic Action Plan**

TP Organics welcomes this timely roadmap to reach the 25% target and transition towards more sustainable food and farming systems by providing Member States with the tools to leverage the potential of organic farming. Involving national, regional, and local actors is vital for actions related to public procurement and the promotion and implementation of bio-districts. National capitals should implement the OAP through their national CAP Strategic Plans. Proper support through competent advisory services as well as capacity building along the supply chain are crucial for full conversion to organic practices rather than mere input substitution as well as to avoid reversion to conventional farming. It is time to properly reward organic farmers as well as conventional farmers transitioning to organic for the benefits they deliver to nature and society, and to properly fund farm advisory systems geared towards organic and other agroecological practices.

### **And the cons of the Organic Action Plan**

However, while the foreseen strengthening of advisory services as part of AKIS and dedicating 30% of the next calls related to Cluster 6 of Horizon Europe (Intervention Area 3 'Agriculture, forestry, and rural areas') to topics specific to or relevant for the organic sector is welcome, regrettably, TP Organics and CORE Organic are not explicitly mentioned. As officially recognised European Technology Platform bringing together researchers and practitioners, TP Organics should have been acknowledged in the OAP for its expertise regarding the knowledge needs and research priorities of the organic sector, as it was in the 2014-2020 OAP. Dedicated support to CORE Organic in the OAP would have allowed the network to continue its activities in terms of alignment and joint funding of R&I, thereby also helping coordinate R&I investments in the organic sector by Member States to ensure a balanced development of the sector across the EU.

[Download the Organic Action Plan.](#)





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## Knowledge for organic

### Promising alternatives to inputs for plant protection: Mineral oil & copper

The [RELACS project](#) recently published two new scientific publications on promising plant protection tools and strategies to further reduce the use of external and contentious inputs, namely mineral oil and copper.

Under exceptional conditions and against specific pests, like whiteflies (one of the most harmful insect pests in greenhouses worldwide), mineral oil is occasionally used in Eastern European and Mediterranean countries. In a paper called "[Vibrational communication and mating behavior of the greenhouse whitefly \*Trialeurodes vaporariorum\* \(Westwood\) \(Hemiptera: Aleyrodidae\)](#)", Fattoruso et al. analyse the role of vibrational signals in mating success. Based on their findings, they consider the use of vibrational playbacks interfering with greenhouse whitefly mating communication a promising option for pest control in greenhouses. They also discuss investigating the possibility to control the populations of greenhouse whiteflies via behavioural manipulation.

In several European countries, farmers use copper as plant protection product. RELACS investigates alternatives for this, like tagatose, a rare sugar metabolised by a limited number of microorganisms inhibiting a large spectrum of phytopathogens. In their article "[Interactions of tagatose with the sugar metabolism are responsible for \*Phytophthora infestans\* growth inhibition](#)", Corneo et al. found the interactions of tagatose with the common sugar metabolism to be a key mode of action against *P. infestans* growth. This may represent the basis for the further development of tagatose as eco-friendly fungicide.

[Learn more about these findings and other scientific publications on RELACS's website.](#)

Visit the [RELACS website](#) to learn more and follow the latest project's developments on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) using @RELACSeu and #RELACSeu.

RELACS seeks to promote the development and adoption of environmentally safe and economically viable tools and technologies to reduce the use of external inputs in organic farming systems. [IFOAM Organics Europe](#) is responsible for the communication and dissemination of project results as well as the coordination of the science-practice-policy dialogue.



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

[IFOAM Organics Europe](#) is responsible for the communication and dissemination of project results as well as the coordination of the science-practice-policy dialogue.





*RELACS has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 773431. This communication only reflects the author's view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.*

### **RELACS and Organic-PLUS collaborate to find alternatives to contentious inputs**

On 8 April 2021, more than 50 participants joined [RELACS](#) and [Organic-PLUS'](#) webinar to discuss both projects' activities on reducing copper and mineral oils for plant protection, animal-derived fertilisers from conventional farming, peat in growing media and fossil fuel-derived plastics.

[Read about the lessons learned by the two Horizon 2020 projects](#), both aiming to reduce the negative environmental impacts of agriculture across Europe and developing alternatives to strengthen organic farming.

Visit the [RELACS website](#) to learn more and follow the latest project's developments on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) using @RELACSeu and #RELACSeu.

RELACS seeks to promote the development and adoption of environmentally safe and economically viable tools and technologies to reduce the use of external inputs in organic farming systems. [IFOAM Organics Europe](#) is responsible for the communication and dissemination of project results as well as the coordination of the science-practice-policy dialogue.



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

[IFOAM Organics Europe](#) is responsible for the communication and dissemination of project results as well as the coordination of the science-practice-policy dialogue.



*RELACS has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 773431. This communication only reflects the author's view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.*

### **Stimulating digital innovations through SmartAgriHubs' Open Calls- PREPARE, RESTART & EXPAND**

In July 2020, SmartAgriHubs opened the **RESTART** and **EXPAND** open calls, assigning up to €5,000,000 funding for Digital Innovation Hubs that are supporting diverse stakeholders in the agri-food economy. On 18 March 2021, SmartAgriHubs announced the launch of a new open call, **PREPARE**, for which €1,200,000 is allocated.



### **Why should the organic sector take part?**

Digital innovations implemented throughout the organic value chain have a huge potential to contribute to the current and future societal challenges.

SmartAgriHubs' open call is also a unique chance to connect with a wider community and exchange on latest knowledge and expertise.

### **How to participate?**

#### **- PREPARE**

This open call targets **Digital Innovation Hubs<sup>1</sup>** (DIHs) that are supporting organisations in the **planning and definition of Innovation Experiments** for digital transformation in the Agri-food economy. DIHs can propose activities and services that support companies and/or organisations in the definition and planning of so called "Innovation Experiments".

A specific objective of this PREPARE open call is to prepare a proposal for an Innovation Experiment that can be submitted in the EXPAND open call. The proposal should not be longer than 2 pages with one additional page with requested budget and milestones, and one other page presenting the involved DIH team.

The PREPARE Open Call will be closed on **26 May 2021**. [Check the PREPARE Open Call fiche for more information](#).

#### **- RESTART**

This open call will focus on **hackathon type of activities** that will RESTART the economy around the agri-food related sectors and affected food systems. Its objective is to generate ideas for potential Innovation Experiments that can be realised by related teams and that go beyond initial conceptual implementations.

Proposals could realise hackathons, challenges and datathons that have a direct as well as an indirect impact to mitigate effects of the corona/Covid-19 or similar (future) pandemics. [Check the RESTART open call fiche for more information](#).

#### **- EXPAND**

The major amount of funding will be assigned to the implementation of programmes by DIHs to **support the realisation of Innovation Experiments**. This shall specifically contribute to the expansion of the network of DIHs and Competence Centres (CCs) as well as making new knowledge and results from digital innovation activities available.

The EXPAND open call is specifically targeting at DIHs as the main proposers facilitating the realisation of innovation experiments. [Check the EXPAND open call fiche for more information](#).

### **Timeline and submission**

- Register to the [SmartAgriHubs' Innovation Portal](#). It will give you access to all information needed and direct communication to the community if any questions on the application arise;
- After that, [start applying](#);
- The next deadline is 26 May 2021, 17:00 CEST. Only RESTART & EXPAND will still be open after that deadline, until September 2021 (new) & June 2022 (new) respectively.

### **Any questions about the Open Calls?**

- Read the call documents on the [dedicated page of the SmartAgriHubs website](#);
- Read the [RESTART & EXPAND FAQ](#);



- Watch the dedicated Q&A webinars on [SmartAgriHubs' YouTube channel](#).

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Digital Innovation Hubs as defined on the Smart Agri Hubs website are public-private partnerships for innovation, providing a mix of different services to their clients. These include technology services such as R&D, provision of lab facilities, testing and validation are mainly the domain of the competence centres. Innovation ecosystem support services include community building lobbying, brokerage, knowledge sharing and advocacy.



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

IFOAM Organics Europe's role is to connect the dots between SmartAgriHubs and the organic sector, disseminate project outputs and communicate key messages during the project run.



*SmartAgriHubs has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 818182. This communication only reflects the author's view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.*

### **Aquaculture keeps growing – FutureEUAqua's progress on organic & innovative fish diets**

As European aquaculture production is growing, certain challenges need to be faced, one of them being the availability of sustainable ingredients in fish feeds.

Part of [FutureEUAqua's](#) mission is to ensure sustainable and resilient aquaculture production by focusing on high fish performance, health, nutritional quality and product safety. To achieve that goal, the project develops innovative tailor-made diets for the two main aquaculture species, salmonids and marine Mediterranean fish, fine-tuning ingredients, and low eco-footprint aqua feed formulations for smart, optimised and better performing conventional and organic aquaculture.

[Read the full article to learn more about FutureEUAqua and their sustainable innovative tailor-made fish diets.](#)

Visit [FutureEUAqua's website](#) to learn more and follow the project's developments on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#) using #futureeuaqua.



*FutureEUAqua promotes sustainable growth of environmentally friendly organic and conventional aquaculture of both major fish species and low trophic level organisms resilient to climate change.*

[IFOAM Organics Europe's](#) role in the project is to work on training, capacity building, communication, and dissemination.





*FutureEUAqua has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 817737. This communication only reflects the author's view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.*

## **Organic-farmknowledge.org: New information available for organic farmers & advisors**

The [Organic Farm Knowledge platform](#) provides organic farmers and advisors with practical information. Initially, the platform was set up covering tools and information on organic arable farming, addressing current bottlenecks. In the past two years, materials on feeding monogastrics and seeds/breeding were added. Now the platform covers all themes of organic food agriculture – from production, certification to environmental protection & beyond. Interested parties are welcome to contribute their practice-relevant materials to the platform, helping European agriculture to become more sustainable.

The restructured platform features six [main themes](#): Crop production, Animal husbandry, Soil, Food chain management, Environment and society and Farm management. Users can browse through the platform's themes or search the toolbox directly according to tool type, language, keywords and more.

This expansion marks a major milestone in the development of the multilingual Organic Farm Knowledge platform, which aspires to become the European reference hub for practical knowledge on organic farming, thus contributing to the European Farm to Fork strategy's goal that 25% of the European Union's farmland should be organic by 2030.

### **The platform's roots**

The platform's original focus on arable crop production and animal husbandry was developed through the two European funded projects in the Horizon 2020 programme: [OK-Net Arable](#) and [OK-Net Ecofeed](#). These projects founded and built this platform from its roots, synthesised existing knowledge and developed new tools adapted to the needs of farmers. The collection of knowledge within these two projects has resulted in approximately 400 tools available on the platform, with 330 relating to [crop production](#) and 150 to [animal husbandry](#). The theme expansion was strategically planned by the [Executive Board](#) and [Editorial board](#) to make it attractive for end-users and sustainable in the long term.

### **Call for further collaborations**

[Several research projects](#) collaborate with the Organic Farm Knowledge platform, using the platform to disseminate their practice-oriented results. The knowledge platform is open to further collaborations, enabling continued growth of knowledge provision by increasing its range of available tools. Partnerships are a win-win: projects can promote and further disseminate knowledge created in their research direct to end-users, therefore increasing their impacts while facilitating the growth and successful continuation of the platform. This platform will continue to thrive only through strengthening and furthering alliances.

Please contact us for more information on how your project or organisation can collaborate or contribute to Organic Farm Knowledge – you find our contact details at the end of the article.

### **About Organic Farm Knowledge – the bridge between science and practice**



The goal of the [platform](#) is increasing the sustainability, productivity and quality of organic farming across Europe by bridging the gap between science and practice. It disseminates existing practical knowledge and research innovations developed in European organic-focused projects to target farmers and farm advisors. Organic Farm Knowledge brings this knowledge together at the European level and facilitates user-friendly and barrier-free access to a wide range of practical tools and resources and promotes knowledge exchange.

The platform was set up in 2017 by the International Centre of Organic Farming Research ICROFS in the framework of the OK-Net Arable project, and it was developed further in the OK-Net Ecofeed project by the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL, IFOAM Organic Europe and ICROFS.

In its Executive and Editorial Boards key organic farming institutions from several European countries are represented.

### Contact

Lauren Dietemann, Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL [lauren.dietemann@fibl.org](mailto:lauren.dietemann@fibl.org)  
Bram Moeskops, IFOAM Organics Europe, [bram.moeskops@organicseurope.bio](mailto:bram.moeskops@organicseurope.bio)

### Weblinks

- Organic-farmknowledge.org:
  - [About the platform](#)
  - [OK-Net Arable – Organic Knowledge Network Arable](#)
  - [OK-Net EcoFeed – Organic Knowledge Network on Monogastric Animal Feed](#)
- FiBL.org: [Organic Farm Knowledge - A unique resource with tools for farmers across Europe](#)  
[FiBL - Organic Farm Knowledge - A unique resource with tools for farmers across Europe](#)



*Organic Farm Knowledge is a product of OK-Net Arable and OK-Net EcoFeed. These projects have received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreements No. 652654 and No. 773911 respectively. The information contained within this platform only reflects the author's view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.*

## 2 IFOAM ORGANICS EUROPE DEVELOPMENT

### Our members can now provide feedback to our new internal strategy

We are working on our new internal strategy. To make sure you, our membership, have a say in this, we are launching a [membership-only survey](#). This survey will assess the implementation of [our 2016 vision and strategy](#) (links to our member extranet) and assess the sectors' current strategic goals and needs.

Your feedback to the survey is warmly welcomed until 30 May 2021. We expect this to take 15-30 minutes of your time.

[The survey](#) is part of the preliminary activities to inform the revision process of the IFOAM Organics Europe strategy and ensure the goals and strategies are relevant in the new political, technological, and societal contexts.



## Background: Our external and internal strategies

In 2015, we shared the Vision of the organic movement in Europe. This was followed by the development of a movement-wide strategy that culminated with a launch of a strategic [Roadmap “Making it Happen”](#) in 2017. The Roadmap highlighted pathways for stakeholders, policymakers, and civil society to transition to sustainable food and farming.

In parallel to our movement-wide strategy, we developed our internal strategy. Since 2016 it has been a cornerstone of all activities implemented in the annual work programmes. On top of that, we also inspired and led our members in developing their own strategies so that they contribute to transforming food and farming within their organisations and environments.



*The work of IFOAM Organics Europe on this topic is co-financed by the LIFE programme of the European Union, under the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME). This page only reflects the views of the authors and its sole responsibility lies with IFOAM Organics Europe. The EASME is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.*

## Hiring now - Colleagues on climate change, the CAP, and organic policies

*We're hiring!*

- **Policy Coordinator** on Agriculture and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)
- **Policy Coordinator** on Agriculture and Climate Change
- **Policy Assistant** on Agriculture, Environment and Food

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ORGANICS EUROPE

**APPLY NOW!**

IFOAM Organics Europe is seeking three self-motivated and responsible people to join our Policy Team:

- [Policy Coordinator on Agriculture and the Common Agricultural Policy \(CAP\)](#)
- [Policy Coordinator on Agriculture and Climate Change](#)
- [Policy Assistant on Agriculture, Environment and Food](#)

You will be working at the heart of the EU with an international team and help us transform food and farming in Europe.

All three vacancies are full-time positions based in Brussels. Homeworking is obligatory until further notice from the Belgian government.



Are you interested? [Check out our vacancy page](#) to read the full positions' descriptions and apply by [filling in the online application form](#) before **24 May 2021**.

Applicants that have not filled in the online form will not be considered and contacted.

Is there any information that you cannot find on our website and the job descriptions? Please contact [employment@organicseurope.bio](mailto:employment@organicseurope.bio) for more information.

### **Looking for new volunteers – ESC call to be launched on 17 May**

On 17 May, IFOAM Organics Europe will launch a new call for 6 motivated volunteers to join our office in Brussels. The successful volunteers will be part of the European Solidarity Corps (ESC), provided the ESC grant is approved (final decision expected in July).

Are you interested in the organic movement and want to experience its day-to-day work? Stay tuned and be ready to apply – you can be part of one of our teams: Policy, Research, Projects, Events & Membership, Communications or HR & Office!

#### **Who is eligible to apply?**

Everyone 18–30-years-old, residing in an EU country who wants to be part of the organic movement for 11 months and can start in September 2022.

#### **How can I apply?**

Have a look at the requirements of the volunteering, read the [Guide for ESC applicants](#) at IFOAM Organics Europe, and fill in the online application form by Sunday 13 June 2021 (to be published on 17 May).

Volunteers will be financially supported: they will receive a monthly allowance of €515, health insurance, public transport pass, reimbursement for travel costs to and from Brussels, and an individual room in a shared house in Brussels!



**EUROPEAN  
SOLIDARITY  
CORPS**

*The volunteering project is funded by the European Solidarity Corps programme of the European Union. The sole responsibility of the content lies with the author and communication reflects only the author's view. The National Agency and the*

*European Commission are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.*

### **IFOAM Organics Europe General Assembly 2021 - Save the date and register now!**

The IFOAM Organics Europe General Assembly 2021 will take place online on Tuesday, 29 June 2021 from 10:00 to 13:00 and registration is open for all members!

A draft agenda is available on our member extranet under the section Governance – General Assembly, '[GA agenda and other events](#)'.

We kindly ask [members with voting rights to register here](#) and [members without voting rights \(observers and supporting associates\) to register here](#). More detailed information on the voting



process can be found on the Member Extranet under Governance - General Assembly - [Who can vote and how](#).

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at [membership@organicseurope.bio](mailto:membership@organicseurope.bio).

We look forward to seeing you there (virtually)!

**[Exclusive for members] Let's discuss organic: May session on reaching 100% organic seed**

The recording of the 'Let's discuss organic' session on the Organic Regulation is [now available for our members on our member extranet!](#)

Our Regulation Manager, Emanuele Busacca, hosted a discussion on 14 April, revolving around dealing with the presence of non-allowed substances in organic products.

This topic was on the agenda due to recent developments in the sesame seed markets. Since Autumn 2020, organic and non-organic products have been contaminated with non-allowed substances and have been taken off the market. To find out how the EU Commission and the organic sector reacted, and what actions Member States and Control Bodies took, our members can access the recording of the session [on our member extranet!](#)

Upcoming webinars in the 'Let's discuss organic' series:

- Wednesday 26 May, 14:30 CEST – A common vision to improve the organic seed sector by 2036 and a roadmap to 100% organic seed in the EU, hosted by Agnes Bruszik, LIVESEED Project Coordinator at IFOAM Organics Europe
- Wednesday 23 June, 14:30 CEST – The organic action plan 2021-2027: Actions & actors, hosted by Silvia Schmidt, Food Policy Officer at IFOAM Organics Europe

[Our members can register to 'Let's discuss organic' on our member extranet!](#)

Are you an IFOAM Organics Europe member who is interested in the sessions but cannot attend them? Do not worry, recordings will be available on the extranet.

Are you interested in these sessions but not an IFOAM Organics Europe member? Contact [membership@organicseurope.bio](mailto:membership@organicseurope.bio) for information about what you can gain from being a member.



## Browse interactive data on organic production and retail



[IFOAM Organics Europe](#) updated its [interactive infographic](#) presenting the EU's 2019 organic production and retail data compiled by the [Research Institute of Organic Agriculture \(FiBL\)](#).

Over the last three decades, organic food and farming has been growing year by year across the EU and continues doing so. In 2019, the EU's total area of farmland under organic production grew to 14.6 million hectares, 8.1% of agricultural land. Organic producers are also on the rise as compared to 2018, their number increasing by 4.9% to 343,000.

Accompanying these developments, the EU organic retail market significantly grew to €41.5 billion, rising by almost 11% and showing “its potential to reach the objective of 25% organic land by 2030 put forward in the EU Biodiversity and Farm to Fork strategies”, according to IFOAM Organics Europe's Director Eduardo Cuoco. Per capita, consumer spending on organic food has doubled in the last decade, reaching €84 annually in the EU.

If you want to know more about organic production and market trends in Europe browse the [interactive infographic](#) and check out how your country performs.

Produced by



Data compiled by



Supported by



Co-financed by



Action co-financed by the European Commission, Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development.

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This communication reflects the views of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Data compiled by the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) and the Agricultural Marketing Information Company (AMI).

**Do you have an initiative that is transforming food & farming? Share it with us to get visibility & inspire others!**



**HAVE AN INITIATIVE THAT TRANSFORMS FOOD AND FARMING? VISIT [EUORGANIC2030.BIO](http://EUORGANIC2030.BIO) TO SEE INSPIRING EXAMPLES AND SUBMIT YOUR OWN!**



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**ORGANICS EUROPE**

Rue du Commerce 124 – 1000 Brussels – Belgium – Phone: +32 2 280 12 23 – Email: [info@organicseurope.bio](mailto:info@organicseurope.bio)

To make the EU Green Deal a reality, we will need to transform food and farming. The organic movement has always been a frontrunner and source of innovation. Across Europe a number of organic and other initiatives are already [transforming food and farming, on the path to our shared Vision 2030](#).

Together we can make organic and truly sustainable farming widely available and recognised. If you have an initiative that can be an inspiration to other food and farming actors as well as to policy-makers, let us and the world know and submit it to [EUorganic2030.bio](#).

If your initiative is deemed to meet the goals of our vision, we will promote it on our social media – showcasing strategic actions to show that fair, environmentally conscious, healthy and caring food and farming systems are possible!

Need inspiration? Have an initiative? [Visit euorganic2030.bio](#)



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### **They make it happen! Making good food the easy choice for everyone**

Organic contributes to promoting and delivering healthy and sustainable diets. This is part of our [Vision 2030](#) set out and shared by the European organic movement. As movement and sector, we are already leading the way towards its goals, together with food and farming actors across Europe.

In the United Kingdom, the Soil Association's [Food for Life](#) is an evidence-based programme impacting health and well-being, education, sustainability, and inequalities across communities. The programme works with public and private sector leaders to make good food the easy choice for everyone, wherever and wherever they are. Food for Life takes a system approach to food, changing both the food environment and food culture within which people make choices. It incorporates the [Food for Life Served Here Award](#), which provides an independent endorsement that food providers are taking steps to improve the food they serve.

Read more about this initiative on [euorganic2030.bio](#), and share it on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Find out what other initiatives are transforming food and farming in Europe on social media using #EUorganic2030.



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## Saying goodbye to colleagues

### Pia Mueller-Cyran

We are saying goodbye to IFOAM Organics Europe's Policy and Research & Innovation trainee Pia Müller-Cyran. Pia joined the office in September 2020 as European Solidarity Corps volunteer in the Policy team. After 6 months of volunteering she became a trainee.



Pia did a great job on green public procurement and promotion policies, supporting Policy Officer Silvia Schmidt with her activities. She was a valuable contributor managing the newly founded subgroup of the Interest Group of Organic Farmers on animal welfare, organising policy-related events, and coordinating our work on the Civil Dialogue Groups (CDGs).

Pia left IFOAM Organics Europe in April 2021 to go back to Germany and continue developing the organic movement as graduate assistant at the state of Baden-Württemberg, facilitating interaction between organic and conventional farmers by developing an organic demo farm network. We would like to thank Pia for her dedication to IFOAM Organics Europe's work and wish her all the best in this exciting next step in her career. We will miss her, especially by her colleagues in the Policy and Research & Innovation teams.

## 3 EVENTS

### 3.1 Preview of events

#### Registration for European Organic Congress opens for members



Registration for the European Organic Congress 2021, taking place from 16-18 June, online & live from Lisbon, will open soon!

This edition of the Congress is free of charge and seats are limited. IFOAM Organics Europe's members can benefit from early-bird registration opening on 5 May on our [member extranet](#).

[Not a member \(yet\)?](#) Stay tuned and book your virtual seat on [the Congress website](#) – we will open registration on 17 May!



This year's Congress will cover the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), expected changes in the new EU Organic Regulation, organic's contribution to climate change mitigation, sustainable food systems and rural development. Six dedicated sessions will provide you with the opportunity to interact with and benefit from the knowledge and expertise of our high-level speakers and moderators on policy developments in organic.

Find out what you can expect during the Congress below, and [check out the programme](#).

### **Day 1: 16 June**

#### **The new CAP and European Green Deal: How far apart?**

11:30-13:00 CEST – The aim of this session is assessing how to align the CAP Strategic Plans with the EU Green Deal. Together with Célia Nyssens, Policy Officer for Agriculture at the European Environmental Bureau, we will discuss to what extent national ambitions are in line with the EU Green Deal objectives, in particular the target to reach 25% organic land by 2030.

#### **Organic farming in Portugal**

14:00-15:30 CEST – We will discover the work on the ground in Portugal, linking organic farming to health and biodiversity.

### **Day 2: 17 June**

#### **Climate mitigation and sequestration in agriculture: What is the right level of ambition?**

10:00-11:30 CEST – The second day will start with a panel debate on climate mitigation and sequestration in agriculture. Thomas Legge, Director of Land Use & Agriculture Programmes at the European Climate Foundation, and Pierre-Marie Aubert, leading researcher at the IDDRI think-tank, will join our discussion on whether "climate neutrality" is a realistic and desirable goal for the agriculture sector, considering the current focus on efficiency and the potential trade-offs with biodiversity objectives.

#### **Towards more sustainable food systems**

11:45-13:15 – While the need to transition towards more sustainable food systems is largely recognized, the consensus on how to achieve this has not yet been reached. During this session, we will explore what sustainable food systems look like and how they can be realized. Initiatives such as the Organic Action Plan, Green Public Procurement and other related initiatives will be at the core of this session.

### **Day 3: 18 June**

#### **The new Organic Regulation (EU) 848/2018: What will change?**

10:00-11:00 CEST – Would you like to learn more about the main regulatory changes expected in the new EU Organic Regulation? Join this session focusing on the main challenges for organic operators in maintaining compliance with the EU rules. We will also discuss whether and how the expected changes could impact reaching the Farm to Fork target of 25% EU organic land by 2030.

#### **Rural Development: Long-term vision for rural areas**

11:15-12:15 CEST – The future development and attractiveness of rural areas will largely depend on improving the climate and environmental performance of farming. This year's congress will end with a session on exploring how initiatives, such as organic districts, living labs and farm demonstrations can contribute to the development of rural areas and the success of the Organic Action Plan.



Finally, we are delighted to welcome Janusz Wojciechowski, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development for the closing speech of our European Organic Congress 2021.

Take part in this unique (organic) event gathering policy-makers and stakeholders all over Europe, by registering from the 17 May, before we run out of virtual seats!

Stay tuned for updates by visiting [our website](#), browsing [our LinkedIn event](#) and following @OrganicsEurope on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

#EUOrganic2030 #EOC2021 #MakingEuropeMoreOrganic  
[congress@organicseurope.bio](mailto:congress@organicseurope.bio)  
[www.europeanorganiccongress.bio](http://www.europeanorganiccongress.bio)



**Organic operators, save the date for the Organic Food Conference**  
**30 September-1 October, Warsaw, Poland**



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On 30 September to 1 October 2021, our bi-annual [Organic Food Conference](#) (formerly Organic Processing Conference) is foreseen to take place in Warsaw, Poland, under the motto 'The future of organic food'.

This year's edition will gather sector representatives and policy-makers to talk, among others, about the new EU Organic Regulation, European Organic Action Plan, and organic market development.

Attend this event to network, share information and gain insights into supply-chain development, market trends and more.

We organise the Organic Food Conference in collaboration with the [Polish Chamber of Organic Food](#).

More information and registration will follow in the coming weeks. Stay tuned for updates by visiting [our website](#) and following @OrganicsEurope on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).



### 3.2 Review of events

#### **OK-Net EcoFeed ration planning tool training, meeting organic farmers' needs 18 March 2021, online**

On 18 March, [ITAB](#) organised a training on the ration planning tool developed within the [OK-Net EcoFeed project](#), in cooperation with FiBL and IFOAM Organics Europe.

What is known as "ration" for animals is what we call "diet" for humans. A nutritionally balanced ration is a must for healthy and strong organic animals. The ration planning tool, developed within the OK-Net EcoFeed project, enables users to calculate feed rations for pigs, broilers and laying hens, independent from the feeding industry and adapted to organic farming conditions and for various scenarios depending on type of animal, age, slaughter weight, laying potential and many more.

About 30 participants attended the training, during which the presenters showed tool and its features, including two practical examples. The training used a hands-on approach allowing attendees to independently use the tool and ask their questions. Moreover, the training also provided participants the opportunity to provide feedback, so the developers can continue improving the ration planning tool to best address organic producers' specific needs.



The tool and its manual are available on the [Organic Farm Knowledge platform](#) for all farmers and advisers interested in [achieving 100% organic diet for monogastric animals](#). Please open this page in the Chrome or Edge browsers since Firefox does currently not support the file.

Visit the [OK-Net Ecofeed website](#) to learn more and follow the latest project's developments on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) using @ecofeed and #OKNetEcofeed.



*OK-Net EcoFeed helps organic pig and poultry farmers to achieve the goal of 100% use of organic and regional feed. The three-year project will extend the OK-Net knowledge platform.*

IFOAM Organics Europe coordinates the project consisting of 11 partners and 8 third linked parties from 12 countries. Dissemination towards all actors in the EIP-AGRI network is an integral part of the OK-Net EcoFeed activities. OK-Net Ecofeed is an EU Horizon 2020-funded project.



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

### **LIVESEED webinar for Members of the European Parliament & their staff 30 March, online**

On 30 March, LIVESEED invited Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and their staff to present them the outcomes of the LIVESEED project and the relevance of the temporary experiment on organic varieties. This webinar was one of the activities to explain outcomes of the LIVESEED project to politicians and enable them to consider these outcomes in the current and upcoming political processes.

Martin Sommer, Policy Coordinator on GMOs, Patent and Seeds, IFOAM Organics Europe, highlighted the EU's political context shaped by the Farm to Fork strategy and the upcoming Organic Action Plan – expected to result in a higher demand for organic seed and cultivars adapted to organic farming systems. However, Martin did stress that there are various bottlenecks that need to be tackled to upscale production of organic seed. These bottlenecks can be overcome by implementing the LIVESEED policy recommendations presented to the audience earlier. These recommendations include the [European Router Database](#) that went online recently and national roadmaps that define step-by-step goals and actions to map the way towards 100% organic seed.

In the second part of the webinar, Monika Messmer, Group lead Plant Breeding, FiBL Switzerland, explained why organic systems require new varieties suited for organic production and why the temporary experiment on organic variety testing (defined in the New Organic Regulation) is crucial to facilitate the registration and bringing to the market of organic varieties suited for organic production.



As the European Parliament is currently debating the upcoming Organic Action Plan and has a say in the distribution of EU budget towards experiments such as the one on organic varieties, this webinar was very timely and successfully showcased the outcomes of LIVESEED and their political relevance.



Visit the [LIVESEED website](#) to learn more and follow the latest project's developments on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) using @LIVESEEDeu and #LIVESEEDeu.

LIVESEED aims to boost organic seed and plant breeding across Europe. IFOAM Organics Europe and FiBL-Switzerland coordinate the project with 50 partners covering 18 EU countries. The [LIVESEED project](#) will increase transparency and will provide recommendations on organic seeds. The project partners analyse national seed databases and factors influencing organic seed production and use. They also explore national policies, smart practices, build EU infrastructure and analyse issues on propagation. The partners also want to advance testing protocols to improve the availability of organic seeds, ensuring they are adapted to the realities of organic farmers. LIVESEED is an EU Horizon 2020-funded project.



*LIVESEED has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 727230 and the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation under contract number 17.00090. This communication only reflects the author's view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.*

### **On virtual demo events, learning by doing and more – NEFERTITI annual meeting 13-14 April 2021, online**

The fourth NEFERTITI Annual Meeting was all about collective reflection: from demonstration and facilitation to network sustainability, communication, dissemination, and outreach, with plenty of opportunities to discuss and exchange in small groups.

As IFOAM Organics Europe we are Deputy Leader of Networks 3 (organic animal husbandry) and 6 (organic arable cropping) and participated in the two-day online event and Network 6/arable sector break-out sessions moderated by Network Leader Mateusz Sękowski, Head of the Department of Systems and Technology in Agriculture, Agricultural Advisory Center in Brwinów Branch Office in Radom, Poland.

#### **Virtual demo events: lessons learned**

Despite the COVID-19 crisis, the NEFERTITI projects reached the number of events per network. Most innovations presented and demonstrated during demo events came from research & innovation (40%), the farmers directly (35%), and the supply chain companies (25%). The highest ranked goal was innovation uptake.

Lessons from virtual demos include:

- The quality of virtual demos can still be high;
- Virtual settings may even make demos more accessible to some, attracting people who are far away and lifting boundaries;
- Technicalities and knowledge exchange may pose hurdles but trial and error and good preparation can overcome these;



- To manage diverse networks, it is important to make a plan and follow up on it;
- It is crucial to ensure everybody is on board by identifying common interests, meaningful content, creating an atmosphere of trust, openness and fun, good facilitation, and in-between informal exchange (using sticky notes, MentiMeter feedback etc. can be ways to include all participants);
- Virtual demos can include pre-recorded videos, live interaction (in studio), facilitated virtual exchange, virtual presentations, live connection to the field, experts' experiences, virtual Q&A etc.

### **Learning by doing: Setting up virtual demos**

After selecting a topic (scientific/technical/agronomic content), the objective of the live/virtual demo should be clarified (e.g. inspiring, enabling implementation or collecting feedback to improve an innovation) before designing the set up and optimising peer-to-peer learning. Organisers can encourage reflection through objective, reflective, interactive and decision questions. If the content is attractive and farmers are able to practice and provide feedback, 90% of participants will remember a virtual demo.

While the development of the national situation for face-to-face meetings in countries participating to NEFERTIT is still uncertain, the networks hope to be able to organise physical demo events in 2021 or 2022. Participants also stressed that it is essential to continue regular meetings and exchange within the project's networks, sharing information, progress and best practices. Especially for farmers themselves, cross-visits (for Network 6 potentially in Finland) are considered indispensable to learn by doing.

### **Network sustainability**

Key elements to making a hub/network sustainable:

- **Financing, such as connecting with EU projects, rural development programmes, new EU instruments to support innovation such as EIP-AGRI, etc;**
- **Institutional ownership and the functional model (governance, partnerships, demo events...); and**
- **Policy interaction.**

Member States assign different value to demo farms in their AKIS systems. The entire structure should be able to sustain also Thematic Networks. Liaising with other Horizon 2020 project, such as [I2Connect](#), was a suggestion from participants.

To make practical knowledge available and easily accessible in a centralised place to the farming community in the long term, IFOAM Organics Europe is also involved in the Horizon 2020 projects [EURAKNOS](#) and [EUREKA](#), with EUREKA going beyond Thematic Networks to include all EU multi-actor projects. Similarly, the online platform Organic Farm Knowledge was set up to make practical knowledge generated by EU projects and tools for organic farming available.

### **Communication, dissemination and outreach**

In terms of communication, participants identified the leaflet describing the hub campaign as well as a series of short videos with farmers' testimonies as most effective and attractive. The videos should be promoted on social media and link to the website. For dissemination of the [training kit](#), agricultural schools might be a good channel. Through the exercises during the annual meeting, the networks could directly apply presented input.



### What's next for the NEFERTITI project?

The meeting ended with an outlook on the next steps: The project is expected to be extended by 6-9 months. Each hub will organize at least one virtual demonstration, making use of facilitation skills and all NEFERTITI tools. The platform will be improved, and the final conference (FarmDemo Conference 2.0) will be held together with the new project IPMWORKS as well as potentially new Horizon Europe projects as there will be a new, follow-up project on farm demos.

Check out the [NEFERTITI project website](#) for more information about the project and networks, results and resources, news, videos, newsletters and, of course, a link to the FarmDemo platform.

For more information about IFOAM Organics Europe and its members' involvement, please contact [maria.gernert@organicseurope.bio](mailto:maria.gernert@organicseurope.bio).



*The NEFERTITI project an EU-wide connected network of demonstration and pilot farms to enhance knowledge exchange and innovation uptake. It established 10 interactive thematic networks, connected 45 regional clusters of demo-farmers and related actors in 17 countries. IFOAM Organics Europe is a partner in the project.*



*This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 772705. This communication only reflects the author's view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.*

### Best Economy Forum: Paving the way to a sustainable future 20-22 April, online

The "Best Economy Forum" (BEF), an alternative economic summit, took place from Tuesday, 20 April to Thursday, 22 April 2021 under the theme of "Take action not words". In this format, the four founding organisations - Bio Hotels, Economy for the Common Good, Bioland and FiBL – invited companies to join a discussion on sustainable business.

Over the course of the three-day event, more than 200 participants discussed and exchanged ideas on strategies and ways to achieve sustainable development in companies. Experienced entrepreneurs and moderators accompanied the process and guaranteed effective, personal and intensive matchmaking. Originally planned as a hybrid event to take place at Andechs Monastery, the BEF could only take place digitally in the end. Even so, this year's BEF was just as lively online thanks to a platform which worked excellently and participants who were eager for knowledge and to share their ideas. And the feedback from participants was equally as enthusiastic.

"The Best Economy Forum 2021 has shown that we are witnessing the beginning of a growing movement of economic actors who can make a difference." Jan Plagge, Chairman of BIOLAND and President of IFOAM Organics Europe.

### The end of the BEF signals the start of a sustainable movement

Although the main BEF event ended last Thursday, the exchange of ideas will, at the request of participants, continue on the platform [www.besteconomyforum.org](http://www.besteconomyforum.org). The many inspirations and newly



acquired contacts can be reached here. All speakers' presentations can be accessed again and there are also plans to create a lounge for the exchange of ideas with like-minded people. This means that anyone who has been motivated by the BEF and wants to bring about changes within their own company can find the perfect network via the platform. Journalists interested in accessing the platform can get in touch with BEF.

Save the date: The third edition of the Best Economy Forum will take place in May 2022.

The Best Economy Forum was launched in 2019 in cooperation with the four associations Bioland, Bio Hotels, FiBL and Gemeinwohl-Ökonomie. The aim of the forum is to inspire companies to set themselves up sustainably.

Because a future in the sense of a common good can only succeed if the economy focuses on the preservation of the earth and people and not on maximising profit and growth. IFOAM Organics Europe supports the Best Economy Forum.

## 4 MAKING EUROPE MORE ORGANIC – SUPPORT IFOAM ORGANICS EUROPE

### IFOAM ORGANICS EUROPE MAIN SPONSOR 2021

The contributions of sponsors allow IFOAM Organics Europe to focus on its most important work – representing organic stakeholders. This funding is a means to co-finance IFOAM Organics Europe events, projects and publications and is a highly valued contribution to our work.



## 5 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

5 May 2021

[LIVESEED training for seed suppliers, seed companies and traders on the EU Router Database](#)

(German only)

online

5 May 2021

[LIVESEED workshop on common bunt requirements and norms for cereal seed production](#)

Online

2 June 2021

[LIVESEED workshop on organic seed market trends, seed business analyses, and policy measures](#)

Online



16-18 June 2021  
[European Organic Congress](#)  
Online, live from Lisbon, Portugal

6-10 September 2021  
[Organic World Congress 2021](#)  
Rennes, France

30 September-1 October 2021  
[Organic Food Conference](#)  
To be determined

30 September-2 October 2021  
[BIOEXPO Warsaw](#)  
Pruszków, Poland

30 November-1 December 2021 (tentative)  
[TP Organics' Organic Innovation Days](#)  
To be determined

9-10 December 2021  
[IFOAM Organics Europe Meets Business](#)  
To be determined

15-18 February 2022  
[BIOFACH 2022](#)  
Nuremberg, Germany



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