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WELCOME NOTE

Dear readers,

2021 has been another turbulent year, again with great successes and challenges. Just like last year, I would like to start by thanking everyone involved in fighting the spread of the ongoing pandemic, as well as all organic stakeholders who continued working throughout these challenging times.

Before reflecting on 2021, I would like to start by looking forward to 2022 – as it is going to be an exciting year. More precisely, the Year of Organics. And it will kick off in a way bringing about many changes to all of us: the new EU Organic Regulation!

1 January 2022, application of the new EU Organic Regulation

As most of you are very much aware of, the new EU Organic Regulation (EU) 2018/848 will apply in only a few weeks, on 1 January 2022; and the reading will not be easy!

Contrary to the current EU Organic Regulation, the new EU Organic Regulation will be much more complex to navigate, containing one basic regulation with annexes, 24 secondary regulations amending or supplementing the Basic Regulation (some of them still to be published). On top of that, there are many cross-references and references to other EU legislations in the text.

We created a guide to help you, our members and other operators, navigate the labyrinth of the new legal framework. I am happy to say that [the beta version of this guide is finally live for our members!](#) You can find [login information on our member extranet](#) and read more about it [further in this newsletter](#).

Celebrating 20 years of making Europe more organic

2022 will also be an anniversary year. We are turning 20 and [will celebrate 20 years of representing the European organic movement at the heart of the European Union](#). Our colleagues at [IFOAM – Organics International](#) and [IFOAM Asia](#) are respectively celebrating their 50th and 10th birthdays!

Our anniversary is the perfect opportunity to look back at our successes in transforming the European food and farming system and thank farmers, processors, retailers, certifiers, and other organic stakeholders for making this possible. Changing our food system is more important than ever. Organic can make a crucial contribution to the climate crisis and biodiversity loss and hence, protect the very earth we are living on.

Together with our network from all over Europe, staff, supporters, decision-makers and other stakeholders from the agri-food and environmental sector, we will celebrate our anniversary and the Year of Organics throughout 2022, including an anniversary event in summer 2022. Stay tuned by visiting [our website](#) and following us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

Looking ahead: Exploring how organic can make food production more resilient and climate-friendly at BIOFACH

We will start into next year with one of organic's key events. On 15-18 February 2022, BIOFACH and Vivanness will take place in Nuremberg, Germany. The congress themed "Organic. Climate. Resilience." will take place in hybrid format and offer visitors the opportunity to explore how organic can make food production more resilient and climate-friendly.



As IFOAM Organics Europe, we will contribute to BIOFACH 2022 by organising sessions on new policy and regulatory frameworks for organic, the new EU Organic Action Plan, digital technology for local and small-scale processing, climate change, pesticides and more.

The full programme will be available on [BIOFACH's](#) and [our website](#) in the coming weeks, keep an eye on them to stay tuned. We look forward to welcoming you to one or more of our sessions.

Looking back: Another successful 2021

Among our recent successes is the recognition of organic as a political tool and part of the solution to the current societal challenges – foremost the climate and biodiversity crises.

As part of the [European Green Deal](#), aiming at making Europe climate neutral by 2050, the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#) sets an ambitious but achievable target of 25% organic land by 2030. A testament to the importance of the Farm to Fork Strategy is the [European Parliament's own initiative report](#). Thanks to IFOAM Organics Europe's advocacy efforts together with like-minded organisations, it supports the principles, mechanisms and rules promoting the environment and human health and recognises the contribution of organic farming to transitioning towards more sustainable food systems.

An important tool to further develop organic and contribute to reaching the 25% organic land target is the new [EU Organic Action Plan](#), which includes many points we had advocated for. As IFOAM Organics Europe, we will ensure its success by closely monitoring its implementation on the ground. [EU Organic Day](#), instated on 23 September, will be an ideal opportunity to evaluate Europe's progress towards achieving its goal of 25% organic land by 2030, trends in consumer demand, awareness of organic in the supply chain and the implementation of the EU Organic Action Plan.

Finally, I would like to announce that IFOAM Organics Europe is searching for three new colleagues to join our team from early next year. Interested in contributing to making Europe more organic? Check out [our vacancy page](#) and apply.

A heart-felt 'Thank you' to our members for your continued support and involvement in our activities. Without you, making Europe more organic would not be possible. I would also like to thank our dedicated staff who worked tirelessly despite these challenging times to deliver important results, represent our members and progress in achieving our Vision 2030.

I wish you and your loved ones all the best for the rest of 2021 and a healthy start into 2022 – the Year of Organics.

Organic regards,

Eduardo Cuoco
IFOAM Organics Europe Director



POLITICAL HOTSPOT

On 23 November, the European Parliament approved the new CAP (2023-2027) Regulations. Now, Member States' CAP Strategic Plans will be under intense scrutiny until their approval by the end of 2022.

In [our report assessing CAP Strategic Plans](#), we highlighted that the level of ambition for measures and support to organic farming are not promising if the drafts remain unchanged.

Germany leading the way in reaching 25% organic land?

As European organic movement, we welcomed [the decisions of the new German coalition](#) to increase their national target for organic farmland to reach 30% by 2030 – instead of 20% in the previous draft – and allocate more research funding for organic. Germany should be seen as an example for large agricultural countries, highlighting the need to go beyond business as usual.

Will CAP Strategic Plans contribute to the transition towards sustainable food systems?

Organic farming has proven positive effects on the environment and biodiversity and is part of the solution to address the current climate and biodiversity crises. Read more in [our report 'Organic farming and biodiversity'](#).

CAP Strategic Plans can still be relevant tools to boost organic farming and reach the targets set under the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy. To achieve this, the European Commission will have to defend its Strategies and send relevant recommendations in its observation letters sent to Member States when reviewing the CAP Strategic Plans.

Are you advocating on a national CAP Strategic Plan?

Have a look at:

- Our last report ['The ambition gap'](#) assessing the current draft CAP Strategic Plans in 19 countries and highlighting key recommendations to level up the support for organic farming; and
- Our publication ['Organic in Europe - Prospects and developments for organic in national CAP Strategic Plans'](#) highlights potential targets for organic land at the national level, and how much of the national CAP budgets would need to be dedicated to organic farming in all Member States to reach these national targets and the EU Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies' average target of 25% organic land by 2030.

IFOAM Organics Europe will continue to inform its members regarding the development of this CAP reform. For more information on the CAP and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please contact amelie.steu@organicseurope.bio. Please do note that we prioritise our members' requests.

Our members can also consult [our arguments database on the member extranet](#) for background materials on topic (main messages, arguments/FAQs, visuals & videos).

1 NEWS

1.1 Policy

Organic Regulations

EU Organic Regulation guide – Beta version online for members!

As most of you are very much aware of, the new EU Organic Regulation (EU) 2018/848 will be applied in only a few weeks, on 1 January 2022; and **the reading will not be easy!**

The new EU Organic Regulation: Much more difficult to read

Contrary to the current EU Organic Regulation, composed of a basic regulation and two implementing regulations, the new EU Organic Regulation will be composed of one basic regulation with annexes, plus 24 secondary regulations amending or supplementing the basic regulation – some of them still to be published.

On top of that, the text contains many cross-references. They will oblige the reader to navigate between the basic regulation and the difference secondary regulations. Furthermore, the new regulation contains many references to other EU legislations, obliging the reader to open and read legislations they usually do not deal with, such as wine, official controls, flavourings, fertiliser, plant protection products, etc.

There are also examples of an article referring to another EU regulation and when checking that said-article, it refers to yet another article of a third EU Regulation. As you will understand by now, reading the new regulation will not be as easy as the current one.

Our regulation guide will help you!

But do not worry, we have been working on a guide to help our members and other operators navigate the labyrinth of the new legal framework.

The beta version of this guide is finally live for our members! Our members can consult the guide on regulation.organicseurope.bio, using the credentials they received via email and available on the IFOAM Organics Europe member extranet.

Please consider that we have been working hard on getting this beta version ready on time. We are performing continuous reviews and welcome your feedback on organicregulation@organicseurope.bio.

For the moment you can find 5 chapters:

1. Scope,
2. Plant production,
3. Poultry,
4. Food processing, and
5. Wine.

We will also upload 'herbivores', 'pigs production' sand 'control and certification' soon.

This first version is now available for our members, and we will further develop it in the coming weeks. Our member can read more about the guide [on our member extranet](#). For information about



membership and accessing our member extranet, please contact membership@organicseurope.bio. For questions about the guide, please contact organicregulation@organicseurope.bio.

What will happen from January 2022 on?

Every **IFOAM Organics Europe member will have one access for free!** If a member wishes more accesses or accesses for their members, a (reduced) contribution will be asked.

For **non-member, the full price will apply.** Reach out to membership@organicseurope.bio if you have any questions about membership.

Again, many things are still ongoing, but we hope you will enjoy your first navigation!

We are working hard finetuning the existing chapters and preparing the next upload! We are aware that there are still things to fix, so please send us your feedback at organicregulation@organicseurope.bio.

Be patient, and in a few weeks, you will have a very good tool in your hands to simplify your day-to-day work. In the meantime, feedback is more than welcome!

We want to thank our seed sponsors who made setting up this guide possible. Without you, it would not be here. We would also like to thank our new sponsors that are now joining! If you also want to become a sponsor, please email organicregulation@organicseurope.bio.

This work was made possible thanks to commitments from these sponsors:

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Organic movement defines integrity of organic supply chain

The new EU Organic Regulation (EU) 2018/848 puts integrity of the organic supply chain at its core principles. However, there is no legal definition of organic supply chain integrity.

Why define integrity of the organic supply chain?

The new EU Organic Regulation bases organic production on some general principles aiming, among others, to ensure the integrity of organic products at the entire supply chain's stages (production, processing, and distribution). On these aspects, the new organic regulation defines only the integrity of organic and in-conversion products without expanding to the definition of the entire organic supply chain's integrity.

A movement-based effort

Following the absence of such an essential understanding, IFOAM Organics Europe's Interest Group of Certification and Integrity (IGOC), involving affiliates with certification activities and relevant actors of the organic supply chain and beyond, developed [a position paper with appropriate meaning to the organic supply chain](#). This position paper, recently adopted by IFOAM Organics Europe's Council and Board members, is the outcome of many meetings, exchanges, and workshops weighing every sentence and adjusted to the most relevant definition according to the organic movement.

Organic supply chain integrity according to the organic movement

The main objective stands on explaining the ethical claim and moral expectations that carry a product labeled and marketed as organic from the fork to the fork. According to IFOAM Organics Europe "Organic supply chain integrity is based on the availability and accessibility of the certification,



production system, and production data for relevant actors to monitor and maintain authenticity along the entire supply chain.”

Learn more about IFOAM Organics Europe’s position paper on the organic supply chain integrity [on our website](#), or contact meriam.ghedira@organicseurope.bio

IFOAM Organics Europe’s Interest Group Certification and Integrity (IGOC) is one of IFOAM Organics Europe’s four interest groups. [Our interest groups](#) provide direct input from the different sectors in IFOAM Organics Europe’s organisation. They formulate policies and positions relevant to their sector.

IFOAM Organics Europe’s members can access [a list of its current members](#) and [the terms of reference](#) on the member extranet.

Are you an IFOAM Organics Europe member who:

- Has certification activities or are relevant actors in the integrity of the organic supply chain? Contact emanuele.busacca@organicseurope.bio
- Is having issues accessing the member extranet? Contact membership@organicseurope.bio.

Are you interested in becoming part of the IGOC? You have to be a member of IFOAM Organics Europe to do so. Contact membership@organicseurope.bio for details.

New Implementing Regulation of the new EU Organic Regulation published

[Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2021/2119](#) related to the new EU Organic Regulation has just been published, a few weeks before its implementation.

This regulation lays down detailed rules on:

1. Certain records and declarations required from operators and groups of operators; and
2. The technical means for the issuance of certificates in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

Moreover, this implementing regulation amends Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/1378 as regards the issuance of the certificate for operators, groups of operators and exporters in third countries.

Learn more about the new organic regulation and all its secondary acts in IFOAM Organics Europe [website](#).

Public consultation revision EU legislation on animal welfare open until 21 January 2022

The European Commission launched [a public consultation on the revision of the EU legislation on animal welfare](#), open until 21 January 2022. As IFOAM Organics Europe, we welcomed this initiative and hope it will contribute to elaborate a future EU legislation that further improves animal welfare.



This public consultation is the second phase of a consultation process that started this summer with the opening of a Roadmap to which [IFOAM Organics Europe sent feedback](#).

In our feedback, we recall that the EU organic regulation already pays close attention to animal well-being and should be regarded as an animal welfare best practice. In this regard, we emphasize our support to create an animal welfare labelling system that puts forward adequate and species-specific animal welfare practices, in which the organic standard is clearly identifiable.

Once submitted, IFOAM Organics Europe will publish its feedback late January 2022. Until then, feel free to reach out to amelie.steu@organicseurope.bio, Policy Assistant on Agricultural Policies and the CAP, if you want to have more information. Please take notes that we prioritize our members' requests.

As IFOAM Organics Europe, we will keep on advocating for higher animal welfare standards in the upcoming months and years as the European Commission foresees:

A new animal welfare legislation by 2023 as announced in the Farm to Fork strategy, and

To "find concrete and operational ways to further improve animal welfare in organic production" as per action 21 of the new Organic Action Plan.



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

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

Organic calls for environmentally ambitious CAP SPs - The Parliament approved disappointing new CAP Regulation

On 23 November 2021, [the European Parliament's Plenary adopted the new Common Agricultural Policy \(CAP\) \(2023-2027\) Regulation](#) with 452 votes in favour, 178 votes against, and 57 abstentions. The CAP Strategic Plans Regulation leaves much flexibility to Member States, who urgently need to improve the environmental ambition of their national CAP plans and better support organic farming. Read more in our [press release](#).

After months of debates during the Triilogue negotiations, **the new CAP (2023-2027) Strategic Plan Regulation does not ensure a strong green architecture nor fair enough remuneration methods to incentivise farmers to shift towards sustainable farming practices**, despite some progressive procedures such as the new social conditionality enhancing farmers and farm workers' rights.

Despite a 25% ringfencing of the first Pillar's budget allocated for the new 'Eco-schemes' (mandatory for Member States but voluntary for farmers), which was pushed by the Parliament, the new CAP lacks a common level of environmental ambition, and national governments rejected any obligation for the CAP to contribute to the EU Green Deal, Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies.

The rest of the CAP's green architecture – the nine Good and Agri-Environmental Land Conditions (GAECs) in the first Pillar, and the 35% ringfencing for Agri-Environmental and Climate Measures



(AECMs) in the second Pillar – has not changed significantly enough to enable the CAP to properly boost sustainable farming such as organic.

Moreover, in some countries organic farmers risk losing payments compared to the current situation. Part of the problem lies with a **perceived double funding issue**, which would prevent organic farmers to be eligible to either AECMs or ‘Eco-schemes’ in some Member States, as highlighted in [the evaluation of measures and budgets to support organic agriculture in Members States’ draft CAP Strategic Plans \(CAP SPs\)](#) we published on 18 November.

This analysis, based on members’ feedback across 19 countries, shows that unless draft CAP national Strategic Plans are significantly improved in several Member States, the new CAP will not contribute to a significant development of organic farming in the EU. You can find the summary in our [press release](#).

For more information on the CAP and IFOAM Organics Europe’s work on this issue, please contact amelie.steu@organicseurope.bio, Policy Assistant on Agricultural Policies and the CAP.

IFOAM Organics Europe members can find more information on [the member extranet](#) and background materials in the [arguments database on the member extranet](#) (main messages, arguments/FAQs, visuals & videos).

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



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GMOs & Seeds

Commission event: Can New Genetic Engineering Techniques (NGETs) be sustainable?

The European Commission invited stakeholders, public officials, and politicians for a high-level event to discuss their plans to launch new legislation for 'New Genomic Techniques' / New Genetic Engineering Technologies (NGETs). The event was opened by Vice-President Timmermans and Commissioner Kyriakides. IFOAM Organics Europe's President Jan Plagge was part of the panel discussing whether NGET products can actually deliver on sustainability.

Commission & seed industry favour new legislation

Commission President Frans Timmermans supported the Commission's communication line, saying new legislation is necessary, but also stressed that a robust fact-based impact assessment is needed.

Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella Kyriakides mentioned that all options are still open, including status quo, but it seems that her Directorate-General (DG SANTE) puts a lot of hope into the sustainability claims of proponents of new genetic engineering techniques.

The EU Member States, most prominently represented by the Slovenian Presidency and French Agriculture Minister Denormandie, welcome plans for new, adapted, EU legislation. They aim to reduce barriers to trade, are concerned about the competitiveness of EU agriculture and see economic potential in these new crops. However, France seems to be open to support a ban on new herbicide-tolerant crops.

Conservative Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Herbert Dorfmann (EPP) and the seed industry also support the Commission's plans to change the regulation.

Civil society & organic sector question if NGETs can deliver

Interesting debates arose between IFOAM Organics Europe's President Jan Plagge and President of the young farmers (CEJA) and organic wine producer Diana Lenzi. They discussed whether NGETs are needed to develop crops with resistance to certain diseases, and Jan Plagge highlighted that disease-resistant varieties have already been bred for organic systems, but it is often market factors that make it so difficult to introduce them in viticulture (wine production), where consumers have clear preferences regarding varieties.

Jan Plagge and Dirk Zimmerman (Greenpeace) highlighted that products currently in the pipeline are not delivering on the proclaimed benefits regarding climate & biodiversity, especially with regard to the 2030 timeframe of the Farm-to-Fork strategy to make our food systems sustainable. In general, those in favour of adapted regulation seemed more reluctant to talk about concrete evidence on whether or not NGETs can deliver on sustainability.

Jan Plagge said **"The expectations towards new genetic engineering techniques are unrealistic and based on assumptions, and they bring our attention away from the system change that we need to achieve genuine sustainability in the agriculture sector.** To make our food systems more sustainable, options need to be compared to other, already available solutions and the effect on existing production needs to be considered."

Pierre Bascou, Deputy Director-General at Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI,) highlighted that safety is essential and that we must better define the concept of sustainability and integrate it into this policy initiative. Bascou also stressed that integrity of organic



production should be preserved and that there does not have to be a conflict between agricultural systems.

Sustainability is a systems-based model

As our President, Jan Plagge stressed during the event, it is crucial to move agriculture towards sustainability, but **it is a fallacy to reduce sustainability to traits or even specific genes of plants as this is a simplistic approach**. A trait does not make a food system sustainable. Consequently, a sustainability assessment cannot be a free pass for lowering the standards for risk assessment, traceability, and labelling. The question of whether NGETs can be used without jeopardizing organic production is still an open question. It is essential that the Impact Assessment covers traceability strategies and coexistence impacts in detail. We need a strong commitment in the EU Commission's Impact Assessment on this aspect, if that is ever supposed to work.

For more information on new and old GMOs and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please contact martin.sommer@organicseurope.bio. IFOAM Organics Europe members can find more information on [the member extranet](#) and background materials in the [arguments database on the member extranet](#) (main messages, arguments/FAQs, visuals & videos).

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

Mainstreaming organic plant breeding – celebrating 20 years of organic plant breeders

'How to make organic plant breeding mainstream' - was the guiding question of the 20th anniversary event of the organic plant breeders in Brussels on 9 November 2021.

Happy birthday, ECO-PB!

The conference was organised by the European Consortium for Organic Plant Breeding (ECO-PB) in close collaboration with IFOAM Organics Europe, Arche Noah, Biodynamic Federation Demeter International and the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL). Organic breeders, seed companies, seed savers, competent authorities, examination offices and policymakers discussed the potential of organic plant breeding as a cornerstone to enabling more sustainable food systems. They also exchanged on key requirements to mainstream organic's plant breeding approach. Of course, the event was also an opportunity to celebrate ECO-PB's contribution to developing organic breeding over the last 20 years.

Key ingredients to mainstreaming organic plant breeding

Monika Messmer (FiBL Switzerland and President of ECO-PB) opened the public session by highlighting the results and impact of the Horizon2020 project LIVESEED (2017-2021) on boosting organic seed and plant breeding and the importance of engaging policymakers along the process.

Participants stressed that key points to make organic plant breeding mainstream are clear guidelines on what organic breeding means in practice, next to the abstract definition in the New Organic Regulation. Furthermore, they deemed it crucial to strengthen participatory breeding initiatives and support farmers in seed production, funding organic breeding and breeding research, as well as improving knowledge transfer and education.



The organic plant breeders greatly appreciated that the new EU Organic Regulation (2018/848), published a legally binding definition for “Organic varieties suitable for organic production” for the first time. They also valued a temporary experiment, as described in the new organic regulation (2018/848), foreseen to ease market access of such varieties. Participants concluded that the results of the temporary experiment on organic varieties should feed timely into the reform and lay the legal ground for more diversity in European agriculture. Infrastructure for organic VCU (Value for Cultivation, Use, and Sustainability) testing should be made available in each Member State. However, some questions remain, including whether plant variety rights for organic variety with adapted DUS (Distinctness, Uniformity and Stability) can still be obtained, which is important for many (organic) breeders.

Conclusions

These recommendations were discussed in more detail in a fishbowl discussion with representatives from the Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO), the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE), IFOAM Organics Europe, organic breeders, Euroseeds, farmers, and seed savers.

The participants agreed that there is a solid legal framework to make organic breeding mainstream. Still, to implement the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies and the new organic regulation, more funding (for example, by linking the Strategic Plans under the Common Agricultural Policy to strong National Organic Action Plans) and targeted research projects are needed, enabling a fruitful and close collaboration with authorities and policymakers.

For more information on (organic) seeds and IFOAM Organics Europe’s work on this issue, please contact martin.sommer@organicseurope.bio. IFOAM Organics Europe members can find more information on [the member extranet](#) and background materials in the [arguments database on the member extranet](#) (main messages, arguments/FAQs, visuals & videos).

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Climate Change

COP26: Outcomes relevant to food, land & agriculture

The UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26) took place from 31 October to 12 November 2021 in Glasgow. Even though food systems and agriculture were not so prominently featured on the agenda and were discussed together as part of the “Nature Day”, there are several outcomes touching on food, land and agriculture.

Early on in the COP, over 140 countries signed the [Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forests and Land Use](#) promising to halt deforestation and land degradation by 2030. However, it has been criticised that the promises were very similar to those made in previous declarations.

Agricultural issues are being discussed under the [Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture \(KJWA\)](#) which covers a range of topics such as soil, livestock, nutrient and water management, food security, the socioeconomic impacts of climate change across agriculture and methods for assessing climate change. For the first time, a reference to agroecology was mentioned in the draft. However, discussions will continue 2022 in Sharm el-Sheikh since no final decision has been reached.



Furthermore, the [Global Methane Pledge](#), a US- and EU-led initiative was launched at this year's COP. Over 100 countries pledged to reduce their methane emissions, by 30% from 2020 levels by 2030. Besides the energy sector, the focus should also lie on the industrial livestock sector to contribute to emission reductions of this potent greenhouse gas.

If you want to find out more about the COP26 in Glasgow read [IFOAM Organics International's article](#).

For more information on climate change and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please contact hanna.winkler@organicseurope.bio. IFOAM Organics Europe members can find more information on [the member extranet](#) and background materials in the [arguments database on the member extranet](#) (main messages, arguments/FAQs, visuals & videos).

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

Sustainable Carbon Cycles: New EU Communication

On 15 December, the European Commission presented its [Communication on 'Sustainable Carbon Cycles'](#). On the one hand, the Communication addresses how to increase carbon sequestration and scale up carbon farming as a business model, and on the other hand it discusses industrial approaches to remove carbon from the atmosphere. Carbon removal and storage should contribute to achieving the EU legally binding commitment of climate neutrality by 2050.

To reach EU climate objectives, drastic emission reductions are needed. A Commission analysis suggests we must reduce the current use of fossil carbon energy by 95% if we want to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. Carbon removals in the land use sector will also play an important role to meet the climate objectives.

Important to keep track of environmental benefits, besides emission reductions

Looking at the issue from the single perspective of carbon sequestration does not consider other environmental impacts of the land use sector, such as nitrate leaching into groundwater, air pollution, soil health and biodiversity loss. It is essential that carbon farming not only delivers on increased carbon sequestration, but also ensures benefits for climate adaptation, biodiversity, and other environmental objectives.

Commission support for carbon farming

To support carbon farming, the Commission will foster innovative approaches under the mission [A Soil Deal for Europe](#), which will create living labs across Europe to test, demonstrate and upscale solutions for carbon farming. The Communication foresees to establish EU standards for monitoring, reporting, and verifying greenhouse gas emissions and carbon removals at farm level

In 2022, the Commission will propose a regulatory framework for accounting and certifying carbon removals. This should provide the necessary legal framework to scale up carbon farming and provide clarity on the quality of carbon removals. In its Communication, the Commission mentions the key role of public funding to kick-start carbon farming and complement private financing and it calls on Member States to integrate carbon farming into their CAP strategic plans.



The European organic movement's actions

In the beginning of December, we [published a letter together with other NGOs in which we are raising concerns about the carbon farming initiative](#). In the letter we are asking for a holistic approach to carbon farming, the need to urgently cut emissions and to acknowledge the multiple benefits of agroecological practices.

For more information on climate change and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please contact hanna.winkler@organicseurope.bio. IFOAM Organics Europe members can find more information on [the member extranet](#) and background materials in the [arguments database on the member extranet](#) (main messages, arguments/FAQs, visuals & videos).

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Plant health care

Read our new leaflet on plant health care in organic farming

Have you ever heard of all the preventive plant protection measures implemented by organic farmers to produce food without using external inputs? Did you know that herbicides and synthetic pesticides are prohibited in organic agriculture? And that organic farmers are only authorised to use plant protection products consisting of natural substances? Speaking of natural substances, are you aware of the challenges related to their registration as plant protection products?

To guide you through the answers to these and other questions, IFOAM Organics Europe releases a leaflet [Plant health care in organic farming – The role of natural substances in a biodiversity-based system](#). In a small number of pages, the leaflet describes organic farming's systemic approach to plant health, including enhanced biodiversity, preventive measures and natural substances.

The leaflet also explains why the current EU legislative framework on plant protection products is not adapted to natural substances, highlighting the main technical, structural, and economical challenges surrounding the registration of these substances at EU level, and illustrated with concrete examples.

This leaflet is key to understand the complementarity between the targets of the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies, which aim to increase organic land by 25% while reducing the use of chemical pesticides by 50% by 2030. Organic farming's unique approach to plant protection has rightly been identified as essential to move toward a food system that is less dependent on external toxic inputs. The organic sector is ready to deliver, and the leaflet provides concrete policy recommendations to make this ambition a reality.

For more information on plant health and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please contact mathilde.calmels@organicseurope.bio. IFOAM Organics Europe members can find more information



on [the member extranet](#) and background materials in the [arguments database on the member extranet](#) (main messages, arguments/FAQs, visuals & videos).

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



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Biodiversity, soil and water

EU releases soil strategy & plans legal initiative in 2023

On 17 November, the European Commission published the [EU Soil Strategy for 2030](#) together with a [proposal for a regulation of deforestation free supply chains](#). The soil strategy addresses the importance of healthy soils for climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity, ecosystem services, food production and the economy.

60-70% of soils in the EU are not healthy, and the EU still lacks a comprehensive soil protection policy, after the proposal for a soil framework directive was withdrawn in 2014. However, to improve the status of European soils, the Commission will table a legislative proposal on soil health by 2023. This legislation should enable the objectives of the 2030 Soil Strategy and achieve good soil health across the EU by 2050.

The strategy integrates and builds on several strategies and legislative proposals such as the Farm to Fork strategy, Biodiversity Strategy and Climate Adaptation Strategy and should contribute to several Green Deal objectives.

Some of the actions the Commission foresees are:

- Consider proposing legally binding nature restoration objectives to maintain and increase soil carbon stocks in the Nature Restoration Law through limit drainage of wetlands and organic soils and to restore managed and drained peatlands and to enhance biodiversity in agricultural land;
- Develop a long-term vision of sustainable carbon cycles and as part of this the EU carbon farming initiative will be presented on 14 December;
- Prepare a set of 'sustainable soil management' practices, including regenerative farming in line with agroecological principles;
- Connecting stakeholders and creating a network of 'sustainable soil management' ambassadors, including on regenerative and organic agriculture building on the living labs and lighthouses of the Soil Mission;
- Provide assistance to Member States to set up a 'Test your soil for free' initiative;
- Prevent soil pollution by revising the Directive on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides, evaluating the Sewage Sludge Directive by 2022, and improving the consideration of soil quality and soil

biodiversity in EU risk assessments for chemicals, food and feed additives, pesticides, fertilisers under the 'one substance one assessment' initiative.

For more information on soil and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please contact hanna.winkler@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.

Food Policy

Organic in sustainable food public procurement: numerous benefits for a low-hanging fruit

Recent European initiatives related to food policies, among which the Farm to Fork Strategy, Organic Action Plan, and new legislative framework on sustainable food systems, have contributed to the growing political importance of sustainable food public procurement– and organic's role in it.

Organic food in public canteens such as administrations, schools, kindergartens, hospitals, etc., can play a significant role in implementing the transformative objectives promoted by the EU and supported by citizens. Sustainable public procurement has [positive consequences](#) in a perspective of transforming our food systems.

From positive budgetary effects...

Sustainable public procurement has a positive effect on public budgets. The [European Commission](#) highlights its accelerating economic and budgetary effect in sectors where public institutions are the main purchasers. More organic, healthy, and plant-based products in sustainable public procurement have led to lower costs on public health as well as to fewer waste management costs because of less food waste.

Studies have shown that the same budget is maintained, [with menu or recipes changes](#). The [example of Copenhagen](#) is often put forward: the city managed to reach 90% organic food in its public canteens without effect on expenditures. But it is not a unique case: [the French city of Mouans-Sartoux](#) managed to drastically reduce food waste by daily distributing fully organic and local food. These examples show that switching to sustainable public procurement, including organic products, does not increase the cost for public budgets.

... to increased accessibility and environmental benefits

From a socio-economic point of view, sustainable public procurement also helps to reduce inequalities in access to quality food and stimulates local and regional networks.

Sustainable public procurement also has beneficial effects on the environment. [Studies have shown](#) that it leads to up to 88% less waste in production, and up to 50% less food waste. Moreover, [studies have shown](#) that canteen staff benefiting from sustainable public procurement had higher job satisfaction and requested less sick leave.

Therefore, sustainable public procurement, including a share of organic products, has important benefits: positive consequences for public budgets, well-being of the staff, less food waste, positive impact on the environment, to name a few. Sustainable public procurement in public canteens is a real [low-hanging fruit](#), to which IFOAM Organics Europe is strongly committed. Our [feedback](#) on the forthcoming new legal framework on sustainable food systems is the latest example.



participants that alternatives to mineral oils are feasible, effective, in line with EU policies, and a safe option for the environment. Bringing innovations such as the practical application of the vibration signal method to the market requires support from consultants/advisors and an action plan to promote these innovations.

Soil and nutrients

In the following session, alternative soil nutrients as well as peat and plastic were presented and discussed by the experts Jakob Magid from Copenhagen University, Anne-Kristin Løes from Norwegian organic research institute NORSØK and Francis Rayns from Coventry University (Organic-PLUS). Nitrogen use efficiency is highly variable between countries and farms and in the case of many farms below 60 kg N/ha. To ensure nutrient supply and avoid soil nutrient depletion, recycling of societal waste streams needs to be further developed and researched. Anne-Kristin Løes stressed that the demand for nutrients and organic matter to be applied in organic agriculture will increase significantly due to the EU Farm to Fork target of 25% organic land target by 2030. On the use of plastic and biodegradable mulch films, Francis Rayns remarked that many types of alternative materials are available, but more knowledge about treatment technologies and applications is needed. Loose mulch films also require further investigation, especially for small and medium growers. Organic farming should lead the way in phasing out the use of peat.

Alternatives used in livestock husbandry

In the afternoon, several experts talked about alternatives that can be used in livestock husbandry. Michael Walkenhorst from FiBL presented how to combat mastitis, one of the most important diseases in dairy cattle, with essential oils and without antibiotics. One challenge in introducing alternative animal husbandry methods that replace antibiotics is educating veterinarians and farmers about the protocol and legal requirements. Animal Health and Welfare Planning (AHWP) could halve antibiotic use under certain conditions.

According to Spiridoula Athanasiadou from SRUC, Scotland's Rural College and Tove Serup from Danish research centre SEGES, while alternatives to anthelmintics in organic animal husbandry have shown huge potential, these should not be seen as a new drug. What is needed above all is a rethinking of how immune response and nutrition can contribute to infection control. Håvard Steinshamn discussed the work of RELACS on the reduction of vitamin B12 supplements in organic chickens. In some groups, doses can be reduced, but others require further investigation.

Next, Federico Righi presented novel bedding material researched within Organic-PLUS, including studies conducted on poultry, broilers and dairy cattle which provide comparisons to traditional bedding materials.

The first day was concluded with summary statements by the project coordinator. Judith Conroy from Organic-PLUS pointed out the differences between countries. There is no single solution; a combination of alternatives must be sought. Lucius Tamm from RELACS added that robust varieties and biodiversity are key to all alternative solutions to contentious inputs. In various cases, results of this research can be relevant for conventional farmers, too.

Day 2: Socio-economic aspects and the way forward for contentious inputs

In the introduction to the second day, Bram Moeskops, Senior Scientific Coordinator of TP Organics, emphasised that the debate about improving organic practices and developing the sector

comes at the right time, with the new EU Organic Regulation entering into force on 1 January 2022. Reducing use of the most contentious inputs is part of living up to organic's principles.

Socio-economic aspects

In the first insightful presentation of the socio-economic results, Adrian Evans from the Coventry University highlighted the benefits of working together with citizens and farmers in the frame of Organic-PLUS. Next, Assumpció Antón reported on the environmental impact assessment of controversial inputs and organic alternatives carried out according to the EU-recommended Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) method, covering the whole production chain and consumption. Limitations were pointed out, such as the lack of background data for organic farming. In addition, the methodologies for impacts on organic production are not yet fully developed, for example, the category of impacts on biodiversity.

Lucius Tamm identified different minimisation strategies. Especially input suppliers have lots of work and investment to do in the coming years regarding copper alternatives. Robust varieties mostly depend on breeders, but farmers, retailers and consumers have to adapt as well. This applies also to plant protection products like orange oil and Clitoria, vibrational disruption, recycled fertilisers, and matching regional resources with demand to replace mineral oil.

Mathilde Calmels from IFOAM Organics Europe closed the first session of the second day with a presentation of the development European roadmaps for the reduction of controversial inputs. She reported on national workshops with farmers, advisors and scientists that have been organised to discuss the alternatives developed by RELACS. While alternatives to copper, mineral oils and nutrients are well acceptable based on current knowledge, residues and impurities remain bottlenecks. Compatibility with organic principles must be ensured.

What can the Organic Action Plan deliver?

Nathalie Sauze-Vandevyver, Director for Quality, Research & Innovation at the European Commissions Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) explained what the EU Organic Action Plan can achieve. She thanked the organic movement and praised the excellent multilateral partnership for the research and innovation contributions of the organic sector. She also emphasised that organic farming supports the EU Green Deal and related EU Farm to Fork and EU Biodiversity targets. Some regulations hinder the uptake of natural products, which should be resolved to give farmers a bigger toolbox. Work is being done on this, but there is no separate system for registering products used in conventional and organic farming under horizontal legislation.

Policy debate: Tackling contentious inputs in organic farming

The highlight of the Organic Innovation Days 2021 was the policy debate moderated by Eduardo Cuoco, Head of the TP Organics Secretariat. It brought together Nathalie Sauze-Vandevyver, Werner Vogt-Kaute, advisor at Naturland and project coordinator, and Faustine Bas-Defossez, External Impact Director at IEEP.

Nathalie Sauze-Vandevyver underlined the importance of platforms like the [Organic Farm Knowledge platform](#) for knowledge exchange and revealed that organic farming has been selected as a priority in the EIP-AGRI work programme 2022. She also pointed out that the EU Action Plan aims to promote research and innovation in forestry, agriculture and rural areas, all relevant topics for the organic sector. Werner Vogt-Kaute agreed but noted that it is also important to promote advice directly on the farms. There is also a need for solutions for livestock farming, as far too little research is done on this topic. Research activities need to be intensified here!



The panellists agreed that it is a challenge to reach the 25% organic target and at the same time reduce the contentious inputs. To overcome the challenges and reach the target, the results of projects such as those presented at the Organic Innovation Days must be used and implemented. Faustine Bas-Defossez added that the 2050 carbon neutrality target will have a major impact on the food and agriculture sector. In this framework, the organic sector should be an example for this complex but necessary transition. European Commission initiatives to make sustainable food affordable in the future were discussed as well. All panellists agreed that research and innovation are crucial, and it is important that research results reach the ground.

Next steps

The project coordinators closed the event. RELACS Project Coordinator Lucius Tamm argued for a systems approach that reshapes agricultural landscapes. New solutions require ecological and economic impact assessments. Acceptance along the value chain, independent advice and real cost accounting are crucial. Organic-PLUS Project Coordinator Ulrich Schmutz agreed and stressed the need for working together to improve organic. Other R&I actions should also be looked at, and farmers should be involved.

Conclusion and announcement

We hope you enjoyed this year's online edition of the Organic Innovation Days and the sessions you took part in! If you signed up for the event, you have access to the [Hubilo](#) platform for the next 30 days and are encouraged to take the unique opportunity to browse the resources section. To help us improve your experience, we kindly ask you to fill in this [evaluation form](#) about the programme and format of the event.

If you did not get the chance to attend the event, we are pleased to inform you that recordings and presentations of all sessions will be made available on the [TP Organics website](#), so stay tuned!

Stay tuned and join us at the next edition of the Organic Innovation Days, which will be held in November 2022 in Belgium.



TP Organics is the European Technology Platform for Organic Food and Farming. IFOAM Organics Europe is a founding member and hosts its secretariat.



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.



Organic-PLUS project (O+) is a European Horizon 2020-funded project and aims to minimise, and eventually phase out contentious inputs from certified organic agriculture and to provide high-quality, trans-disciplinary, scientifically informed decision support to help all actors in the organic sector. By doing so organic food systems can be truer to the IFOAM organic principle of 'ecology'.



These sessions are financed by the projects RELACS and Organic-PLUS, which have received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreements No 773431 and No 774340, respectively.





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Using blockchain technology in organic

Ever wondered how blockchain technology can be used by the organic sector? Check out [the highlights of the innovation experiment led by the partners of the SmartAgriHubs project](#).

Transparency and trust are crucial for a well-performing and sustainable organic food sector. With the help of apps such as OriginTrail crucial, supply chain data could be connected and secured from manipulation through blockchain technology. These data secured can be further used for traceability of organic products, increasing trust of the consumers and optimising supply chain management. SmartAgriHubs project partners from Slovenia tested the technology in the poultry and dairy pilots. [Learn more about the experiment](#).

Follow @SmartAgriHubs on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#) to stay tuned about the latest updates or visit the project's website www.smartagrihubs.eu.

[SmartAgriHubs](#) will realise the digitisation of European agriculture by fostering an agricultural innovation ecosystem dedicated to excellence, sustainability and success. It 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 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 is a project partner and represents the European organic movement.



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.



2 IFOAM ORGANICS EUROPE DEVELOPMENT



Stay tuned for the full vacancy descriptions and deadlines to apply by visiting our [vacancy page](#) and following @OrganicsEurope on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

Do you contribute to transforming European food and farming? Submit your initiative & inspire!

A variety of organic and other initiatives are already revolutionizing food and farming across Europe, paving the way for the shared Vision 2030, we share as organic movement.

We can make organic and sustainable farming more widely available and recognized if we work together.

If you have a project that can serve as an inspiration to other food and farming actors as well as policymakers, share it with us by submitting it to www.EUorganic2030.bio.

If your campaign is found to fulfil the goals of our vision, we will promote it on social media, highlighting strategic initiatives to demonstrate that fair, ecologically conscious, healthy, and compassionate food and farming systems are achievable!

Need inspiration? Have an initiative? Go to euorganic2030.bio



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They make it happen! Get inspired by ETHIQUABLE's sustainable code of conduct

In 17 years of presence on the ground, Ethiquable measures how dedicated fair trade is able to provide an answer for producers and consumers. The social enterprise developed "[Paysans d'Ici](#)", a code of conduct based on 24 criteria on organic peasant agriculture. Designed with French producers, the code allows for an adapted global North-South fair-trade approach.

Paysans d'Ici products are sourced from 1300 organic producers, organized into 14 cooperatives across France. With an array of more than 50 products, they are pioneers of organic farming and aim for an ecological transition. On average, 49.8% of the price of a local, fair and organic products returns to the producer group. This not only guarantees a reasonable income and livelihood for the producers, but also ensures an ethical trade relation with the global South.

The companies' popularity demonstrates consumer's demand for higher transparency and greater fairness in the value chain. On the other hand, it shows that rules adapted to a local context and shorter value chains can contribute to increased clearness for the whole supply chain.

Learn more about this and other initiatives that are transforming food and farming in Europe and get inspired on [euorganic2030.bio](#) and share it on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.



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



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Volunteering at IFOAM Organics Europe: Discovering Belgian culture & JINT training

In this article, one of our ESC volunteers shares their feedback about their ESC-experience. Enjoy sharing their experience!

We all know Belgium, the country of beers, waffles, and delicate chocolates. But let me tell you that this is merely a short stereotypical list of the Belgium culture and lifestyle.



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During my time here at IFOAM Organics Europe I had the opportunity to visit Brussels and most of its world-famous historical buildings. As a French person, I could see that this capital was different than other European cities: you could feel and hear the international implications and the multiplicity of people from different nationalities walking down the streets. And one thing I could notice when travelling to the North of Belgium for the JINT training is that as soon as you leave Brussels, you get to know a totally different country. Indeed, people no longer speak English but Flemish.

And this was the main aim of our attendance to the JINT training: to meet and learn from the locals. For a week we would gather with other participants from all over the North of Belgium and discuss about the tradition and heritage of Flanders. In addition, we would participate and organise activities revolving around cohesion, solidarity, and team building. Overall, this training gave us a chance to better grasp the complexity of the Belgium identity as well as share our own culture. In conclusion, I would like to thank every trainer for the organisation of the week and for their joyful implication.

The European Solidarity Corps (ESC) provides young people residing in Europe with the unique chance to express their personal commitment through a full-time voluntary activity in a foreign country for a period of up to 1 year. Young volunteers can develop new skills and, therefore, improve their personal, educational and professional development. More information about ESC is available in the ESC website: europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en

Are you interested in the organic movement and want to experience its day-to-day work? Stay tuned and be ready to apply – you could be part of our team!



**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.

Need inspiration communicating organic's benefits?



**CHECK OUR
MEMBER-ONLY
UPDATED ARGUMENT
DATABASE!**

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3 EVENTS

3.1 Preview of events

Celebrating 20 years of IFOAM Organics Europe in the Year of Organics

Next year, the European organic movement will celebrate its 20th anniversary. Together with [IFOAM – Organics International](#)'s 50th and [IFOAM Asia](#)'s 10th anniversary, 2022 will also mark the Year of Organics.

Following the recognition of organic as a political tool and part of the solution to current societal challenges – foremost the climate and biodiversity crises – the Year of Organics comes at the perfect time. Now more than ever we need to stay together and emphasize the critical contribution organic can make to transforming our food and farming systems, a change that is urgently needed.

Thanks to the tireless effort of organic farmers, processors, retailers, certifiers and other organic stakeholders, the organic sector has grown exceptionally over the past decades. This is testament to producers, consumers and policy-makers alike understanding and appreciating the environmental and societal benefits of organic food and farming.

As the European organic movement, we would like to take our 20th anniversary and the Year of Organics as an opportunity to thank our network across Europe, staff, supporters, decision-makers and like-minded organisations for contributing to making our Vision 2030 a reality. Together, let's look back at our past achievements and challenges lying ahead to build a European food and farming system that promotes Health, Ecology, Fairness and Care and protects people and the planet.

We will organise a range of celebratory activities across Europe throughout 2022 to celebrate organic. Visit [our website](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#) to stay tuned.

We look forward to celebrating with many of you digitally or in person!

Come to our sessions at BIOFACH 15-18 February 2022, Nuremberg, Germany

The trade fair duo BIOFACH and VIVANESS will take place again in Nuremberg from 15-18 February 2022. The event will be both on-site and online, so experience the full diversity of the organic community in Nuremberg or virtually, thanks to live streaming sessions and networking beyond the physical trade fair.

Organic is more than a label or certification: organic stands for quality and conviction – for the responsible use of nature's resources. BIOFACH in the Exhibition Centre Nuremberg is the place where people share their passionate interest in organic food, get to know each other and exchange views, and this since 1990.

BIOFACH / VIVANESS is the perfect opportunity for professionals to meet organic producers from the organic market and be inspired by the sector's latest trends.



2022 congress theme - "Organic. Climate. Resilience."

The 2022 congress theme will be "Organic. Climate. Resilience.": how organic can make food production more resilient and climate-friendly.

The event is also divided into congress forums - on sustainability, politics, science and finally agriculture. IFOAM OE will held various sessions for each of them.

Come to our sessions at BIOFACH

We are organising sessions on new policy & regulatory frameworks for organic, the new European Organic Action Plan, digital technology for local and small-scale processing, climate change, pesticides & much more.

All sessions will be uploaded to [BIOFACH's](#) and [our website](#) in the coming weeks.

Keep an eye on them to stay tuned!

3.2 Review of events

Organic's approach to plant health: Webinar with MEP Eric Andrieu 16 November 2021, online

On November 16, IFOAM Organics Europe and French Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Eric Andrieu (S&D) co-hosted a webinar on the organic approach to plant health.

The webinar explored organic's approach to plant health and its potential contribution for achieving the Farm to Fork target of reducing pesticide use and risks by 50% by 2030. As the Commission is finalising its proposal on the revision of the Sustainable Use of pesticides Directive (SUD), it was timely to discuss the challenges and policy options to enable pesticide reduction strategies based on effective and ready-to-use alternative approaches, such as organic farming.

What is organic's approach to plant health?

Jutta Kienzle, independent scientist specialised in pest control in organic fruit growing, started the webinar with a [presentation explaining the organic approach to plant health](#). She described the indirect and preventive measures implemented by organic farmers to reduce the use of inputs as much as possible, and clarified the fact that only natural substances are allowed in organic agriculture, as an active precautionary measure. In conclusion, she emphasised that organic agriculture is not only a low-input approach for plant protection, as is Integrated Pest Management (IPM), but a systemic approach which keeps sustainability beyond the farm gates, throughout the organic value chain, in short: from Farm to Fork.

Challenges to register biocontrol products

Frank Volk, CEO of Biofa (a German SME manufacturing biocontrol products), continued by [presenting the challenges related to the registration procedure of biocontrol products](#). He explained that the registration process of plant protection products should be better adapted to the specific characteristics of natural substances contained in biocontrol products, such as their natural background levels or the natural variations in their composition. He concluded that the main challenge is the current concept of the chemicals-oriented registration process, which leads to the loss of highly



selective biocontrol products with favourable ecotoxicological profile as there is no return on investment.

These presentations were followed by a discussion on the role of organic agriculture in the Commission's upcoming initiatives to achieving the Farm to Fork's target on pesticide reduction, moderated by Eric Gall, Deputy Director of IFOAM Organics Europe.

Tackling pesticide reductions systemically & moving to low-input systems

Ms Pilar Aguar Fernandez, Director for Health and Food Audits and Analysis in the Directorate-General of Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE), stated that the pesticide reduction issue needs to be tackled systemically, as organic agriculture does. She explained that the revision of the SUD will focus on strengthening certain elements of the directive, such as IPM, and should also propose enhanced record keeping at farm level and crop specific guidelines at Member State level. The goal is to promote a fundamental shift towards low-input systems, where organic agriculture is leading. Regarding the registration process for natural substances, Ms Aguar Fernandez added that the Commission was in the process of updating the rules for microorganisms to facilitate their substitution for chemical products. Once this work is completed, they will look more closely at the situation of semiochemicals and botanicals, to take stock, assess and consider whether additional measures are needed for these substances, similar to what has been done for microorganisms. Finally, she said that the Farm to Fork Strategy's targets should not be seen in isolation, but as complementary: therefore, increasing organic farming should lead to a reduction in the use of pesticides.

CAP Strategic Plans should contribute to a system approach

Eric Andrieu stressed the role of the future CAP in reducing pesticides and called for vigilance on the quality of the CAP strategic plans to be submitted by the Member States if results are to be achieved in this area. He insisted on the importance of adopting a systemic approach to reduce pesticides rather than simply substituting chemical molecules with natural ones. He highlighted the role of organic farming in this process, stressing the need to support the agricultural sector in its transition to lower-input models. Eric Andrieu concluded that the reduction of synthetic pesticides is by no means a leap into the unknown: economic and technical solutions already exist, it is therefore the responsibility of politicians to seize them during the upcoming discussions on the SUD in order to give farmers the necessary means

Watch the recording of the webinar in [French](#) and in [English](#)

Nest steps

The European Commission is finalising the impact assessment of the revision of the SUD and is starting to draft the future directive. Internal consultations will take place in the first quarter of 2022 and the Commission is expected to present its proposal of revised SUD on 23 March 2022 (indicative timetable). We will keep our members updated about this process.

For more information on organic plant health and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please contact Mathilde Calmels. IFOAM Organics Europe members can find more information on [the member extranet](#) and background materials in the [arguments database on the member extranet](#) (main messages, arguments/FAQs, visuals & videos).

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





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6th European Conference on copper in Plant Protection 17-18 November 2021, online

2021 was an extremely rainy year, posing challenges for copper minimization on farms with permanent and specialty crops. As it is clear that farmers and growers will have to prepare for more droughts and heavy rain, discussions on the future of copper minimisation at the 6th European Online Symposium on Copper as a Crop Protection Product, on 17 and 18 November, were very timely.

BÖLW, IFOAM Organics Europe and the Julius Kühn Institute, discussed which innovations can drive minimization and how policy can support the transformation, together with stakeholders from research, industry, practice and policy. On both days, more than 100 people attended the meeting and exchanged views with the speakers in German and English.

On November 17, German organic associations presented their current copper monitoring, and policymakers and practitioners also discussed the topic "Copper as a plant protection product in politics - New tailwind or headwind?". On the first day of the conference, discussions were in German, with Mathilde Calmels from IFOAM Organics Europe, bringing a European perspective by presenting the European strategy for copper minimisation in organic farming (developed by IFOAM Organics Europe).

The second day of the conference focused more on technical aspects of copper reduction. The speakers presented research results of practical trials and innovative alternative products or strategies regarding the minimization of copper use. Many promising alternatives for copper minimisation were presented, and, as IFOAM Organics Europe, we drew the main conclusion **that the organic sector remains proactive in developing an effective copper minimisation strategy, and further support from policy makers is expected to achieve this.**

Could not attend the conference? Catch up on the [BÖLW website](#) where all speakers' presentations are available!

For more information on organic plant health and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please contact Mathilde Calmels. IFOAM Organics Europe members can find more information on [the member extranet](#) and background materials in the [arguments database on the member extranet](#) (main messages, arguments/FAQs, visuals & videos).

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und andere Formen nachhaltiger
Landwirtschaft

Day two is carried out on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) as part of the Federal Program for Organic Farming and Other Forms of Sustainable Agriculture (BÖLN).

Scaling up and out – FoodSHIFT 2030 webinar

COVID-19 has shown how fragile our food systems are and how important it is to develop well-thought supply chains. Our Policy Associate Manager, Silvia Schmidt, chaired this FoodSHIFT 2030 webinar, which highlighted how to transform today's food supply chains into more sustainable ones by shortening them and bringing local consumers and producers together.

The webinar started with the introduction of the Brasov FoodSHIFT Accelerator Lab in Romania. This FoodSHIFT lab enables producers to connect with local people and restaurants, which is very important for farmers as they depend on the regional market. Following, Tom Uhnak introduced the audience to a form of community supported agriculture in Czech Republic. In this solidarity approach to local food supply, people can visit a website to find or connect with the nearest group to support regional agriculture. Lastly, Nick Weir presented the Open Food Network in the UK. It is a food hub that brings together all regional producers and their consumers, by providing an online market platform. The discussion at the end between speakers and audience also highlighted how important the integration of low-income groups and the digitalization of supply chains are.

[Are you interested in this event? Watch the recordings on FoodSHIFT's YouTube channel.](#)

Visit the [FoodSHIFT2030 website](#) to learn more and follow the latest project's developments on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#) using @foodshift2030.

FoodSHIFT2030 is a Horizon 2020 project promoting food systems innovations in nine cities across Europe. More information about the 9 FoodSHIFT Labs is available on the [FoodSHIFT 2030 website](#). Follow the project on social media using @FoodSHIFT2030 on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#). IFOAM Organics Europe contributes to the conceptual framework for further development of governance strategies and food policy strategies. We will also disseminate project outputs within the organic network and at our main events.



FoodSHIFT 2030 has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement number 862716. 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.



IFOAM Organics Europe Meets Business: Bridging business and EU policies **7 December, online**

On 7 December 2021, players from the whole (organic) supply chain – including processors, traders, retailers, and certifiers – joined the 4th edition of IFOAM Organics Europe Meets Business.

Once again, the (online) event proved to be a successful occasion to exchange knowledge and experiences on market, policy, and regulatory developments, as well as their impacts on the organic value chain. Participants had the chance to network with expert speakers, (organic) companies and policymakers, through thematic roundtables, interactive coffees, and lunch break.

[Consult the full programme on our website](#) and read a summary of the event below.

First session: Organic market development and societal trends

After some welcoming words by Eduardo Cuoco, IFOAM Organics Europe's Director, the event began with a morning session on the current EU organic market and its foreseen development in the coming years.

Eric Gall, Deputy Director at IFOAM Organics Europe, highlighted the current public interest in organic market development and its central role on the EU agenda. For instance, in the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Commission has set the target of “at least 25% of the EU's agricultural land under organic farming”, launching the Organic Action Plan to support this ambitious goal. He also claimed that today's consumers are more demanding for food products that benefit not only themselves, but also the environment, and that organic production currently satisfies this demand.

The following presentation of Carlotta Brondi, Market Analyst at Nomisma, confirmed this trend. Focusing on the Italian and EU market, she displayed interesting data about consumers: in 2021, 89% of Italian consumers bought organic products at least one time and 54% consumed organic products at least once a week. Moreover, Italian consumers believe that public Institutions should spread more awareness about organic. Roberto Pinton, IFOAM Organics Europe board member, shifted the focus to France, Germany, and Sweden, to give a general overview of the current market situation. He shared that French consumers buy organic mainly for health, environmental, ethical and social reason, and, that in Germany, 2020 saw a 22% increase of organic sales. Valentina Gritti, Global Community and Project Manager at Slow Food Youth Network International, closed the session with a focus on youth market trends in Europe. Among these: organic, sustainability, agroecology, no plastic, zero waste, local, fair and climate friendly.

Before switching to a networking lunch break, Andrea Rigoni, President and Chief Executive Officer of Rigoni di Asiago, presented the truly inspiring story of this Italian company, which has always been committed to organic “for a better and sustainable future of today's consumers and of tomorrow's generations”.

Second session: (New) EU Organic Regulation

The afternoon session was all about regulation, since the new EU Organic Regulation 2018/848 will enter into force on 1 January 2022.

Emanuele Busacca, Regulation Manager at IFOAM Organics Europe, gave a first general update before handing over to the first speaker Alexander Beck, Managing Board Member of AöL, who introduced



the new rules on processing and flavourings. He focussed on new restrictions in the use of conventional natural flavourings and to the Organic Critical Points systematic approach.

Then, Bernard Lignon, Head of Regulation and Quality at Synabio, took the floor to provide insights on the provisions regarding cleaning and disinfectants, from the 2018 Regulation to the actual situation. Concluding this regulation spotlight, Michel Reynaud, Vice-President of Ecocert, displayed the new rules on organic certification and the new import regime in 2022. Concerning controls on compliance, he specifically stressed that potential challenges could be again related to harmonisation among Member States.

The second part of this session was dedicated to the issue of pesticide residue findings in organic products. Sarah Compson, International Development Manager at the Soil Association and chair of IFOAM Organics Europe's Interest Group of Organic Processors and Traders, opened the discussion on the topic reminding the audience of the organic approach, its principles, and why it is important to look at the whole production process and not only at the final product.

The current state of play, in terms of the political and regulatory context, was then introduced by Marian Blom, Board Vice President of IFOAM Organics Europe and Bionext Project Leader Knowledge and Innovation. She also explained the project on pesticide use and contamination of IFOAM Organics Europe, the aim of which is to foster the development of EU policies and regulations capable of ensuring a level playing field and support for farmers, processors, retailers and traders producing food without the use of pesticides.

Jan Groen, CEO of Green Organics, then presented Green Organics' quality assurance system, giving a practical case of the burden and costs of laboratory analysis linked with pesticide residue findings. Finally, Bernard Lignon examined the case of the contamination of certain products with ethylene oxide, providing some "lessons learned" that could better prepare the organic sector for a potential other crisis of this type.

For the attendees of IFOAM Organics Europe meets business, the recordings and slides of the event will be available for 30 days on [the Hubilo platform](#).

IFOAM Organics Europe members can access all recordings and slides [on the members extranet](#).

If you have any feedback or comments related to the event, please do not hesitate to email us on events@organicseurope.bio.



This event was co-financed by the LIFE programme of the European Union, under the under the Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA). This publication only reflects the views of the authors and its sole responsibility lies with IFOAM Organics Europe. CINEA is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.



EU Agricultural Outlook Conference: Fit for 2030? **9-10 December 2021**

On 9-10 December, the European Commission organised its annual [EU Agricultural Outlook Conference, themed Fit for 2030?](#)

In his opening speech on 'The CAP fit for 2030', European Commissioner for Agriculture, Janusz Wojciechowski, declared that agriculture should not be a factory to produce as much as possible regardless of the environmental impact. Emphasis will be given on agroecology, the soil's capacity to sequester carbon, and better water management. He stated that despite what certain say, the CAP's green architecture does not mean less efficiency nor a threat to food security. The Commissioner also recommended to have an open dialogue at national level between farmers, society, and national officials to ensure all parties are involved. There is still space for improvement until the draft CAP Strategic Plans are submitted.

During the session on organic farming, FiBL researcher Jörn Sanders affirmed that "under organic farming, soil related emissions can be reduced by 1000 kg per ha" and that "taking into consideration the potential CO2 sequestration of organic farming, this farming practice should be one element of a strategy to fight against global warming."

Kurt Sannen, IFOAM Organics Europe's Chair of the Interest Group of Organic Farmers, stressed the need for a more systemic approach, and the need to think 'how we can create fair agricultural systems that can give a fair remuneration to farmers'. He added that we must change our mindset from producing as much as possible, to optimising food production. He added that we must ask ourselves how we can feed healthy food to people with an agricultural system that can deliver within planetary boundaries. He also recalled that livestock is important but stressed the need to shift towards a more plant-based diet and to consume less but better quality and organic meat.

Finally, Nathalie Sauze-Vandevyver, DG AGRI's Director for Quality, Research & Innovation, and Outreach Directorate, stated several good reasons to support organic farming: the direct positive effect on biodiversity, water, and animal welfare; the multiplier effect given more organic land will help to reach other EU Farm to Fork target; fair income to farmers; and organic farming attractiveness for young farmers and women.

Have a look at agenda of the [2021 EU Agricultural Outlook Conference on the Commission's website](#). You will also find [all presentations](#).

4 Our Holiday Wishes



IFOAM Organics Europe wishes you caring, health, ecological and fair holidays. May 2022 be bright, peaceful, inspiring, healthy, united, joyous and organic!

IFOAM Organics Europe and its staff will be enjoying their holidays starting 23 December. We are open again as of 3 January – of course, individual staff members' holidays may differ.

5 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.

IFOAM ORGANICS EUROPE KEY SUPPORTER 2021



6 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2022

The Year of Organics

Global

15-18 February 2022

[BIOFACH 2022](#)

Nuremberg, Germany

21-23 February 2022

[International Conference on Organic Fruit Growing](#)

Online

23 September 2022

[EU Organic Day](#)

European Union

2022

[10-year anniversary of IFOAM Asia](#)

[20-year anniversary of IFOAM Organics Europe](#)

[50-year anniversary of IFOAM Organics International](#)



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