

PRESS RELEASE

## EU ORGANIC AWARDS – APPLICATIONS OPENED AT HIGH-LEVEL EVENT

BRUSSELS, 25 MARCH 2022 – Today, Commissioner for agriculture Janusz Wojciechowski launched the applications for the first ever [EU organic awards](#) alongside representatives of the awards’ co-organisers a high-level event. IFOAM Organics Europe’s President, Jan Plagge, and representatives of the awards’ co-organisers were all there – together, in the spirit of pan-European collaboration. These awards will recognise excellence along the organic value chain, rewarding the best and most innovative actors in organic production in the EU.

Organic operators can now apply for eight awards within seven categories, including best organic farmer female, best organic farmer male, best organic region, best organic city, best organic bio-district, best organic SME, best organic food retailer and best organic restaurant. There will be an award ceremony to announce the winners on the annual [EU Organic Day](#) on 23 September 2022. The organising partners are the European Commission, IFOAM Organics Europe, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Committee of the Regions, and COPA-COGECA.

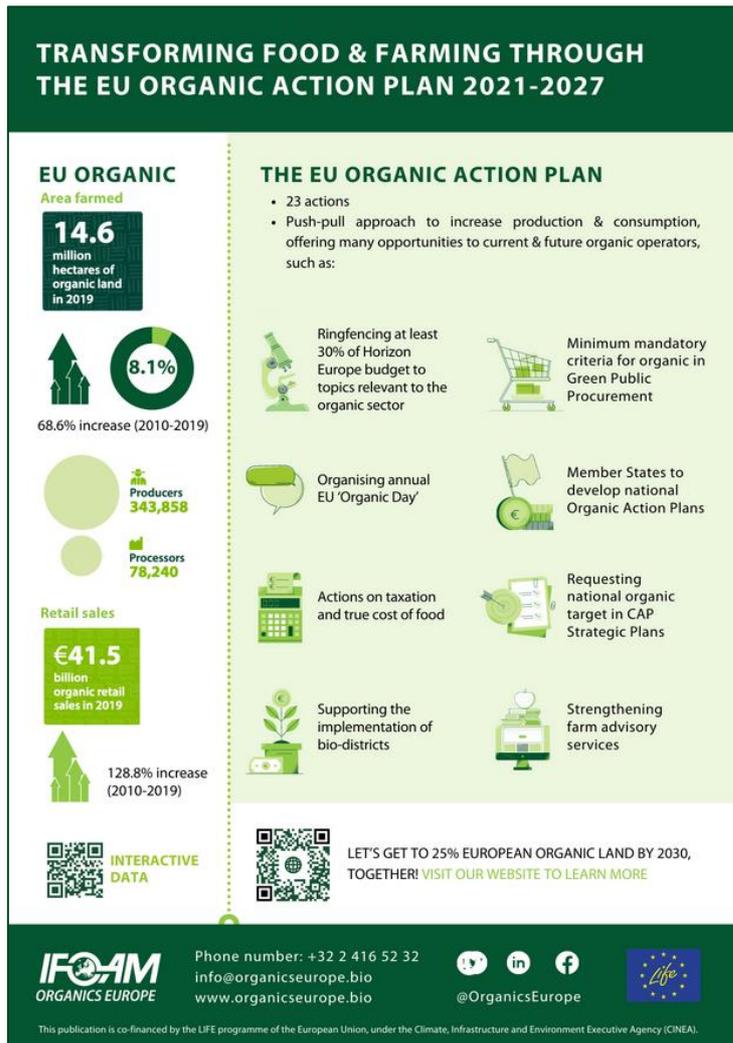
Jan Plagge, IFOAM Organics Europe’s President, said: “These EU Organic Awards are a great way to showcase the innovative potential in the EU organic sector and how the sector contributes to the EU Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies’ goals. The current crisis shows that the EU should seek to speed up its work towards an agroecological and social model which is more resilient, fairer, healthier, more knowledge-intensive and based on shorter supply chains. The war in Ukraine and its devastating consequences show that the agro-industrial model, which is highly dependent on global imports and exports, fossil-fuels, and non-circular inputs, is broken. The EU Farm to Fork Strategy sets the right mid- and long term objectives to ensure food security in an uncertain and volatile world.”

Eduardo Cuoco, IFOAM Organics Europe’s Director, adds that “these awards will inspire those working to make our food and farming system more sustainable, using organic’s potential. Some of their criteria are based on the holistic principles of organic – care, health, ecology & fairness. I believe organic’s approach to food and farming is a good way to re-think our food production system, to make it more independent from external inputs, less input intensive and more resilient. These awards can inspire many practitioners to make the switch to organic and be part of the solution to many crises we are facing, including food security, and the biodiversity and climate crises.”

Applications are open from today, 25 March, until 8 June 2022. After the application period, a jury consisting of one representative from each of the different organisers and a representative of each of the European Parliament and European Council will shortlist the best candidates. More information [is available on the EU Commission's website](#).

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## Background information

### Why these awards?

The European Commission identified organic as playing a key role in achieving the objectives of the [European Green Deal](#), the [Farm to Fork strategy](#) and the [Biodiversity strategy](#). For this reason, the Commission has defined a target of 25% of EU agricultural land under organic farming by 2030 and a significant increase in organic aquaculture.

In support of that target, the Commission has adopted the [Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production](#) in March 2021. This Action Plan takes the approach that, to stimulate organic production, consumer demand for organic products should grow. This requires, amongst other things, increased public awareness of the characteristics and benefits of organic production.

For this purpose, the Action Plan includes the launch of annual awards recognising excellence in the organic value chain. They aim to reward the best and most innovative organic actors, contributing to the reduction of agriculture's impact on the environment and climate, and to

the achievement of EU Biodiversity and Farm to Fork strategies. It will be awarded for the first time in 2022.

### How did these awards come to be?

The EU organic awards are jointly organised by the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Committee of the Regions, COPA-COGECA and IFOAM Organics Europe. Together with these partners, we have worked hard on setting up selection, eligibility and award criteria (that also refer the organic principles for many categories!).

The jury deciding on the final winners will comprise representatives of the above organisations, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.

### Useful links

- All information about the EU Organic Awards [is available on the EU Commission's website](#) and [IFOAM Organics Europe's website](#)
- [EU Organic Awards Press Release published by EU Commission](#)
- [European Organic Action Plan 2021-2027](#)
- [IFOAM Organics Europe's press release on the European Organic Action Plan 2021-2027](#) (25 March 2021)
- [IFOAM Organics Europe's infographic on the European Organic Action Plan](#)

IFOAM Organics Europe is the European umbrella organisation for organic food and farming. With almost 200 members in 34 European countries, our work spans the entire organic food chain and beyond: from farmers and processors organisations, retailers, certifiers, consultants, traders and researchers to environmental and consumer advocacy bodies. In 2022, IFOAM Organics Europe is turning 20, IFOAM Organics International 50 and IFOAM Asia 10. [Celebrate the Year of Organics with us!](#)