

PRESS RELEASE

ORGANIC MOVEMENT CALLS FOR INCREASED SUPPORT FOR ORGANIC FARMING IN CAP STRATEGIC PLANS TO ACHIEVE FARM TO FORK'S TARGETS

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, 3 March 2022 – Today, the organic food and farming movement published its [assessment of the support for organic farming in draft Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plans 2023-2027 \(CAP SPs\)](#). The analysis, based on organic farmers associations' feedback across 22 countries, shows that most draft CAP national Strategic Plans lack ambition and will not contribute to significantly developing organic farming in the EU nor to achieving of the EU's targets set in the Farm to Fork Strategy.

IFOAM Organics Europe calls on the European Commission, which is evaluating the plans, to ensure that Member States have better measures and budgets that could guarantee at least the continued growth of organic production during the next CAP period, in line with the EU Action Plan on developing organic farming.

Overall, IFOAM Organics Europe is very concerned about the insufficient ambition and budgets to incentivise more farmers to convert to organic farming, and to reward organic farmers for the public goods they provide. More specifically, in comparison to the current CAP period (2014-2022), **our members are concerned with the decrease of a comparative advantage for conversion of conventional farms to organic farming**, compared to incentives to adopt other types of farming practices that are less transformative and provide much less environmental benefits. This alarming situation is mainly due to the lack of environmental ambition of the eco-schemes criteria as well as to issues for organic farmers to combine organic schemes with eco-schemes or agri-environmental and climate measures (AECMs).

Jan Plagge, President of IFOAM Organics Europe warns: "The next CAP 2023-2027 should be a smart public policy tool to increase the support to organic farming and reach the objectives set under the Green Deal, the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies. But for now there is a clear gap between the EU's ambition to reach 25% organic land by 2030 and the weakness of the measures and budgets currently foreseen to develop organic farming in many Member States. As organic agriculture can contribute to many of the new CAP's objectives to protect nature, improve animal welfare, empower farmers, and revitalise rural areas, organic farming should be properly supported by Member States."

Eduardo Cuoco, Director of IFOAM Organics Europe states: "The Commission faces a huge responsibility to ensure it approves CAP national Strategic Plans that address the collapse of our biodiversity and the climate crisis. Member States should make sure that their measures and budgets incentivise more conventional farmers to transition to organic farming, which has proven benefits for biodiversity, the environment and animal welfare. Organic farmers should be rewarded with fairer levels of CAP payments for the benefits they deliver to the environment and society, in line with the principle of public money for public goods."

The situation is especially worrying in large agricultural countries like **Spain** where the budget set for organic has been drastically cut from EUR 400 million per year under the previous CAP period to EUR 700 million for the whole next CAP period. **Austria**, which already reached 26% of organic farmland set a low ambitious target of 30% by 2030 and planned a reduction of the organic scheme from EUR 235 per hectare in the previous CAP to EUR 205 in the next one. In **France**, organic farming is currently foreseen to receive the same level of payment under an eco-scheme as other standards such as HVE (so called "High Environmental Value") which provides lower environmental benefits and that allow the use of pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, and GMOs. Finally, in **Germany**, despite an ambitious target of 30% organic farmland by 2030, the budget set to boost organic farming will not be enough to achieve this 30% target, and organic farmers remain at risk of losing up money due to an alleged "double funding" issue between Eco-schemes and Rural Development measures.

Several Member States have still not set an official target of organic farmland in their CAP Strategic Plan (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, The Netherlands, Spain, Sweden) whereas the Commission Implementing Regulation 2021 clearly states that Member States shall provide an explanation of their national contribution to the Unions' targets set under the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies. Other countries (Austria, Belgium (Flanders), Denmark, Hungary, Finland, France, Latvia, Poland, and Portugal) set up targets for organic land that are not ambitious enough compared to business-as-usual growth trends, like in Austria, which already reached 26% of organic farmland but only set a 30% target for 2027, or Portugal, which reached 18% in 2021 and set a target of 19% by 2027.

Ends.

For more information please contact:

Eric Gall, Policy Manager, +32 491 07 25 37, eric.gall@organicseurope.bio

Amélie Steu, Policy Assistant on Agriculture and the CAP, amelie.steu@organicseurope.bio

or

Eva Berckmans, Communications Manager on +32 2 416 52 32, eva.berckmans@organicseurope.bio

or visit www.organicseurope.bio

Background information

Read IFOAM Organics Europe's [an assessment of the support for organic farming in draft Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plans \(CAP SPs\)](#).

On 29 June, IFOAM Organics Europe published [an estimation of national targets for organic production and the budgets necessary to reach them](#). The report estimates that the European Union should dedicate 3-5 times the current amount of CAP budget dedicated to conversion and maintenance of organic farming from 2023 onwards. Depending on their potential national target, baseline, and payments rates, in some cases, Member States should dedicate 10 times more national budget to organic support measures.

[Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2021/2289 of 21 December 2021's Article 2\(2\)\(e\)](#) on the Intervention Strategy clearly states Member States shall set a national target of organic farmland by 2030 to prove their national contribution to the EU's overall 25% target of farmland managed under organic practises by 2030. **'Member States shall include an explanation of the national contribution to achieving the Union's targets for 2030 set out in the Farm to Fork Strategy and the EU Biodiversity Strategy** with a view to allowing the Commission to assess the consistency and contribution of the proposed CAP Strategic Plan to the Union's environmental and climate legislation and commitments and, in particular, to the relevant Union targets.'

The [European Organic Action Plan](#) states: "In December 2020, the Commission published recommendations to Member States on their future CAP strategic plans. These recommendations address economic, environmental, and social challenges of European agriculture and rural areas, focusing on the European Green Deal targets, including the target of 25% of agricultural land under organic farming by 2030. Member States are therefore invited to set national values in their CAP strategic plans for these Green Deal targets. Based on European averages and trends, Member States should focus on increasing the organic area by defining target percentages or encouraging positive trends. When drafting their CAP national strategic plans, Member States will be asked to respond to the aforementioned recommendations."

Action 9 of the new EU "Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production" foresees that "In the framework of the new CAP and CFP, the Commission will: starting in 2023 [when the new CAP enters into force], assess the specific circumstances and needs of Member States regarding the growth of the organic sector, and ensure Member States make the best use of the possibilities offered by the new CAP to support their national organic sector. This support will include technical assistance, the exchange of best practices and innovations in organics, and the full use of relevant CAP instruments such as eco-schemes and rural development environmental management commitments, which include organic farming. Farm advisory services on specific topics will be



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

Read IFOAM Organics Europe’s [study on organic farming and biodiversity](#) to learn more about the benefits on organic farming on the biodiversity.

IFOAM Organics Europe represents almost 200 member organisations in the EU-27, the EU accession countries and EFTA. Member organisations span the entire organic food chain and beyond: from farmers and processors organisations, retailers, certifiers, consultants, traders, and researchers to environmental and consumer advocacy bodies.

