

PRESS RELEASE

## MEMBER STATES SHOULD ENHANCE SUPPORT FOR ORGANIC FARMING IN CAP STRATEGIC PLANS IN LINE WITH COMMISSION'S OBSERVATIONS

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, 7 JUNE 2022 – Over the past days, the organic food and farming movement sent letters to national Ministries of Agriculture and to the European Commission to provide its observations regarding the level of ambition and budgets of organic farming in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Strategic Plans. These letters were based on the European Commission's Observation Letters sent to Member States and organic farmers associations' feedback.

**IFOAM Organics Europe calls on Member States to modify their CAP Strategic Plans according to the observations made by the Commission in its Observation Letters and calls on the Commission to continue the discussion with national governments to ensure they set better measures and budgets for organic.** Organic agriculture can contribute to many of the new CAP's objectives and is a tool to increase soil and water quality, improve animal welfare, reduce the use of antimicrobials and pesticides, and revitalise rural areas. Thus, it should be properly supported by Member States.

Jan Plagge, President of IFOAM Organics Europe states: "As the European Commission mentioned in its Observation Letters, some countries lack ambition to contribute nationally to the EU's target of 25% organic farmland by 2030, either in terms of targets, either in terms of weak interventions, and low budgets to develop organic farming. Member States should integrate the Commission's observations to guarantee at least the continued growth of organic production during the next CAP period 2023-2027 and have a greater overall climate and environmental ambition."

Eduardo Cuoco, Director of IFOAM Organics Europe stresses: "The Commission should ensure Member States enhance their CAP Strategic Plans before approving them to make sure the interventions set will incentivise more conventional farmers to transition to organic farming, given the benefits of organic for biodiversity, the environment and animal welfare as recalled by the Commission itself in its letters."

### **Insufficient budgets: Czech Republic, Finland, Portugal, Sweden, France, the Netherlands, and Spain**

IFOAM Organics Europe agrees with the Commission's observations regarding **the insufficient budgets to incentivise more farmers to convert to organic farming in several countries** like in the Czech Republic, Finland, Portugal, and Sweden, where the budget for conversion to organic is equal or lower to the one for maintenance of organic despite the challenges faced and needs required during the conversion period. Besides, **some budgets are also too low to enable the maintenance of organic farming**, such as in France, for which the Commission predicts a risk of deconversions as of 2023 due to the withdrawal of the budget to support maintenance of organic farming; and in the Netherlands, for which the Commission believes the interventions will be insufficient to properly boost organic production given there is no specific organic scheme.

However, **in the case of Spain, the Commission did not identify the alarming situation faced by the organic sector** due to the lack of budget allocated for organic farming. The budget planned by Spain for the entire CAP period 2023-2027 is €752 million, which is not even enough to maintain the current organic area. To reach a potential target of 25% by 2030 (the Spanish government set a target of 20% by 2030) it would need €1,100 million per year to support the organic area.

## Decreased comparative advantages & misinterpretation of overlapping payments

IFOAM Organics Europe also believes that the interventions and levels of payments set in the CAP Strategic Plans do not enable 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 situation is due to issues for organic farmers to combine organic schemes with Eco-schemes or agri-environmental and climate measures (AECMs). In this regard, **the European organic movement warns against misused interpretation of overlapping payments**, which occurs in several countries including Spain, France, Austria, Germany, and Finland. For instance, in Finland, the compensation for organic production is not planned to be paid for the area of grasslands and biodiversity fields, nor for the area of the environmental compensation protection zone measure, given the cultivation of these areas under the organic production conditions is not more demanding than these measures. The reduction of levels of payments for organic farmers will trigger a lack of attractiveness for organic farming compared to conventional farming.

This situation is also due to **the lack of environmental ambition of the Eco-schemes criteria**. For instance, for France, the Commission mentioned that the Eco-scheme for organic farming is currently foreseen to receive the same level of payment than the Eco-scheme for HVE (so called “High Environmental Value”) despite it provides lower environmental benefits.

*Ends.*

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## Background information

Read IFOAM Organics Europe’s [assessment of the support for organic farming in draft Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plans](#) (3 March 2022).

On 29 June 2021, 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.’

[Regulation \(EU\) 2021/2115 on CAP Strategic Plan’s Article 105](#) stating **Member States shall have a better performance with the CAP (2023-2027) than the previous one (2014-2020) regarding the benefits on the environmental and climate**. ‘Member States shall aim to make, through their CAP Strategic Plans and in particular through the elements of the intervention strategy referred to in Article 109(2), point (a), **a greater overall contribution to the achievement of the specific objectives set out in Article 6(1), points (d), (e) and (f)4**, in comparison to the overall contribution made to the achievement of the objective laid down in Article 110(2),



first subparagraph, point (b), of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 through support under the EAGF and the EAFRD in the period 2014 to 2020.'

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.

