

1 placement for Erasmus+ Traineeship

JOIN IFOAM ORGANICS EUROPE

A guide for applicants
2022 - 2023

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1 Introduction

1.1 About IFOAM Organics Europe



IFOAM Organics Europe, the EU Group of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements is a non-profit organisation based in Brussels representing almost 200 member organisations from the entire European organic sector. Our members come from 34 different countries and span the entire organic food chain and beyond: from farmers and processors, retailers, certifiers, consultants, traders and researchers to environmental and consumer advocacy groups. Additionally, we built up strategic alliances with numerous diverse environmental and social NGOs. With this network, we fight for the adoption of ecologically, socially and economically sound farming systems in Europe and the world and are embedded within the IFOAM – Organics International movement with 800 affiliates in more than 100 countries.

We believe that only holistic farming models based on the four main principles of organic agriculture – health, ecology, fairness, and care – can cope with existing threats like climate change or soil and water pollution and will lead to more resilient and sustainable farming systems. Our aim is to encourage and disseminate knowledge, principles and practices about organic agriculture that can bridge language and cultural barriers, to IFOAM Organics Europe affiliates, to public authorities and to society. The work of IFOAM Organics Europe mainly focuses on building the capacity and representing the interests of its members in the EU policy making process and making sure that organic farming is considered a sustainable food production system as it can provide healthy food and at the same time be a solution for environmental and societal challenges due to climate change mitigation and adaptation. In short, IFOAM Organics Europe is striving to make Europe greener and more resilient and sustainable – more organic!

Further information on IFOAM Organics Europe can be found on www.organicseurope.bio.

1.2 The placement

We are looking for an **Erasmus trainee to join the Policy unit** of IFOAM Organics Europe **from February 2023 to July 2023**. The duration will be minimum 6 to 11 months and you are expected to commit to the project for **35 hours per week** (7 hours a day) from Monday to Friday. The weekend is free, and you will be entitled to **two days of holidays per month worked**, plus days off during Belgian public holidays when the office is closed). Flexible conditions are applied for homeworking. Due to COVID-19, the plan is adapting to the changing health situation and the office rules follow the Belgian government recommendations. At the time of the publication of the call (December 2022), each person is allowed to work from the office at least 2 times/week.

You will be assigned to a specific unit for the duration of your stay, however there is the possibility to be involved in some tasks from other units if agreed with supervisors. This will allow you learn about a wider range of IFOAM Organics Europe's work.

One placement will take place under the Erasmus+ Traineeship program:

- Traineeship in the 'Policy' unit

Depending on which position you apply for, different requirements and procedures need to be followed that will be

“Volunteering at IFOAM Organics Europe is a truly rewarding experience, both on a professional and personal level. Get to know this vibrant city of Brussels, meet inspiring people, drink beers (a lot!), learn more about organic agriculture and EU legislation and develop a wide range of skills! Knowledge and friendships are awaiting!”

Bérénice Cau, from France
Volunteer in the Projects & Fundraising Unit
2019-2020

explained in the following sections. Relevant experience for your placement is welcome, but not needed as long as you are willing to learn.

IFOAM Organics Europe welcomes volunteers and trainees from all backgrounds regardless of gender, cultural, ethnic background, or religion. We open our doors to open-minded and strongly motivated young individuals. As our organisation is an umbrella organisation, we enjoy welcoming volunteers and trainees from diverse cultures as it helps to enrich our community and understand the challenges and opportunities for organic on a wider scale.

2 Erasmus+ Traineeship

2.1 What is the Erasmus+ Traineeship?

Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. While mostly known for enabling students to study across Europe, it also provides grants for young people to work abroad through the traineeship program. These traineeships are open to students and recent graduates registered in a higher education institution that takes part in the Erasmus+ program. To be eligible for this traineeship you need to have successfully applied for a grant at your higher education Institution through the international or Erasmus+ office. More info about the program can be found on the [Erasmus+ website](#).

2.2 Traineeship in the 'Policy' unit

The policy unit is working on many different policy topics related to organic farming such as the Common Agricultural Policy, GMOs, seeds, pesticides, food policies, biodiversity and climate change. The work involves weekly meetings with the policy team to monitor and discuss our advocacy impact on different dossiers, the management of our members participation to the stakeholders meetings organised by the Commission, and may also include advocacy meetings, working with the different IFOAM Organics Europe interest groups, the development of position papers, and contributing to EU research projects.

You will be involved in the following:

- Advocacy for developments within agricultural, food and/or environmental legislation, specifically:
 - Researching, identifying and analysing relevant legislative developments in the environmental and agricultural policy fields.
 - Coordinating the gathering of inputs from members for public consultations and position papers and drafting IFOAM Organics Europe's position on relevant topics.
 - Assisting the policy unit in coordinating internal structures such as the IFOAM Organics Europe Interest Groups, Expert groups and Task Forces and/or supporting IFOAM Organics Europe colleagues in developing the content and identifying the speakers for IFOAM Organics Europe events.
- Support in coordinating and implementing IFOAM Organics Europe projects, specifically:
 - Following and monitoring the EU legislative developments related to GMOs, seeds, inputs.
 - Assisting in organizing project workshops and roundtables with external experts.
 - Producing minutes and reports with the projects results after meetings, workshops, etc. to communicate project outcomes to the project funders.
- Networking with policy makers, external partners and IFOAM Organics Europe members, specifically:
 - Organising, preparing for, attending, taking minutes and follow up on meetings/phone conferences, external and internal events and others as requested.
 - Supporting internal coordination of meetings and organising the participation of IFOAM Organics Europe members to the DG AGRI CDGs (Civil-society Dialogue Group of DG AGRI) and managing the dedicated mailbox.

During the traineeship, you will develop the following skills and knowledge:

- Develop advocacy and time management skills, as well as the ability to summarize, in a clear and effective way, policy-related positions.
- Learn about organic agriculture and its positive impacts on the environment, as well as about the organic sector.
- Acquire an understanding of the functioning of EU institutions.

2.3 Financial and linguistic support

The financial support will be determined in an agreement between you and your higher education institution. This might vary to each educational institution. According to the financial support received, if it's necessary we could grant additional financial support to reach EUR 550 per month. Moreover, we will contribute to the **rent expenses** up to EUR 400 (possibility to stay in a shared accommodation suggested by IFOAM Organics Europe, with other volunteers and trainees – more details in the next paragraph).

Your university or higher education institution will transfer you the grant.

You will receive **access to the Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support (OLS)** to help with learning languages such as French or Dutch.



“Being at IFOAM Organics Europe has been one of the most enriching experiences of my life, both on a professional and personal level. Working in the policy unit, I acknowledged the importance of IFOAM OE in the development of European and national policies and, above all, the fundamental role of organic farming for the sustainability of the agri-food system. The multicultural working environment and the stay in Brussels also gave me the opportunity to get to know other cultures, and to feel part of one big community: the European one. In addition to having acquired new competences and working skills, one of the most stimulating and satisfying aspects of this project has been the awareness of contributing with one's own work to a better future from an environmental, ethical and social point of view.”

Maria Vittoria Borghetto, from Italy
Volunteer in the Policy Unit
2021

2.4 Travel and accommodation

Travel costs associated with coming to Brussels from the country of origin and then returning after the project end are covered by the Erasmus project: **the university should provide you with the travel grant** (distance-based calculation realised by the European Commission). IFOAM Organics Europe is going to **assist in getting an accommodation** (we have an agreement with a landlady for a shared apartment with other young professionals in Schaerbeek – an area of Brussels within 20 mins walking from the office).

2.5 Insurance

As an Erasmus+ Trainee you will be fully insured during the length of your traineeship.

- You are obliged to have the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) from more than 15 days before the start of your traineeship.

You are entitled to an insurance by your own university or higher education institution. Please, let us know in the application form if you need additional insurance.

2.6 Who can join the Erasmus+ Traineeship at IFOAM Organics Europe?

Do you want to join IFOAM Organics Europe with the Erasmus+ Traineeship?

Then you have the following characteristics:

- You are a recent graduate or still enrolled in a higher education institution in the EU.
- Your higher education institution is participating in the Erasmus+ Traineeship program.
- You successfully obtained the Erasmus+ Traineeship scholarship **at your higher education institution.**
- You have not done an Erasmus+ Traineeship before or it was less than the allowed number of months (**Erasmus Traineeships can last maximum 12 months within the same cycle of studies**).

You, IFOAM Organics Europe and your higher education institution will sign a Learning Agreement for Traineeships to ensure a transparent and efficient preparation of the exchange abroad. This document sets out rights and responsibilities of all parties, a detailed programme of the traineeship, information on insurance, and how your traineeship will be recognised upon successful completion.

3 What to expect from joining IFOAM Organics Europe

IFOAM Organics Europe offers a wide array of opportunities such as learning more about EU institutions, our advocacy work, the activities and mission of other like-minded NGOs, organic farming practices and the impact of environmental and climate policies, but also about Belgian/Brussels culture. This learning will be enabled through:

- Trainings on content and practical skills provided by IFOAM Organics Europe staff on various topics such as GMOs, the organic regulation, project development and management, communication, writing, climate change, organic seeds, how to write CVs or have interviews, etc.
- Farm stays on organic farms in Belgium, as you have the possibility to visit up to 2 organic farms in Belgium for 1 or 2 weeks.
- Public events in Brussels such as conferences at the European Parliament or the Commission, workshops, festivals, IFOAM Organics Europe events and meetings, seminars and many other events constantly happening in this vibrant city.
- Meetings and exchanges with other young people from like-minded Brussels NGOs. i.e. through the YEP Brussels (Young Environmental Professionals of Brussels) network, which was founded by previous volunteers of IFOAM Organics Europe and now has over 200 members that regularly interact, organise seminars of pertinent topics in their premises; as well as working on common projects (such as the organisation and facilitation of a workshop on access to land for young farmers that was organised by former volunteers for the 2018 European Youth Event in Strasbourg).
- Supporting the daily work of IFOAM Organics Europe, allowing you to develop professional experience by helping with tasks within your unit (more information on specific tasks is further described in section 2).
- Supervision and mentoring are provided to you, as you will have a supervisor that guides you through your individual projects and supports you in your tasks, and a mentor that serves as guidance in personal development and helps you to get integrated within the organisation, the project and community.