

4 placements European Solidarity Corps
1 placement Erasmus+ Traineeship

JOIN IFOAM ORGANICS EUROPE

A guide for applicants
2023 - 2024

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1 Introduction

1.1 About IFOAM Organics Europe



IFOAM Organics Europe, is a non-profit organisation based in Brussels representing the interests of the organic movement in front of EU institutions. We are composed by almost 200 member organisations 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 collaborate with diverse environmental and social NGOs to **fight for the adoption of ecologically, socially and economically sound farming systems in Europe and the world**. In fact, we 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. 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 placements

This year, there are five placements available within different units at IFOAM Organics Europe between **January 2024 and July 2024**. The duration will be 6 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** and 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 (October 2023), 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.

Four placements will take place under the **European Solidarity Corps (ESC)**:

- Volunteering in 'Research and Innovation' Unit
- Volunteering in 'Projects and Partnerships' Unit
- Volunteering in 'Membership and Events' Unit
- Volunteering in the 'Communication' Unit

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

- Traineeship in the 'Policy' Unit

"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 & Partnerships Unit
2019-2020

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

2.1 What is the ESC?

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 on the [ESC website](#).

To make this project possible we cooperate with the Flemish National Agency Jint. Jint will provide on-arrival and mid-term trainings where all other volunteers doing their ESC placement in Belgium can meet and are introduced in more detail to the ESC programme while spending several days together outside of Brussels. Furthermore, they will assist you and IFOAM Organics Europe if any issues arise.

Your learning experience will be monitored and evaluated with the help of a mentor and will result in the YouthPass that each volunteer will receive upon completion of their placement at IFOAM Organics Europe (more information about the YouthPass can be found [here](#)).

2.2 Volunteering in 'Research and Innovation' Unit

In this placement, you will volunteer in the Research and Innovation unit. Your main area of work will be TP Organics, the European Technology Platform for Research & Innovation into Organics and Agroecology. It is hosted by IFOAM Organics Europe that provides advice on EU R&I policies and programmes towards EU Policymakers, so that the research needs and priorities of the organic and agroecological sector are taken up. Furthermore, TP Organics informs its members about funding opportunities, organises events and webinars about organic and agroecological R&I and fosters exchange, networking and capacity building among the organic actors.

You will be engaged in the following tasks:

- TP Organics:
 - Events: Contribute to the organisation of the Organic Innovation Days (end of 2024) and TP Organics' Science Day at BIOFACH (Feb 2024).
 - Advocacy: Contribute to advocacy on Horizon Europe, the EU's main research & innovation funding programme for 2021-2027 (e.g. monitor the budget allocated to organic R&I), and the succeeding programme FP10 (e.g., contribute to the development of a lobbying strategy and the preparations of TP Organics' new Strategic R&I Agenda and the work of the FP10 NGO coalition).
 - Communication: Update the TP Organics website, send out the newsletter, engage with members and supporters of TP Organics through mailings, social media etc., update contact the database of TP Organics, collect donations and report to supporters.

During the experience, you are expected to develop or further improve the following skills:

- Acquire event organisation skills
- Acquire membership management skills
- Acquire fundraising skills
- Acquire coordination skills
- Acquire communication and dissemination skills
- Acquire IT skills
- Acquire networking skills

2.3 Volunteering in 'Projects and Partnerships' Unit

In this placement you will volunteer in the Projects and Partnerships unit, which primarily works on getting funding and ensuring smooth execution of internal strategy, advocacy-focused projects and partnerships. It leads on the fundraising strategy, identifies funding opportunities, and builds relationships with donors, and partners on various topics across sustainable food production and consumption. The team develops proposals for funding to private foundations, businesses, and the EU Commission (mainly CINEA). Furthermore, the unit plays a key role in the strategic development of IFOAM Organics Europe, looking at business trends, opportunities, and challenges and developing strategic choices related to business model and financing to ensure organisation's sustainability.

Your tasks in Projects and Partnerships will include:

- Grant management - coordinate grant management processes:
 - EU LIFE grant technical report: oversee planning, prepare templates, collect inputs from colleagues, and compile the final report.
 - Support in the coordination of the European Solidarity Corps projects: reporting, ESC recruitment process, follow-up with former volunteers.
 - Support in coordination of other projects granted by foundations or other funders.
- Fundraising - contribute to the execution of the fundraising strategic plan:
 - Identify funding opportunities from foundations and sponsors, maintaining and improving databases for sponsors and foundations.
 - Support development and writing project proposals: carry out background research, develop project log frames and theory of change, and design monitoring plans.
 - Participate in sponsors' acquisition by drafting pitch presentations (phone, email), if needed.
 - Draft communication materials for sponsors and foundations.
- Partnerships - contribute to the implementation of the sponsorship and partnership commitment plans:
 - Draft sponsorship agreements.
 - Support the overview of main sponsorship commitments & ensure their fulfillment (communication material, logos, invoices).
 - Liaising with sponsors for communication material if needed.

During this period, you will develop the following skills and knowledge:

- Writing project proposals to different target groups, including the European Commission, foundations and businesses.
- Working knowledge about project management approaches, processes and their optimisation.
- Understanding of the key sustainability topics (environmental, health, carbon management, etc.) and how they link to business values.
- Problem-solving skills
- Organisation skills, including prioritisation and time management
- Networking and presentation skills
- Coordinating and managing relations with partners.
- Analytical thinking
- Fundraising skills

2.4 Volunteering in 'Events and Membership' Unit

Want to learn how professional conferences come together? While in Events & Membership team you would definitely have the chance to do so. During your placement you would be part of the organization of European Organic Congress 2024, development of the concept and organisation of Organics Europe Youth Event and also coordinate series of smaller events.

Of course nothing comes together without a strong base of the organisation – our membership is key, while at IFOAM Organics Europe, you would get the possibility to learn more about the vast organic sector reach, also closely observe and be part of our governing bodies activities.

Your tasks will include:

- Contribute and implement events communications activities (website coordination, mass mailings sending & drafting, newsletter contributions).
- Coordinating event programme development (contact with speakers, invitations etc)
- Coordinating member only webinar series " Lets discuss organic".
- Keeping membership database information and accesses up to date.
- Co-assisting in the preparation of events and meetings involving IFOAM Organics Europe Members and governing structures.

During the ESC period, the ESC volunteer is expected to:

- Learn the processes of event coordination & backend of the physical & digital events management
- Learn how to communicate to different sector representatives, people involved in events & membership
- Learn how to work with different service providers, how to compare offers and make the best choice

2.5 Volunteering in 'Communication' Unit

IFOAM Organics Europe's Communications unit is responsible for IFOAM Organics Europe's external communication, including traditional channels, such as our website, newsletters, mailings and printed publications, as well new media, such as social media, infographics, GIFs, videos, and online publications.

You will have the following tasks:

- Content support:
 - Leading on the production of [IFOAM Organics Europe newsletter](#): from planning to collecting articles & liaising with colleagues and sending it out.
 - Producing content: for IFOAM Organics Europe's website, newsletter and [initiatives that are making Europe more organic](#).
 - Updating and maintaining IFOAM Organics Europe websites: adding information, and ensuring all content is up to date.
 - Supporting our social media presence: monitoring, drafting content, scheduling, and reporting.
- Database and SharePoint support:
 - Responsible for sending mailings from our database (CiviCRM) and helping keep it up to date.
 - Supporting maintenance and development of our SharePoint environment (intranet, extranet and IT WIKI).
- Other tasks:
 - Managing the integrated mailing planning and the calendar with upcoming communication.
 - Tracking our media presence.
 - Assisting with basic designs: creating visual materials for IFOAM Organics Europe's online presence.
 - Providing secretarial support: first point of contact for shared inboxes, reporting, lending your eye for detail to various (online and printed) publications/infographics, populating our digital publications.

"I did not know much about IFOAM Organics Europe when I saw the ESC vacancy, but I shared its values of protecting biodiversity, caring for nature and fairness in the food production processes. During my volunteering I learned a lot about the organic sector and, being based in Brussels, I gained a better understanding of European Union's institutions and importance of advocacy work."

Katarina Šeme, from Slovenia
Volunteer in the Communication Unit
2019-2020

2.6 Financial and linguistic support

All essential costs related to your volunteering placement are covered. You will be provided with accommodation, insurance, a local public transportation pass, reimbursement of your travel to and from Brussels, and on top of that a reimbursement for food and other living cost up until 550 euros per month. Furthermore, you will receive access to the Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support (OLS) to help with learning languages such as French or Dutch.

2.7 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 project (distance-based calculation realised by the European Commission). While you are in Brussels, you will receive a public transportation pass to give you access to all busses, trams and the metro in the city.

The accommodation for all volunteers is arranged by IFOAM Organics Europe. Each volunteer will have their own room in a shared house (with other volunteers and/or other young people) with a shared kitchen and bathroom, located about 20-30 minutes walking distance from the IFOAM Organics Europe office.

2.8 Insurance

All volunteers will receive full insurance coverage during the entire length of their ESC placement. The Volunteers are obliged to have the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). The ESC also provides an additional insurance (Cigna) that can cover partly or fully the national insurance.

2.9 Who can join the ESC project at IFOAM Organics Europe?

Do you want to join IFOAM Organics Europe with the European Solidarity Corps?

Then you have the following characteristics:

- You are between 18 and 30.
- You are a legal resident of a European country other than Belgium.
- You have the right to live and work in Belgium.
- You are passionate about or have a substantial interest in learning about organic agriculture.
- You did not participate to EVS or ESC projects before.

3 Erasmus+ Traineeship

3.1 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](#).

3.2 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 may 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, and inputs.
- Assisting in organizing project workshops and roundtables with external experts.
- Producing minutes and reports with the project 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.

“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 in 2021

3.3 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.

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.

3.4 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 project (distance-based calculation realised by the European Commission). The accommodation for the trainee is arranged by IFOAM Organics Europe in a shared house (with other volunteers and/or other young people) with a shared kitchen and bathroom, located about 20-30 minutes walking distance from the IFOAM Organics Europe office.

3.5 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.

3.6 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 1 month (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.

4 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.
- 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.