

# MAKING EUROPE MORE ORGANIC

## 10 YEARS OF ADVOCACY FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND FARMING



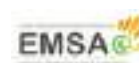
## IFOAM EU MAIN SPONSORS – 2013



## IFOAM EU 10 YEAR CELEBRATION SPONSORS – 2013



## IFOAM EU BIRTHDAY DONORS – 2013



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WE HAVE MADE EVERY EFFORT TO INCLUDE EVERYONE WHO HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE LAST TEN YEARS AND EXPRESS OUR DEEPEST APOLOGIES FOR ANY MISTAKES WE MAY HAVE MADE IN COMPILING THIS CELEBRATORY BOOK.



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# FOREWORD - LOOKING FORWARD

Anniversaries provide an opportunity to reflect on achievements and look forward towards new horizons. They mark a point in time in the present, between the past and the future. Before we look to the future, let us consider our past. Our origins stretch way back, our success has encompassed the work and commitment of countless people.

This anniversary publication gives a voice to our people; each contribution gives a personal perspective on how IFOAM EU has played a part in developing and delivering a common vision for organic, influencing public and business policy as well as personal practice. They speak of how our ethos is expressed in our daily lives, how the ethics of our standards and codes of conduct brings food from our farmers and growers to our tables.

Our earliest pioneers could see the winds of change shaping a twisted food and farming system. The jungle of corporate control and environmental devastation had already taken hold three decades ago. It was tearing up communities and ecosystems, exhausting people and planet, spoiling food culture and farming tradition.

Organic is a movement for change for food from the heart of the land, from nature, feeding our bodies and souls, shared by all. Our legacy is to shape a friendly and compassionate food and farming system, where human fulfilment is derived from the natural capacity of the planet and the culture of our food and farming communities. We strive to understand the natural cycle of life, of the need for localised, seasonal, recycling food systems sustained by renewable ecosystem resources, human in scale, rich in cultural tradition and diversity.

Since the beginnings of our movement there have been many successes and thankfully organic has grown. However, as a consequence of organic becoming mainstream, we are facing new challenges both regarding principles and market development. IFOAM EU, part of the global IFOAM family reaching around the world, is preparing for the next two decades. We are working from secure foundations, setting priorities for development towards a shared organic vision for Europe in 2030. Our task is to create a framework that

will enable us to reach the goals of organic farmers and businesses through defending and building on organic principles. We want to show that good organic farmers and producers, working with the complexity of a whole organic system, can deliver accessible good food to communities' tables for the benefit of people and planet.

As we look forward together, we aim to strengthen the position of organic as one key driving force for sustainable food and farming, simultaneously providing great added value to consumers, citizens and our shared planet. We do this through living real examples and by working alongside the many members of civil society, environmental, rural, food and social organizations.

In order to succeed in these challenging times we need to work together, stronger than ever before. As President, I make a call to arms: enriched by our shared lives and our common understanding, let's broaden and deepen our engagement with all our stakeholders to create conditions that reward sustainable food and farming and so improve our world environmentally, economically and socially.

I ask you to use this overview of one decade of the IFOAM EU Group in Brussels to shine a light on our vision for the next two decades. Our work will be shaped by a new framework of policies and regulations that provide opportunities and pose threats. We are aware of the forces that seem to make it hard to do the right thing, but we have good evidence of the benefit of better food and farming. Millions are on our side. Like nature, we are in a constant state of flux, but we know what good looks like and humbly acknowledge our place in the world. We believe that organic food and farming is an excellent model for transition to life in a resource constrained and more equitable world.

Involve yourself in the action-debate shaping an organic vision for 2030.

► **Christopher Stopes,**  
IFOAM EU President



A stylized, handwritten signature of Christopher Stopes in black ink.



## HOW WE GOT HERE

### GETTING STARTED: 1984-1991

» **Pierre Ott**  
Organic Pioneers



» **Philippe Desbrosses**



At the General Assembly of IFOAM in August 1984 in Kassel, Philippe Desbrosses, an active promoter of organic farming as well as an attentive political observer of agricultural matters, was elected to the IFOAM Board of Directors. In the early eighties the CAP was the common policy with the largest budget devoted to agriculture, with a rising overproduction of milk ("butter mountains") and surpluses in the wine sector ("wine lakes"). Philippe stressed that IFOAM had a role to play in the new orientation of the CAP. IFOAM, as an international organization, could not have any significant influence, but its European members would. Mandate was given to Philippe to organize a "European Delegation". Philippe, who spoke only French at that time, asked me as a multilingual insider of IFOAM<sup>1</sup> to assist him in this task. The founding act of this Delegation was to develop a template for a letterhead in order to communicate properly with the EU Commission as a European entity!

Thereafter Philippe approached the newly appointed EU Agriculture Commissioner Andriessen (1985 – 1989) about organic farming being part of the CAP renovation. Unexpectedly Andriessen responded favourably and asked the European Commission's Legal Service to tackle the question of an official recognition of organic farming. The first meeting was called on very short notice by the Commission Legal Service in April 1985.

All persons known to IFOAM to be actively involved in the European Member States were invited for a two day meeting. Participants from France, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, Italy, Spain and Portugal gathered at the Jacques Brel Youth Hostel in Brussels. A broad spectrum of views was expressed as to whether organic farming movements had to "cooperate" with the Commission, which was promoting industrial farming, pushing small farmers as blue collars workers into towns and degrading our landscapes. However, we had to "face the Commission" on the next day with a consensus. The consent was actually very basic, all of us present agreed to present the *IFOAM Basic Guidelines* on organic farming as **THE** reference for any kind of official recognition of organic farming, should the Commission consider organic farming as having its place in the European Agriculture scene.

The introductory remarks of the Director of the Legal Service Team Agriculture and Fisheries, Mr Barthelemy, assisted by Mr Godin from the Environment Directorate, indicated openness towards some techniques of organic farming, however, with some scepticism related to the different philosophical approaches. The participants presented facts and figures about organic farming in their country and pledged allegiance to the fundamental *IFOAM Basic Guidelines*.

*"I would like to express my personal thanks to IFOAM EU for its important job in coordinating the entire European organic sector. It is an important task for the European Institutions because we need this kind of coordination and we need to help organic farming which is an important economic segment of agriculture and food production in Europe. I very much hope that IFOAM EU will continue to do this job in the future and continue keeping the attention of the European Institutions to organic farming. Congratulation for these 10 years and good luck for the future!"*



**Paolo De Castro**, MEP, Chair of the European Parliament Agriculture Committee  
Italy

The Commission was, however, very much impressed by the unity of the different national representatives, all promoting the same organic production guidelines. The Commission had never experienced such a wide consensus among European stakeholders. Usually Member State representatives have quite different views, which lead to lengthy negotiations and weak compromises.

The Commission initially intended to draft a Directive (guidelines for Member States to draft their own legislation)<sup>2</sup>. Impressed by the general consensus of the organic farming representatives, the Commission offered

to draft a Regulation, which becomes part of each Member State's national law, once it has been voted on by the EU Council of Ministers.

Mr Alberik Scharpe, a staff member of the Commission, was appointed to draft such a piece of legislation. The main challenge of the IFOAM European Delegation (which also included Lawrence Woodward, UK, and Jan von Ledebur, Germany) was to help "extract out of an organic handbook" (with many "ifs" and "whens") a legal framework. The resulting document was finally discussed by the Socio-Economic Committee and the European Parliament and voted on by the Council in June 1991. •

## VOLUNTEER ADVOCACY: EARLY 90s TO 2003

### Francis Blake

Soil Association, former IFOAM EU President



The IFOAM EU Group is unique within the IFOAM family, not only because it is the largest regional group, but also because it has a different democratic structure to other groups. This was the source of tension between IFOAM World and IFOAM EU as it was establishing, and contributed to its long gestation before finally becoming a regional group at its founding assembly in 2000.

It all started at the 1990 IFOAM World Organic Congress in Budapest, where "regionalisation" was the buzzword. Bernward Geier, then Director of IFOAM, organised a series of meetings to encourage IFOAM members in the various continents to set up regional groups. I found

myself chairing the European meeting. We devised a structure with four sub-regions: Eastern, Mediterranean, Nordic and EU, and I agreed to coordinate the resulting establishment of both the European Group and the EU sub-group.

One year later, the founding assembly of the European Group was held in Prague and I handed over its reins to Rikke Lundsgaard, to concentrate on the emerging EU Group. There was much to do, especially with the new organic regulation and the step change this brought. But first, we had to devise a structure that would give confidence both to the European Commission

<sup>1</sup> I was at that time heavily involved in the development of IFOAM (organisation of the 1980 FOAM conference in Brussels, Leadership of the IFOAM Technical Committee)

<sup>2</sup> Piece of European legislation asking the member states to elaborate new pieces of legislation according to the rules of the approved Directive.



*"As former IFOAM Director I stood at the cradle of the EU Working Group. I am very pleased to see how this initiative became – especially since the establishment of the "organic embassy" in Brussels – a showcase of efficient and successful work for the benefit of basically all stakeholders in the organic movement.... and this way beyond Europe."*



**Bernward Geier**, C O L A B O R A - Let's work together Director, former IFOAM Director  
Germany

and to IFOAM that we were not only competent but also representative, and therefore able to take on responsibility from the IFOAM European Delegation.

Throughout the 90s, the IFOAM EU 'Working Group' reported to the IFOAM World Board on all matters and was therefore somewhat restricted in developing its own workplan and policies. Its particular democratic structure – IFOAM members in each country elect their own board member – intentionally mirrored the EU institutions as the Commission wanted to be sure the representation was genuinely EU-wide, and also was sufficiently independent of IFOAM World (though of course, the IFOAM EU Group has always based its policies on the IFOAM principles and standards).

In 1994, the head of the Organic Unit, Alberik Scharpe, took the unprecedented step of inviting the Working Group members 'as experts' (i.e., expenses paid) to meet Commission officials in Brussels. This became an annual meeting and only ceased recently. It allowed the group to feed in its views and demands right to the heart of the Commission's decision making structure.

Through good relationships with the Commission, Member States and NGOs, the group became quite good at obtaining information early on so we knew when, where and what was being discussed. This enabled us to react appropriately and in time – often earlier than others – to the relevant items on the political agenda.

There was one memorable occasion around 1997 when the Standing Committee on Organic Farming (the Member State representatives) were meeting in Brussels at the same time the EU Group were also meeting. We arranged for a social evening together; the same as today, relations between EU Group and government representatives varies widely between different countries and it was clearly vital to help build trust. It was gratifying to find that most were closet organic supporters, but

it was also shocking to discover they were all simply defending and protecting their own national interests – there was no feeling of working as a team for better organic regulation.

This is a complete contrast to how the EU Group worked (and still does) where we all share a common goal and work together to try and achieve this, which is why it is so special.

One of the biggest battles in the 90s concerned GMOs. Although they had been around in various forms for some time, they were only just beginning to impinge upon agriculture. It took intense, sustained and widespread lobbying to persuade the EU that they had no place in organic farming and should be banned. The Commission was extremely reluctant to bow to this as they foresaw, correctly, how difficult this would make the more general introduction of GMOs. It raised the impossible conundrum of 'co-existence', which continues to be an ongoing conflict today.

Eventually, prohibition of GMOs was enshrined in the organic regulation in 1999, as part of the new organic livestock regulation. It was a major victory and undoubtedly one of the IFOAM EU Group's most significant achievements, helped of course by the firm support and actions of many others in the organic movement.

Eventually, it became obvious that the job was too big and too important to be left to the voluntary input of the board. We had to set up a proper office in Brussels. After some lucky breaks, we managed to raise some 60% of our fundraising target and decided this was enough to 'bite the bullet'. We advertised and interviewed for the post of coordinator, and Marco Schlüter was the successful candidate. History has demonstrated how good that decision was! ●

*"Dedicated to making Europe more organic – this is how I experienced IFOAM EU as a policy assistant in the European Parliament. I saw IFOAM EU be extremely active in relevant policy processes, such as EU regulation 834/2007, and in convincing policy makers to support organic food and farming in the EU. Since 2009, I can say I am proud to be part myself – of an office that ensures visibility and presence of the organic movements in EU policies. However, the members are most important, representing all facets of the organic movement, different cultural backgrounds and motivations, with their ideas, input, inspiration to sustain the good work."*



**Antje Kölling**, former Policy Assistant to the Vice President of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development in the European Parliament, IFOAM EU Policy Manager Germany

## 10 YEARS OF ORGANIC REPRESENTATION IN BRUSSELS: 2003-2013

**Marco Schlüter**  
IFOAM EU Director



After several years of intense discussion the IFOAM EU Group decided on a crucial step for organic food and farming in Europe: To launch the "Making organic waves in Brussels" campaign and to open an IFOAM EU coordination and liaison office in Brussels. On 13 October 2003, I started as the first employee and IFOAM EU coordinator in the premises of the Swedish Farmers Association who were hosting the office in the first year. This acknowledged the fact that most of the relevant legislation for organic production is decided in Brussels. It also took into account that IFOAM EU was not only dealing just with the organic EU regulation, but it had also started to work on various EU policy issues, such as CAP reform, GMOs and research policies.

However, at that time nobody thought IFOAM EU would grow to become a professional lobby organization with full time employees in double figures and significant influence on the EU's food and agriculture policy making.

### MAKING ORGANIC WAVES IN BRUSSELS

The relevance of opening of a permanent representation in Brussels cannot be overestimated: It enabled IFOAM EU to build up and professionalise permanent relations to the EU institutions as well as other stakeholders and NGOs. Before 2003 it was just a voluntary network with contacts only to Commission officials in the Organic Unit (which was itself part of the Pesticides Division) and some individual contacts to other NGOs and Parliament. One of the first steps was to get orientation in the jungle of EU procedures and to become part of the different consultation procedures.

While IFOAM EU was in the beginning only invited to the Advisory Group on Organic Farming it is nowadays represented and invited to various advisory groups, hearings and consultations of multiple Commission Directorates.

From the beginning, the main focus was the Commission, as the only EU institution that can propose legislation. Once a legal proposal is published it can only be amended by Parliament and Council, through a cumbersome process. The setting up of a professional structure was the pre-condition for IFOAM EU to become a relevant and respected player in Brussels. It was then able to establish contacts throughout the Commission hierarchy from Commissioner to desk officer, and across different Directorate Generals.

Since 2005, IFOAM EU has managed to hold yearly meetings with the Agriculture Commissioner and also several meetings with Commissioners for Environment and Consumers and Health. There is regular contact with the cabinets of many Commissioners; the most intensive was with 14 cabinets in 2004, lobbying for labelling thresholds for non GM seed to be at the detection limit.

Member States and national ministries are also vitally important. These are mainly contacted through the national membership, centrally coordinated by IFOAM EU. This was extremely successful in the development of the EU organic regulation, e.g. during the revision process from 2005 to 2008, and when setting up new rules on organic wine and aquaculture.

*"Organic development has been clearly driven by the work of IFOAM EU, which has repeatedly showed the way in regulation and policies, taking into account the realities of each country and the demands of consumers. We have been member of IFOAM EU for many years and a main sponsor for three. For us it is a matter of responsibility to reinforce its role as the organic representative facing the European authorities. In this difficult economic situation we must ensure that our voice is heard loud, clear and at the right time. It is therefore essential that IFOAM EU members ensure its ability to function."*



**José Luís García Melgarejo**, Ecovalia Managing Director, IFOAM EU Treasurer  
Spain

More recently, IFOAM EU has started to get directly engaged with EU Council Presidencies. Highlights have been the organisation of an EU organic week with the Austrian Presidency (2006), organisation of the European Organic Congress with Hungarian Presidency (2011) and Lithuania (2013). In 2012, the Organic Days were jointly organised between the Cyprus Presidency, Commission and IFOAM EU Group. IFOAM EU is also more and more invited to high level meetings, such as the informal meetings of agriculture ministers (2011) and environmental ministers (2011), and of rural development directors (2011 & 2012). All this experience has helped to build IFOAM EU's connections and know-how on negotiation with the authorities.

The European Parliament (EP), as the only institution directly elected by citizens, has been targeted using a mixed approach: On the one hand the Brussels office has built direct contacts and relationships with MEPs, assistants, legal advisors and the administration; on the other hand, the national membership is extremely important to lobby their national MEPs on specific issues. From 2009, the Lisbon treaty gave the EP the right of co-decision for agriculture issues which has significantly enhanced their importance in the decision making process.

Cooperation with single key Parliamentarians has also been helpful to get our messages across.

- In 2006, in conjunction with the EP rapporteur for the new organic regulation, IFOAM EU organised a hearing involving organic sector, Parliament and Commission.
- Several studies have been launched and events organised with MEPs in the Parliament on various issues: non GM seed thresholds, climate change, organic regulation, biodiversity strategy 2020 and others.

- The political support of agriculture committee chair Paolo De Castro for the IFOAM EU initiated research and innovation platform, TP Organics, was crucial in achieving official recognition by the Commission in 2013.
- IFOAM EU was very successful in influencing the EP report on the organic regulation reform in 2006 and the new research and innovation framework Horizon 2020 in 2012.
- During the co-decision process of the CAP reform in 2012-13, IFOAM EU and an alliance of other green NGOs lobbied successfully to maintain some progressive elements of the Commission proposal for more sustainable farming practice.

Another key element was networking with other stakeholders and NGOs, as well as trade unions and young farmers. This ensured that IFOAM EU was always up-to-date with different subjects discussed in Brussels and was able to build useful strategic alliances. The most prominent examples of successful cooperation have been the lobby work to avoid GMOs in Europe, the 2014 CAP reform (with other green NGOs as well as the Agriculture Rural Convention, ARC 2020), the initiation of the research platform TP Organics (with 20 civil society organisations), and the coordination of an alliance to improve the legal proposal of Horizon 2020 and the strategic implementation agenda of the European Innovation Partnership "Sustainability & Productivity".

## INTERNAL GROWTH

The above achievements are mirrored by the internal development of IFOAM EU from a voluntary network to an organisation with a professional structure. There were two decisive developments that influenced and improved its capacity and effectiveness:



*"IFOAM EU is a huge network of professional people committed to the development of organic farming, processing and to working for a sustainable future and all as close as the nearest telephone or e-mail. I hope never to lose this network. IFOAM EU is much more than the sum of its parts. I need this network to learn, to challenge myself and get help!!!"*



**Marika Auersalmi**, MaBio CEO , IFOAM EU Board Member  
Finland

- On the one hand, involving the wider membership beyond national elected representatives brought in more detailed expertise covering various policy fields – more than 15 different working groups, task forces and interest groups have been established.
- On the other hand, the increase in number (from one to more than ten) and quality of staff made it possible to coordinate the membership and formulate organizational positions. In 2009 IFOAM EU approved a five year strategy for the first time.

The enlargement of the EU in 2004 and 2007 was also an enlargement of IFOAM EU. The organic movements of the 12 new Member States needed to be integrated and the IFOAM EU board increased from 18 to 30 people. Although this integration can be considered a big success, with only Slovakia not engaged, it started a discussion on how to professionalise the enlarged organisation. Two structure reforms have resulted, aiming to make IFOAM EU more efficient and to strengthen its lobby impact, but still keep its identity as a movement. In 2009 more decision power was transferred from the 30-person Board to the smaller Executive Board and the working structure was opened to better include membership expertise. In 2013 a second reform continued this path, so that a future board (nine members) will be directly elected by the General Assembly as first chamber and the current board of national elected representatives will become a Council acting as second chamber. In addition, interest groups for processing and farming were formalised. These latest reforms will come into force in 2014.

## SUSTAIN SUFFICIENT FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The finance of the organization was and remains a huge challenge. When I started in 2003, I was in the lucky position of having to spend 50,000 EUR within 4.5 months (due to the deadline of that particular funding).

This one time luxury never came back – the focus was how to organize the next 50,000 EUR to come in. However, the movement grew with the challenge: with the membership fee reforms in 2006 and 2011 income increased from 3,500 EUR (2003) to 140,000 EUR (2008) and 220,000 EUR (2013), and a modern membership fee system is now in place.

Nevertheless, with a core budget of 600,000 EUR the work of the IFOAM EU Group is chronically underfinanced by the sector. But with a mix of sponsoring, EU grants, donations and foundation projects, and careful management by all concerned, it has been possible to close this gap.

From 2009 to 2012, IFOAM EU received an operational grant from the Commission that helped it grow to what it is today, with significant reserves that ensure enough cash flow for management of EU grants and greater resilience. However, the challenge remains how to finance IFOAM EU work as the demands from the membership are increasing, salaries of staff are slowly rising to the Brussels NGO average and the increased work outputs must be financed.

In the last ten years, IFOAM EU has managed to become the leading organisation for organic food and farming in Europe which the EU institutions consider as their organic reference. Excellent contacts with them exist, and the IFOAM EU organised European Organic Congress is the key organic policy event in Europe. IFOAM EU is the tool to make the work of the national membership effective at the European level. However, it must also be recognized that the capacities and structures of the organic movement in many countries, including most of the new EU 12 Member States, are still weak. Further, IFOAM EU's long term financial stability is an issue that is still to be resolved. There is still a long way to go! •



*"IFOAM without IFOAM EU would be as if we missed arms and legs in Europe. Europe is the best-united organic movement worldwide and you are a light tower for other continents that are just starting with Regional IFOAM Bodies. 10 years of impressive commitment and there is a great impact that nobody wants to miss in a growing organic sector. We need more not less of you – for a better, an organic world!"*



**Markus Arbenz**, IFOAM Executive Director  
Switzerland

## IFOAM: PROUD TO BE PART

On Behalf of the World Board and all the Staff at Head Office in Bonn I would like to extend our congratulations on 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of IFOAM EU's presence in Brussels.

The role of IFOAM EU in advocating to the EU for changes to the Organic Regulation, CAP and other key issues has a major influence in shaping organic agriculture in Europe. Due to Europe's influence, particularly as the biggest organic market in the world, this has an effect on shaping the regulations and organic practices in many countries.

IFOAM EU had a significant influence on the review we had on the structure of our organization, particularly in how we organized IFOAM into an action network. One of the critical issues that was identified in the process was the need for regionally organized Self Organized Structures (SOS). The review and the World Board recognised the need for most of the advocacy to be done at a regional and at national levels, rather than all of it coming out of the Head Office in Bonn. The specific knowledge and expertise is based with our members and staff in the regions, thus the need to develop IFOAM on this level was critical.

This new vision for IFOAM was approved by our members at the General Assembly in Korea in October 2011.

Consequently, IFOAM EU has been a role model for the formation of other regional IFOAM SOSs such as IFOAM Asia and IFOAM Middle East and North Africa.

IFOAM EU's initiative in developing TP Organics provided an excellent exemplar for the formation of the Technical Information Platform of IFOAM (TIPI). The formation of TIPI has enabled Universities and Research Institutions doing organic research on every arable continent to join together under the umbrella of IFOAM. This will help in the dissemination of information, cooperation on projects and a substantial increase in the level of organic research and development around the world.

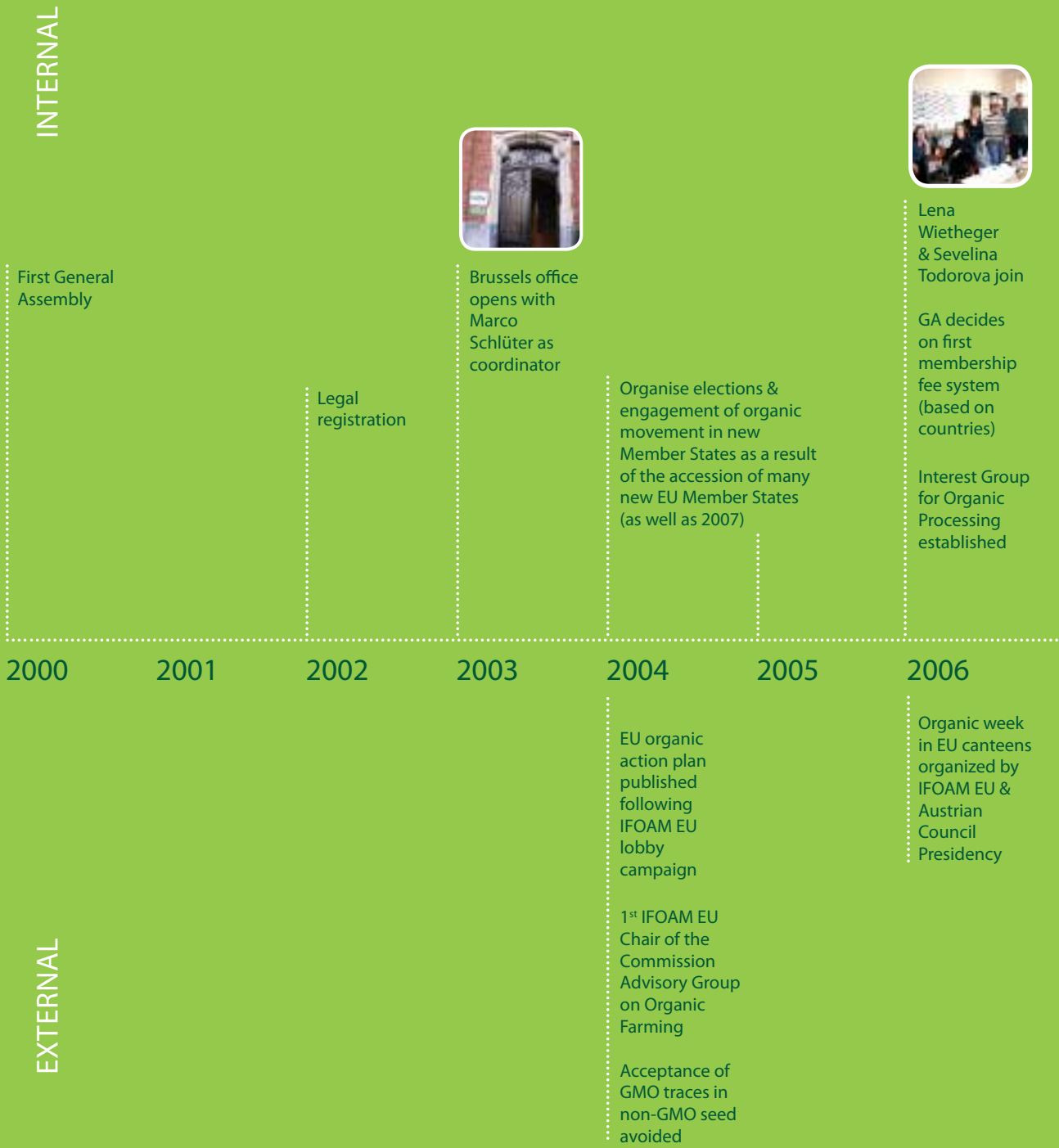
We look forward to decades more of working together to achieve our common goals and wish IFOAM EU continued success for the future.

Kindest Regards,

► **Andre Leu**  
President, IFOAM  
[a.leu@ifoam.org](mailto:a.leu@ifoam.org)



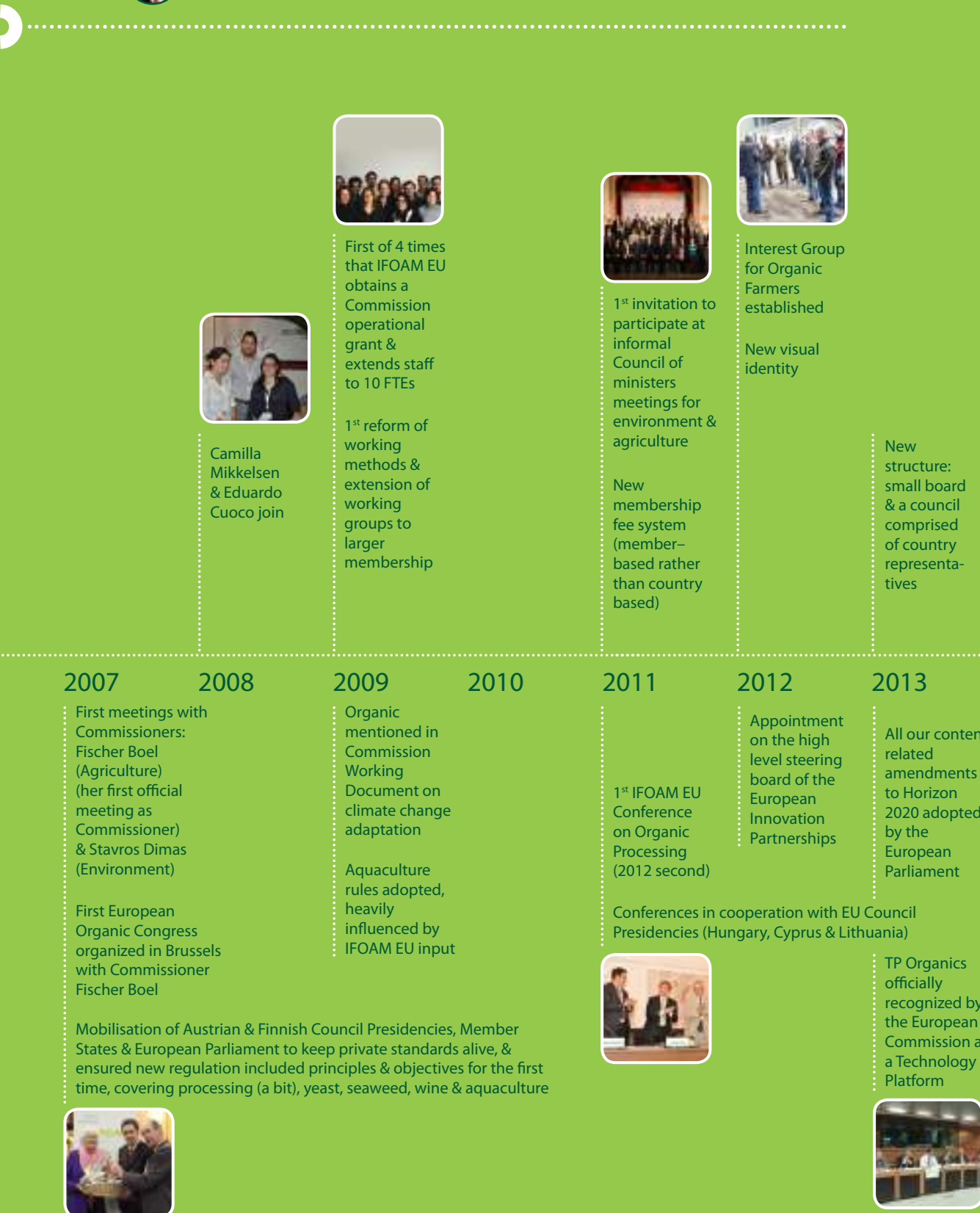
# MOMENTS IN IFOAM EU REPRESENTATION HISTORY



*"Congratulations to IFOAM EU on their 10th Anniversary. It has been an interesting period during which the sector has evolved considerably."*



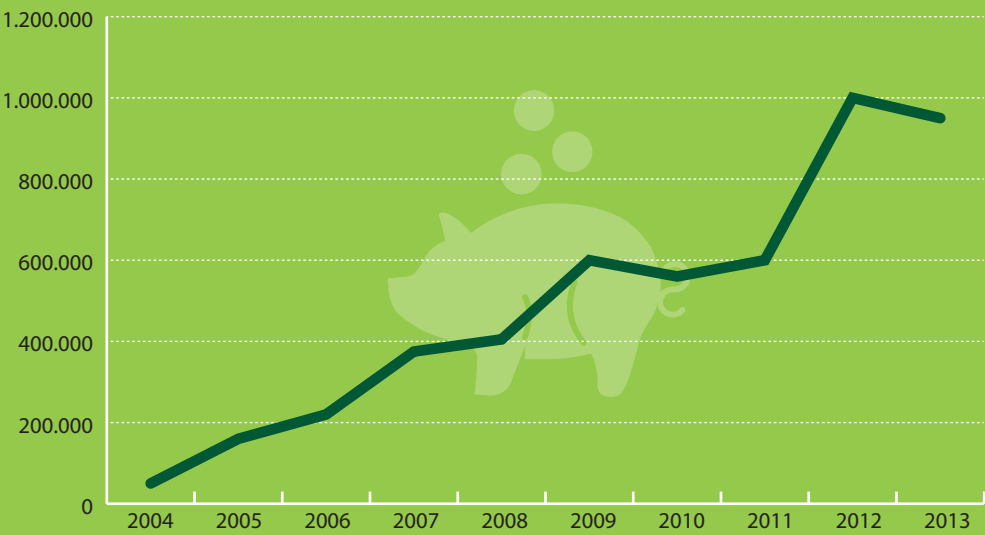
**Dacian Cioloș**, EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development  
Romania





# WE'VE GROWN A BIT

## ► IFOAM EU BUDGET

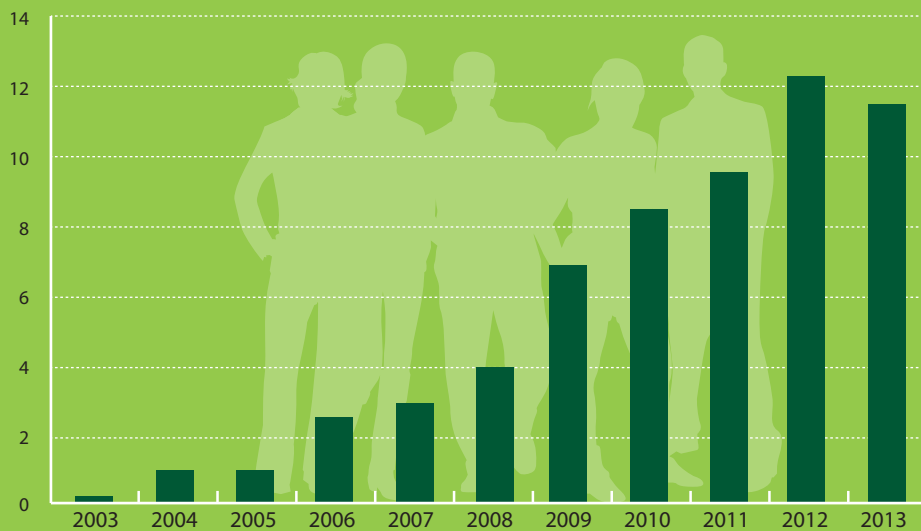


*"The work of IFOAM EU is immensely important in keeping the initiative of developing the organic sector in the hands of the sector itself. The whole organic value chain should join to support the IFOAM EU work."*



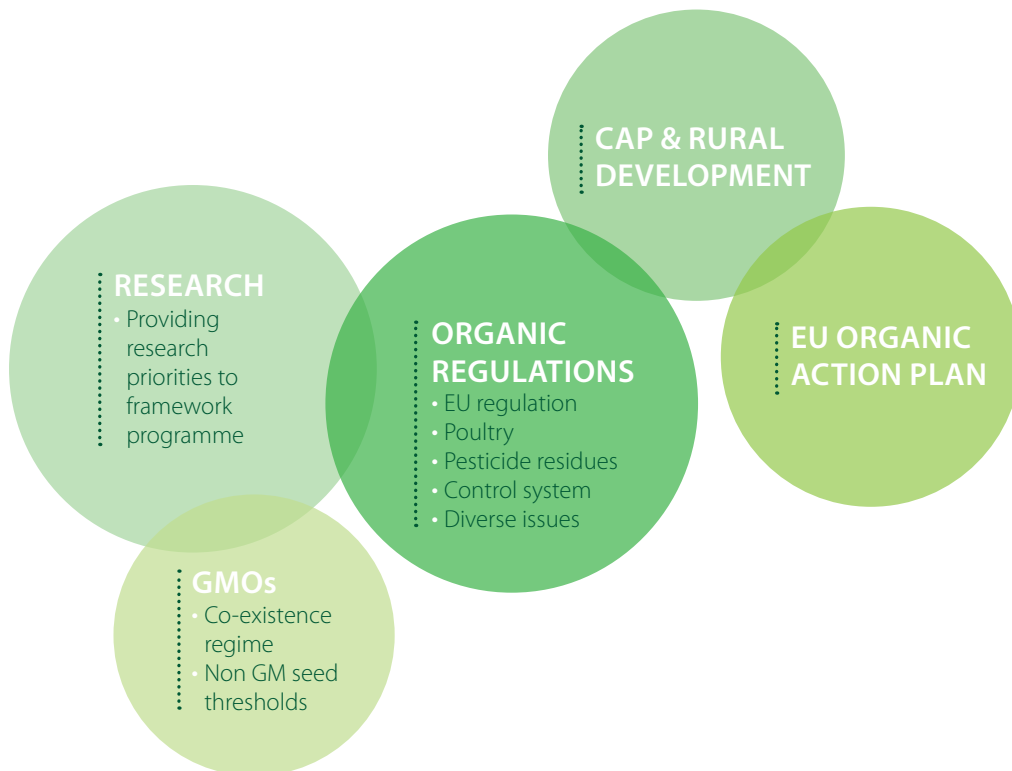
**Erkki Pöytäniemi**, Organic Food Finland CEO, IFOAM EU Board Member  
Finland

## NUMBER OF STAFF IN FULL TIME EQUIVALENT/YEAR



## WORKING AREAS

### 2003



*"From IFOAM EU's 10 years in Brussels I have shared 8. Starting from a one-room office we have grown to a more and more specialised staff. And this pays off: I remember in the first years people were astonished when I described what my work was: 'Organic, hmmh...' Now a typical reply is: 'Organic, cool! I also buy organic'. Organics is now positively recognised, not least thanks to IFOAM EU.*

*If it wasn't for the promotion of organic, I would be in IFOAM EU for the people. Our members and Brussels alliances offer such an abundance of professional knowledge, personal wisdom and admirable perseverance for the promotion of organics, not to mention the variety of languages, backgrounds and beliefs."*



**Lena Wietheger**, IFOAM EU Head of Communication  
Germany





## MILESTONES OF THE LAST 10 YEARS

### POLITICAL RECOGNITION FOR ORGANIC: FIRST EUROPEAN ORGANIC ACTION PLAN



#### › Mette Meldgaard

former IFOAM EU policy chair, Organic fruit grower and producer of gourmet juices, Board Member of Organic Denmark

The European action plan launched in 2004 was a major step to give organic farming a role in the EU agricultural policy. For the first time the Commission clearly recognised organic farming as a policy tool with a dual role:

- Responding to the concern of consumers through the market;
- Delivering public goods, and therefore acceptable to be developed by society.

The outcome of the EU action plan was not only because of the activities following the implementation, but also the preparation of the plan had a major impact.

IFOAM EU played an important role participating actively in the five-year process. It started with EU and national government sponsored conferences on organic farming in Vienna in 1999, and in Copenhagen in 2001 where 13 EU ministers and several NGOs, including IFOAM, signed a declaration to support further development of organic farming in Europe.

IFOAM EU was able to create synergy, both collaborating on EU-level issues, and at the same time working at the national level to ensure support from the agricultural ministers for the EU action plan. As a result, simultaneously there was activity in many countries to initiate national action plans, and today many EU countries have implemented organic action plans.

I see this as an important example of how collaboration through IFOAM can create results for the organic sector both at EU level and at national level, and how the exchange of ideas and activities between the members can strengthen the whole sector if the involvement is strong and committed. This calls for continued support for and engagement in the IFOAM work at the EU level – it will surely be needed for many years ahead. ●



*"Not only the European Commission, also national governments need civil society and NGOs as opponents and partners for the fruitful development of agriculture and food policies. IFOAM EU has become one of the most competent and skilled partners of the EU Commission. Congratulations!"*



**Jiri Urban**, former Deputy Minister for Agriculture  
Czech Republic

## SHAPING EU ORGANIC REGULATION



**Francis Blake**  
Soil Association,  
former IFOAM EU President

It was in the late 1980s that the European Commission first started thinking about legislation for organic farming. This was primarily to protect consumers from fraudulent claims, as organic food was becoming more popular. It also became the foundation for the financial support that some countries started providing to organic farmers in recognition of the environmental benefits. By the time the IFOAM EU Working Group became operational in the early 90s, the first regulation (2092/91) had been published and was coming into force.

It would be fair to say that it took most of the 90s to establish the trust of the Commission and to develop our lobbying capabilities – until the Brussels office was established all was done by the voluntary efforts of the national representatives, so this was necessarily limited. The first big challenges were the addition of food processing to the regulation in 1995, and livestock in 1999, both of which we had been calling for. As ever, we lobbied for rules that reflected organic principles (of which there were none in the original 2092/91) but were also flexible enough to cater for the wide extremes of organic development, climate and culture in Europe, and also based on reality, tied to the research needed to overcome the blockages. This remains an all too familiar mantra today!

With the growing effectiveness of the Brussels office and the increasing respect this has generated, discussions leading up to the new organic regulation (834/2007 and 889/2008) were altogether more positive and effective. We had regular meetings with the most senior people right up to the Commissioner herself and managed to achieve much more of what we wanted. However, it was still a 'mixed bag', particularly because of the other influences on the process, such as the Member States and now the European Parliament – herein lies (part of) our future challenge! ●

*"Optimism is an integral part of being organic, looking as we do to the long term and to its positive, health giving powers. Optimism was present amongst those of us who started IFOAM EU in 1990, to increase the profile of organic in Europe and to support those 'on the ground'. But little did we know what a remarkable organisation we were founding. It has been a tremendous journey which has been a great privilege to be part of. Its success is due to everyone who has contributed. Huge thanks to all of you... to all of us, for we are a movement, and long may that remain so, for there is a long way still to go, and we are optimistic we will get there!"*



**Francis Blake**, Soil Association, former IFOAM EU President  
England

## KEEPING THE PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE ALIVE



**Thomas Dosch**  
former Bioland President,  
former IFOAM EU Vice President  
& Board Member

What would the organic farmers of the early years say about the practices and the importance of organic farming today, if they could compare then and now? They would certainly wonder what has happened to their attempts and ideas – in the positive and negative sense.

It is impressive what know-how has been gained in organic food production and processing over the decades, for instance the progress that has been made in species-appropriate husbandry. And it is certainly also impressive that organic food is available in almost all supermarkets everywhere in Europe. Organic is no longer a question of being "small or large", though there might be people who mourn the conventionalisation that affects some organic farming.

What would certainly strike many pioneers the most is the organic movement networks spanning several countries and the joint debates on the fundamentals and principles of organic farming. IFOAM EU plays a central role here. It is the platform enabling an exchange across regions and countries. The cooperation cultivated here will continue to be of key importance in the future.

The more "organic" becomes "business", the more important it will be not to leave the future development to the interests of large corporations and to legislative bodies. Thus, it has been one of the biggest successes of IFOAM EU to keep private standards alive by ensuring EU Organic Regulation (EC) No. 834/2007 in 2007 allowed private standards to continue to be the innovative and consumer-facing frontrunners they are.

It was indeed a key battle. The Commission's intention in this new regulation was to do away with private organic standards in furtherance of the Single Market. IFOAM EU mobilised the Austrian and Finnish presidencies, a number of Member States and the European Parliament and entered into hot bilateral negotiations with DG Agriculture's Deputy Director General over the course of seven intense meetings. The result was eventually that the restrictions on private standards were taken out.

This is justifiably a key milestone of IFOAM EU's 10 years in Brussels. Its success was the prerequisite for the organic movement to continue its ongoing and pioneering development, and establish organic farming as a future model of a sustainable food supply, in line with the basic principles as well as ecological, social and economic aspects. ●

*"Europe is our house and without IFOAM EU it would be impossible to adequately represent the organic sector in front of the European Institutions. IFOAM EU is also a unique place for sharing experience and knowledge for the European organic community."*



**Andrea Ferrante**, AIAB federal board chair, Member of the European  
Via Campesina Coordination Committee, IFOAM EU Executive Board Member  
Italy

## PREVENTING THE ACCEPTANCE OF GMO TRACES IN NON-GMO SEED



► **Marco Schlüter**  
IFOAM EU Director

One of the first and important milestones of the Brussels-based IFOAM EU was preventing the acceptance of GMO traces in non-GMO seed. The discussion had started already at the beginning of 2000 – Directive 2001/18/EC 'on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms' clearly stated that thresholds can be established.

Following that, the European Union's new Regulation on genetically modified food and feed (no. (EC) 1829/2003) together with the regulation on traceability (no. (EC) 1830/2003) were finally adopted in 2003. These defined a maximum threshold of 0.9% for 'adventitious or technically unavoidable' GM contamination in food which is exempted from labelling.

The next step was to define, how much GM traces a non-GM seed could contain without the need to be labelled. IFOAM EU was strongly demanding that this threshold be set at the reliable detection limit of 0.1%, as otherwise it would be impossible for farmers to fulfil requirements to deliver GM-free raw material. Any threshold above the reliable detection limit would "allow" a basic contamination to enter the food chain without the farmer even knowing about it.

Extraordinarily, the European Commission developed a proposal for maize and oilseed rape, allowing contamination of up to 0.5% and 0.3%, respectively. IFOAM EU was a key player in organising a strategic alliance against this proposal, consisting of environmental NGOs, some conventional farmers associations, trade unions, beekeepers, consumer associations, feed mills and others. Relevant Commissioners and 14 Commissioner cabinets were lobbied and events and letter campaigns were organised.

In September 2004 the Commission proposal was on the agenda of the College of Commissioners for adoption. The alliance of NGOs was holding a press conference at the same time to blame the Commission for this decision – when a call came in that the proposal has been withdrawn by Commission President Prodi at the last minute.

Although the issue has still not been regulated, it was a great victory and it means that a bad proposal was taken off the table and the default position of the current zero tolerance of contamination continues to apply. ●

*"Democracy is powerful, if trusted. For 10 years, members of IFOAM EU have been changing the world by living the paradigm shift others are only talking about. The engagement of volunteer and professional expertise has resulted in an organisation that is much respected by the sector as well as by the EU. Organic Services is proud to be part! We are asking those still standing on the fence to decide to join and to make the organisation stronger – it is needed."*



**Gerald Herrmann**, Organic Services Director, former IFOAM President and Director  
Germany

## AVOIDING AN EU ECO-LABEL FOR FOOD IN 2012



► **Andrzej Szeremeta**  
former IFOAM EU Food Legislation  
Coordinator

The European Commission developed the concept of the EU Ecolabel in 1992 to encourage businesses to market products and services that meet high standards of environmental performance. There are now over 17,000 products labelled with the flower logo on the EU market.

The proposal to include food products in the scope of the Ecolabel regulation sparked a lively debate in the EU with different stakeholders split in favour and against this idea. In particular, DG Environment, responsible for the Ecolabel, was keen to include food within its jurisdiction. However, the organic sector was united against it – from the very beginning it was concerned that such an extension might cause confusion and unfair competition in the food market and thus undermine the achievements of the organic sector. It also pointed out that the organic regulation makes it illegal to label non-organic food as 'eco'. Moreover, this regulation is well established, is being constantly developed and has a functioning certification and control system in place since 1991.

Faced with this opposition, the Commission agreed to review the feasibility of including food in the EU Ecolabel scope via launching an external study.

IFOAM EU represented the organic sector in all stages of this debate, including: the revision of the Ecolabel Regulation (published as Regulation (EC) No. 66/2010), the Commission study exploring the feasibility of establishing reliable criteria for food and feed products, the preparation of the resulting European Union Ecolabelling Board opinion, and also mobilising Member State opposition.

At the beginning of 2012 and following the Commission study, the European Commission decided to stop the uncertainty and abandon the idea of Ecolabel criteria for food. It recognised it would indeed be too confusing to have two EU labels for food based on similar approaches of respect for the environment, but with organic already requiring, and delivering, so much more – organic farming has been recognised as the most environmentally friendly and sustainable food system that provides high quality food and delivers many environmental services and other public benefits.

Consumers rightly have high trust in organic food. We are delighted that the Commission recognises its importance. ●

*"In May 2007, a group of people met in rural Alsace in France and started the Technology Platform Organics. The participants felt like taking the European research agenda setting into their own hands for the first time. It has become a stupendous success story. IFOAM EU has taken a strong lead by running the secretariat and doing lobby work in Brussels. As a result, more research projects have received funding, the research community has grown and the progress for the farmers has been significant. It's crucial for organic scientists to support the work of IFOAM EU."*



**Urs Niggli**, FiBL (Research Institute of Organic Agriculture) Director  
Switzerland

## STRATEGY FOR BETTER RESEARCH ON FARMING AND FOOD PRODUCTION



**Eduardo Cuoco**

TP Organics Strategic Relations Manager  
& Marco Schlüter, IFOAM EU Director

The strategic decision of IFOAM EU and the International Society of Organic Agricultural Research (ISOFAR) to establish a research technology platform (TP) goes back to 2007. It followed the analysis that industry-led technology platforms recognised by the Commission had a significant influence on the research priorities of the EU research framework programme. While the Commission stated at this time that they did not see any added value in a platform for organic research, and therefore no funding would be provided, IFOAM EU was able to fundraise sufficient money itself from the German government and foundations to kick it off.

A vision camp held in Hagenthal-le-Bas, France, in June 2007 laid down the foundation of the key document, the "Vision for an Organic Food and Farming Research Agenda to 2025". In 2008 Eduardo Cuoco was employed as TP Organics coordinator by IFOAM EU which hosts the platform secretariat. The platform was officially launched in December 2008 with the support of the Czech Agriculture Ministry, which was holding the Council Presidency at this time.

Currently the platform unites 28 civil society and sector EU organizations, more than 250 SMEs, four national platforms, and scientists and academics from all around Europe.

The TP Organics Vision 2025 revealed the huge potential of organic food and farming to mitigate some of the major global problems of the century – from the preservation of environmental resources to climate change, to food security, to the whole range of socio-economic challenges in rural areas. It provided the basis for the development of a Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) identifying 63 major research priorities, based on an intensive consultation process involving contributions from over 300 stakeholders and researchers, with special attention was given to the involvement of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Goals and topics relate to the development of more sustainable food and farming systems going beyond organic production for example. The Implementation Action Plan (2010) adds to the concrete research priorities included in the SRA by addressing how to approach, carry out and follow up the research proposed for the best possible effect.

These documents were fundamental to the success of TP Organics in channelling its research priorities into the EU research work programmes. TP Organics also became active in transnational research cooperation of Member States, e.g., as observer in the ERA net CORE Organic as well as in the advisory body of FAACE, the joint programming for agriculture, food security and climate change.



*"'Proud to be part of it' – I feel it is my obligation and my responsibility to support the transmission of IFOAM EU's opinions to the producers of food, energy, goods and fair political decisions."*



**Sotiris Di. Bampagiouris**, Local Food Systems Consultant  
Crete, Greece

During this time, TP Organics was steadily building political support, including most prominently Agriculture Commissioner Ciolos as well as Paolo De Castro, chair of the agriculture committee in the European Parliament. In 2012, TP Organics provided a speaker for the Parliament hearing on the Commission proposal of the new EU research and innovation framework, Horizon 2020. This was part of a highly efficient lobby campaign to introduce amendments into the Parliament report on this legal dossier.

In July 2013, after five years of advocacy, TP Organics celebrated its biggest success: The European Commission finally officially recognized it as an official European Technology Research Platform. Therefore, it will now officially be included in any future consultation on research and innovation policy in the area of food and agriculture – it provides a balance to other platforms that deal only with food industry or biotechnology. •

For more information visit [www.tporganics.eu](http://www.tporganics.eu) or email us at [info@tporganics.eu](mailto:info@tporganics.eu)

*"The European Organic Certifiers Council (EOCC) congratulates IFOAM EU for 10 years of leadership and substantial achievements! With common objectives to ensure and improve organic farming in Europe and Third Countries, EOCC and IFOAM EU have become allies in conferences, meetings and in the exchange with EU authorities or stakeholders – which have strengthened both organisations substantially. EOCC thanks all members of the IFOAM EU technical committees for this openness in collaboration. As EOCC Representative, I am particularly enjoying the professional performance and diligence when we reflect jointly on solutions for hot topics! EOCC is looking forward to extending commitments and passion to the organic sector in cooperation with IFOAM EU!"*



**Sabine von Wirén-Lehr**, EOCC Representative  
Belgium

“IFOAM EU is vital for the organic sector to have an influence on the European organic regulation and policy. As a national or regional organisation, we lack the capacity to follow it all in detail and to lobby at a European level. IFOAM EU provides us with information and offers the possibility to express our concerns. For the organic sector in Europe, it is of the utmost importance to defend common positions towards the European authorities, and IFOAM EU offers a space to discuss and reach common positions.”



**Lieve Vercauteren**, BioForum Director, IFOAM EU Board Member  
Belgium

## FROM ENTHUSIASTIC TO PROFESSIONALIZED LOBBY WORK FOR ORGANIC IN EUROPE: 200 COMMON POSITIONS AND COUNTING



› **Sabine Eigenschink**

IFOAM EU Vice President for Regulation,  
Austria Bio Garantie

I am a dinosaur. Why? Not from the looks (hopefully) but from the long time I've been active in the IFOAM Movement in Europe. Starting as Austrian Representative in 1997 I have been able to follow and partly co-design and influence the development of IFOAM EU and its work on the European level in various positions.

Until we could found the office in Brussels, work of course was different: lots of enthusiastic people from fewer Member States, trying to do the best on a minimal budget and with means from the last millennium (snail mail and fax between physical meetings). Just as times were in general then, our work too was slow.

The rise in number of Member States in the EU was mirrored within our Group and internal procedures became more complex. Work needed to become more professional in order to stay influential.

Therefore 10 years back we took the risky step to found the office in Brussels and employ Marco Schlüter. Both risks turned out to pay off: Work has sped up and has become much more professional, efficient and influential, proven e.g. by almost 200 common positions in the area of regulation being presented to the decision makers. These positions are founded on the diversity of organic operators through the whole organic chain. As it was in the beginning, this diversity and variety is still a big value and a central strength of IFOAM EU.

As we have to experience these months, our movement's qualities are more important than ever to face the challenges on the European table. IFOAM EU is the only guarantee for the sector to speak with one voice for the organic movement in the EU and to make this voice heard! ●

*"The Wessanen mission is 'healthier food, healthier people, healthier planet.' That is why building strong organic brands is at the core of our activities. The organic movement is important in developing a healthier and more sustainable food system and we are proud to be a sponsor of IFOAM EU as a key actor of this movement."*



**Piet Hein Merckens**, Royal Wessanen CEO  
The Netherlands

## COOPERATION GETS RESULTS ON EU LEVEL, AND IS NEEDED MORE THAN EVER

### FOR ORGANIC PROCESSING...



**Bavo van den Idsert**  
IFOAM EU Vice President for Processing,  
Bionext Director

Shortly after it set up in Brussels, I became involved in IFOAM EU. VBP was part of an initiative of national organisations representing the processors and traders, like AoEL (Germany), BioForum (Belgium) and Synabio (France). We were cooperating at an EU level for the common interest of the organic processing sector.

Thanks to the convincing energy of Marco Schlüter and his team we decided to become part of IFOAM EU, as Interest Group Organic Processing. This proved to be a good decision, as the ideas and proposals of the interest group became integrated in IFOAM EU and the distance between organic farming and processing was reduced. We even have the illusion that we inspired the farmers associations to unite in a Farmers Group within IFOAM EU, which is a very good step forward.

As a convinced European I believe IFOAM EU sets a positive example of successful cooperation between representatives of the different countries and sectors in Europe. We manage to find solutions for the diversity of different countries within the common framework of the Organic Regulation. This strength is more than ever needed: in a complex and diverse EU there are no simple solutions with a black and white Organic Regulation.

Of course the organic sector wants to develop and improve these standards, step by step in order to keep everybody on board. But a too rigorous step in purifying the Organic Regulation will harm the development of organic, especially in the developing countries and for small farmers.

What I appreciate most in our IFOAM EU cooperation is that we really try to understand each other's needs and are willing to act in that direction. We will need that attitude now more than ever. Proud to be part! ●

*"Organic food is the only segment in the current food market that still shows significant growth. Further, it provides high quality workplaces for workers, doesn't use risky pesticides and thus helps workers identify with their workplace. For EFFAT it has been a pleasure to cooperate with IFOAM EU, they have been a reliable partner over the last 10 years and we hope IFOAM EU will continue their successful work at European level."*



**Arnd Spahn**, Agricultural Sector Secretary, European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism  
Trade Unions (EFFAT)

"Through FNAB, its federation of organic farmers, France has always been a driving force in the development and structuring of an organic agriculture movement based on solidarity and ethical choice. The movement of French organic farmers wants the voice of European organic farmers to be heard through IFOAM EU, so as, along with the other partners of the sector, to be able to influence the evolution of the sector, in the spirit of its founders but looking forward. That is why FNAB is proud to be part of IFOAM EU."



**Dominique Marion**, Fédération Nationale d'Agriculture Biologique (FNAB) National Secretary,  
IFOAM EU Board Member - France



**Jan Plagge**

IFOAM EU Farmers Interest Group  
interim chair, Bioland President

## ... AND ORGANIC FARMING

In spring 2011, the Farmers Interest Group was founded by farming association members as an internal interest group of IFOAM EU to strengthen the voice of organic farmers. Our goals are to facilitate information exchange and capacity building among farmers in different EU farming regions. As part of this journey, we want to increase farmers' involvement in the policy process and develop a unified voice for sustainable farming solutions in EU legislation. This includes common solutions to topics such as greenhouse production, the stable supply of protein feed and sustainable approaches to the development and expansion of organic farming based on the principles of organic agriculture.

It also advocates for organic farmers in Europe playing a prominent role at EU level in the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy post-2013. Bringing responses to the sustainability needs of organic farmers into the review of the EU Organic Regulation is also a key priority for us.

As interim chairman of the Farmers Interest Group I believe that political influence of farmers can only be derived through the common agreements among farmers, as we can achieve so much more if we speak with one voice in Brussels. Experience from our German farmers' association "Bioland" shows that the farmers themselves are the best experts to create the right conditions for them to work in. And they want to contribute to a regulatory process that builds a truly sustainable food and agriculture sector. This is essential because if we do not create the conditions, others will do so for us.

The Farmers Interest Group is open to all farmer associations and farming organisations representing farmers that are members of IFOAM EU. ●

“Mind the CAP – Organic for a sustainable future. The agricultural policy of the EU is a GAP – a gap in the sense of a black box of lost tax money considering the need to strive for sustainability on farms, for farmers and for the people. IFOAM EU is our common effort of Europe’s green movement pushing for a real European agricultural greening by positioning the organic sector as the driver of innovation and green economy. With IFOAM EU we work on closing the gap to open the door. The success of our network is our future.”



**Steffen Reese**, Naturland Managing Director  
Germany

## ENSURING EU SUPPORT FOR AGRO-ECOLOGICAL APPROACHES AND ORGANIC FARMING



**Thomas Fertl**  
Head of the Department  
of Agricultural Policies at  
Bio Austria, IFOAM EU  
Vice President for Policy



**Antje Kölling**,  
IFOAM EU Policy  
Manager

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) sets an important framework for the development of farming and rural areas in Europe. Since adopting a position in 2002 on the CAP midterm review, IFOAM EU has been working to make this policy greener by advocating for measures that would encourage farmers to contribute positively to reducing climate change and the prevention of biodiversity loss, among others.

With the expansion of the policy unit in 2009 and 2011, IFOAM EU’s CAP advocacy was further intensified. Through conferences, letters, talks, common declarations with other environmental NGOs, and the foundation of ARC2020 as a civil society platform for a greener and fairer CAP - IFOAM EU ensured that the organic movement has been heard in the policy process towards the CAP 2014-2020.

As of writing, the process has not yet come to an end; details are still to be fixed in the Member States and regions. However, we can say: despite tough and strong lobby from “the other side”, we succeeded together with our partners to get a “greening” principle for CAP direct payments introduced and the recognition of organic farming under both Pillar 1 greening and Pillar 2 measures.

Other successes include protecting a legal minimum spend for environment measures, including organic farming under the new rural development programmes (RDP), acknowledgment in farm advisory systems and higher investment support rates and EU co-financing of RDP measures.

The introduction of the agro-ecology concept under the new European Innovation Partnership is also a major step to increase support for research and innovation in the sector, as it will help boost farming that respects and enhances the natural environment.

Mind the CAP - we will go on to make the CAP more organic! •

*“IFOAM EU Group gave organic farmers and processors a voice during the CAP reform process and played a vital role in trying to substantially reform the Common Agricultural Policy by campaigning for a paradigm shift towards a greener and fairer CAP.”*



**Ulrike Rodust**, S&D Group, Member of the European Parliament  
Germany



“IFOAM EU provides the space to navigate on the lights of the stars and not only on the lights of commercial ships. Without IFOAM EU agriculture would miss vision and influence at the crucial tipping points of change. Europe would miss the voice of a movement that has demonstrated leadership about mind shifting, co-creating and prototyping farming systems that safeguard our planet’s ability to feed us with healthy food today and tomorrow. Help IFOAM EU to enlighten these Brussels politicians and decision makers. Where there is a will there is a detour.”



**Volkert Engelsman**, Eosta CEO, IFOAM World Board Member  
The Netherlands

## BUILDING ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE INTO ORGANIC PROCESSING AND TRADE



**Dr. Alexander Beck**  
AoEL Director, IFOAM EU Processors  
Group Chair

The main foundations of the organic sector are based on natural human nutrition and a healthy environment. From the beginning, the principle of natural cycles was the central underlying concept for organic farming. The system approach that this embodies delivers environmental services. It also produces food that is oriented toward wholesome and natural nutrition.

The post-farming food chain, together with other industry, developed over 30 years the concepts for environmental responsibility in parallel with the concept of organic foods. However, these were not integrated at the regulatory level either in state or in private standards. Instead, amongst the operators were many pioneers in the organic food sector and these were also pioneers in environmental oriented management practices.

In the last decade, because of the climate change debate and because of a growing awareness for the tremendous losses in biodiversity, the topic of seeing the world as “one whole world” has come back onto the political agenda. There is a rising awareness that even in the food system some nutrient cycles are threatened (e.g. phosphorus) because we have not established closed cycle techniques.

To make the organic sector fit for meeting the challenges of the future, some years ago organic operators all around Europe called on the authorities to take a next step. They asked for the integration of the concepts of environmental management into the organic regulation for all post-farming operations and for the feed industry. This was also a clear reflection of the original organic principles and the fact that consumers have always seen that environmentally responsible management was an essential and integral part of organic foods.

The discussion in IFOAM EU’s Interest Group on Organic Processing started in 2009. It resulted in a letter from the IFOAM EU Board to the Commission in 2011. After a further year of intensive debates within IFOAM EU, a more detailed concept was developed in spring 2012 and sent to the Commission. The proposal was taken up as one option in the currently running revision process. It is now the opportunity to establish, for the first time, in the organic regulation the obligation of a more general environmental responsibility for the post-farming operators and feed processors. ●

*"IFOAM EU is an absolutely excellent and efficient lobby for organics in Brussels. Their conferences are not only ideal for networking but also provide a very good platform to address the EU officials in the Commission, to promote and discuss new ideas together."*



**Kai Kreuzer**, Journalist, Organic-Market.info  
Germany

## THE PLACE TO MEET: EUROPEAN ORGANIC CONGRESSES AND CONFERENCES



**Marco Schlüter**  
IFOAM EU Director

It all started in December 2007 with the first European Organic Congress (EOC) "The Future of Organic Food and Farming in EU". Since then the EOCs have developed to become the master series of IFOAM EU events and the leading organic events in Europe for EU policies, overall developments and networking.

The most recent 7<sup>th</sup> EOC was held in Vilnius in July 2013 under the auspices of the EU Lithuanian Council Presidency. While the EOC was originally organized in Brussels, from the 5<sup>th</sup> EOC onwards it has been held in one of the countries hosting the EU Council Presidency in the respective year.

One of the most impressive, the 5<sup>th</sup> EOC was held in Hungary. Held in the historical castle of Gödöllő, it was an official event listed by Hungarian Council Presidency as linked to the informal Council meeting of agriculture ministers. In the presence of EU Agriculture Commissioner Ciolos, chair of the agriculture committee in the European Parliament Paolo De Castro and the agriculture ministers of the actual Hungarian and upcoming Polish Presidency, participants witnessed this important moment for organic production in Europe.

The topics of the 5<sup>th</sup> EOC addressed various issues: development of the EU organic regulation, Common Agriculture Policy, organic research policies, environmental policies and climate change, the green economy, GMOs, organic integrity or organic action plans. Together these demonstrate the main ingredients of the EOC: bringing high level policy makers, authorities, stakeholders and organic movement in Europe together to discuss relevant political issues and demonstrating the uniting power of organic food and farming. Further, it is an excellent opportunity for networking at a location and programme chosen with greatest care.

The tradition of the European Organic Congress and its value has been established; it will continue in the future to provide added value to the organic sector in Europe. ●

*"For me a real organic life is the global future of agriculture and mankind. We all know, political decisions made in Brussels have a major impact worldwide. IFOAM EU in Brussels means bringing sun to the mainstream lobby work. At the moment, I see no better choice to make Europe more organic. Personally, it is fun to work with the highly engaged office team. The engagement with IFOAM widens my visions and enlightens my daily business work."*



**Alexandra Thöring**, artebio Founder-Owner  
Germany

“When you hear ‘organic advocacy in Brussels’ there is no chance that it is not about IFOAM EU. Indeed, IFOAM EU provides the best way for organic actors in Europe to be heard. The stronger its membership, the stronger message that cannot be ignored. It is a very lively, friendly and open platform for exchange of experience for organic interests and actors that I was happy to work with and for.”



**Andrzej Verissimo Szeremeta**, former IFOAM EU office staff member  
Poland

## FIRST IFOAM EU CHAIR OF THE COMMISSION ADVISORY GROUP ON ORGANIC FARMING



► **Francis Blake**  
Soil Association,  
former IFOAM EU President

For years, a cosy relationship existed between DG Agriculture and COPA/COGECA (the representative body of European farmers’ organisations and cooperatives). DG Agriculture’s 60 advisory committees were always chaired by COPA/COGECA as their numbers and those of the other industry stakeholders supporting them ensured a majority over the few union, environmental and consumer representatives.

Into this rarefied mix IFOAM EU tried to force its way when, in 1999, an organic farming sub-committee was formed. IFOAM EU was allowed two delegates (compared with COPA/COGECA’s nine). After irate complaining that the organic movement’s representative body should be so insulted, we were allowed an additional three observers.

The structure received a proper shake up in 2004. Much fewer (31) ‘advisory groups’ were constituted, one being for organic farming. IFOAM EU were given five full places, though COPA/COGECA still had seven.

After some deft behind-the-scenes negotiating beforehand, the first meeting witnessed the biggest upheaval of the whole advisory committee structure: a non COPA/COGECA representative was elected as Chair - the then IFOAM EU Group president, myself. This was the first time in any of the advisory committees, and it sent shockwaves through COPA/COGECA.

This significant step played its part in the gradual opening up of DG Agriculture’s processes whose workings hitherto had invariably been more or less closed. Aided by closer ties with the Commission’s Organic Unit staff that this position brought, the new chairman was able to introduce more transparency and the Organic Unit gradually responded with earlier and more open consultation on regulatory and other issues.

Thus we played our part in helping to establish a new era of genuine stakeholder and public engagement by the Commission, though of course there is still a long way to go for this to be properly fit for purpose and in accordance with best practice. ●

# STAFF & BOARD

## STAFF

			2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Andrzej Szeremeta</b>	Food Legislation Coordinator	Poland											
<b>Angela Morell Perez</b>	Operations and Event Manager (jr)	Spain											
<b>Ann-Kathrin Trappenberg</b>	Project Assistant	Germany											
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<b>Camilla Mikkelsen</b>	Regulation Coordinator	Denmark											
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<b>Eduardo Cuoco</b>	TP Organics Strategic Relations Manager	Italy											
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<b>Stephen Meredith</b>	Policy Coordinator	Ireland											
<b>Stephen Turner</b>	Communication Assistant	Canada											
<b>Teresa Elola Calderón</b>	Policy Assistant	Spain											

			2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Andrea Rodriguez</b>	Trainee	Columbia											
<b>Asta Donielaite</b>	Office and Events Trainee (EVS)	Lithuania											
<b>Athanasia Champidi</b>	Regulation Trainee (EVS)	Greece											
<b>Audrey Vincent</b>	Policy Trainee (EVS)	France											
<b>Audrey Malherbe</b>	Communication Trainee	Belgium											
<b>Benny van de Velde</b>	Regulation Trainee	Belgium											
<b>Carolina Cardoso</b>	Policy Trainee	Belgium/Brazil											
<b>Christiana Christen</b>	Trainee	Germany											
<b>Christoph Furtschegger</b>	Research Trainee	Austria											
<b>Cyrille Cornerotte</b>	Trainee	Belgium											
<b>Damien Dessane</b>	Trainee	France											
<b>Dimitrios Petalios</b>	Regulation Trainee	Greece											
<b>Eden Granata</b>	Research & Admin Trainee	Italy											
<b>Guillaume Coutelet</b>	Trainee	France											
<b>Irina Maia</b>	Trainee (EVS)	Portugal											
<b>Ivan Marko Stazic</b>	Communication Trainee (EVS)	Croatia											
<b>Kathrin Baechthold</b>	Trainee	France											
<b>Lasma Ozola</b>	Research Trainee	Latvia											
<b>Laura Maeso</b>	Policy Trainee (EVS)	Spain											
<b>Laurent Dombret</b>	Trainee	Belgium											
<b>Lena Tuszyński</b>	Regulation Trainee	Germany											
<b>Louisa Winkler</b>	Project Trainee	UK											
<b>Maria Chiara Tort</b>	Research Trainee (EVS)	France											
<b>Michaela Senek</b>	Project Trainee	Sweden											
<b>Monika Styczek</b>	Trainee (EVS)	Poland											
<b>Natasha Vasilevskaya</b>	Trainee	Belarus											
<b>Nina Berner</b>	Trainee	Germany											
<b>Pierre Sultana</b>	Regulation Trainee	France											
<b>Silvia Corrado</b>	Project Trainee	Italy											
<b>Sofia Baruffol</b>	Policy Trainee	Belgium											
<b>Stylianios Karfopoulos</b>	Trainee	Greece											
<b>Tomas Milar</b>	Regulation Trainee	Czech Republic											
<b>Vivianne Aggestam</b>	Regulation Trainee	Sweden											
<b>Yvonne Henkel</b>	Regulation Trainee	Germany											
<b>Zsafia Gyori</b>	Communication Trainee	Hungary											

\*Trainees who became staff members are included in the staff list

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

	Most recent role		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Alessandro Triantafyllidis</b>	Vice President	Italy	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Alexander Gerber</b>	Vice President	Germany	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Alexandra Pohl</b>	Policy Chair	Austria	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Andrea Ferrante</b>	Vice President	Italy	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Bavo van Idsert</b>	Vice President	Netherlands	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Christopher Stopes</b>	President	UK	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Dorota Metera</b>	Vice President	Poland	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Francis Blake</b>	President	UK	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Gerald Altena</b>	Treasurer	Norway	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Joost Guijt</b>	Treasurer	Netherlands	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>José Luis Melgarejo</b>	Treasurer	Spain	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Karolina Dytrtova</b>	Vice President	Czech Republic	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Marianne Schönning</b>	Vice President	Sweden	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Mette Melgaard</b>	Policy Chair	Denmark	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Otto Schmid</b>	Vice President for Research	Switzerland	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Sabine Eigenschink</b>	Vice President for Regulation	Austria	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Thomas Dosch</b>	Vice President	Germany	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Thomas Fertl</b>	Vice President for Policy	Austria	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

## INTEREST GROUP CHAIRS

<b>Alexander Beck</b>	Processors	Germany	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Jan Plagge</b>	Farmers	Germany	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●



## BOARD MEMBERS FROM 2003-PRESENT

Alexandra Pohl	Austria
Sabine Eigenschink	Austria
Thomas Fertl	Austria
Leen Laenens	Belgium
Lieve Vercauteren	Belgium
Patrick Ruppel	Belgium
Roland Cartryse	Belgium
Sylvie Morcillo	Belgium
Albena Simeonova	Bulgaria
Stoilko Apostolov	Bulgaria
Svetla Nikolova	Bulgaria
Marinela Sofokleous	Cyprus
Savvas Mouzakis	Cyprus
Stelios Orphanides	Cyprus
Jiri Urban	Czech Republic
Karolina Dyrtrtova	Czech Republic
Katerina Nesrstova	Czech Republic
Tomas Zidek	Czech Republic
Birgit Ingvorsen	Denmark
Evald Vestergaard	Denmark
Knud Erik Sørensen	Denmark
Mette Melgaard	Denmark
Sybilie Kyed	Denmark
Airi Vetemaa	Estonia
Merit Mikk	Estonia
Aira Sevon	Finland
Elisa Niemi	Finland
Erkki Pöytäniemi	Finland
Esa Partanen	Finland
Katarina Rehnstroem	Finland
Katja Mahal	Finland
Marika Auersalmi	Finland
Mikko Rahtola	Finland
Visa Vilkkuna	Finland
Anton Pinschhof	France
Cécile Lepers	France
David Peyremorte	France
Dominique Marion	France
Laurent Moinet	France
Marie-Christine Monnier	France
Vianney Le Pichon	France
Alexander Beck	Germany
Alexander Gerber	Germany
Jan Plagge	Germany
Thomas Dosch	Germany
Charikleia Minotou	Greece
Christina Vakali	Greece
Dimitrios Bilalis	Greece
Dimitris Dimitriadis	Greece
Dimitris Sotiropoulos	Greece
Konstantinos Dritsas	Greece
Eva Cellerne Daroczi	Hungary
Éva Sándorné Ács	Hungary
Ferenc Frühwald	Hungary
Mária Tarnai	Hungary
Gunnar Gunnarsson	Iceland
Olafur Dyrmondsson	Iceland
Eveline Gill	Ireland

Gillian Westbrook	Ireland
Grace Maher	Ireland
Helen Scully	Ireland
Mary Linch	Ireland
Richard Mee	Ireland
Alessandro Triantafyllidis	Italy
Andrea Ferrante	Italy
Antonio Compagnioni	Italy
Fabrizio Piva	Italy
Ricardo Cozzo	Italy
Aistara Guntra	Latvia
Dzidra Kresimane	Latvia
Gustavs Norkarklis	Latvia
Madara Mezvieta	Latvia
Mairita Bluma	Latvia
Antanas Svirskis	Lithuania
Edita Karbauskienė	Lithuania
Nijole Daugeliene	Lithuania
Raymond Aendekerck	Luxembourg
John Portelli	Malta
Mario Salerno	Malta
Bavo van Idsert	Netherlands
Joost Guijt	Netherlands
Maike Raaijmakers	Netherlands
Marian Blom	Netherlands
Paulien Veerman	Netherlands
Gerald Altena	Norway
Grete Serikstad	Norway
Dorota Metera	Poland
Ewa Rembalkowska	Poland
Maria Staniszevska	Poland
Urszula Soltysiak	Poland
Alexandra Maurer da Costa	Portugal
Jaime Manuel Carvalho Ferreira	Portugal
Niels Rump	Portugal
Damian Dragomir	Romania
Ion Toncea	Romania
Marta Klimekova	Slovakia
Zuzana Lehocka	Slovakia
Jana Tomasikova	Slovakia
Anamarija Slabe	Slovenia
Boris Fras	Slovenia
Carolina Suárez	Spain
Évelyne Alcázar Marín	Spain
José Luis García Melgarejo	Spain
Victor Gonzalvez	Spain
Eva Mattsson	Sweden
Kjell Sjö Dahl-Svensson	Sweden
Marianne Schöning	Sweden
Barbara Früh	Switzerland
Hans Ramseier	Switzerland
Otto Schmid	Switzerland
Seda Orhan-Defranceschi	Turkey
Chris Atkinson	United Kingdom
Christopher Stopes	United Kingdom
Francis Blake	United Kingdom
Lawrence Woodward	United Kingdom
Steve Belton	United Kingdom

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