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WELCOME NOTE

Dear readers,

On behalf of the European organic movement, I would like to welcome you back after the summer break. I hope that you were able to recharge your batteries for the rest of the year despite the challenges we are still facing in Europe and around the world due to Covid-19.

However, these should and will not stop us from working towards making Europe more organic. Together we have already achieved that organic takes a key role in the EU Commission's Farm to Fork strategy and we have intensively worked to have the implementation of the new EU Organic Regulation postponed from January 2021 to January 2022, which is likely to happen. Both achievements are highly relevant for all of our members. The probable one-year postponement of the new Organic Regulation is crucial, as without it the organic sector would have faced an unrealistic timeline for implementing the new rules. These successes were only possible because of your tireless efforts and support, and I would like to express a heart-felt 'thank you' to everyone for their contribution. This shows the strength of uniting as organic movement and sector at EU level.

At the same time, I would like to encourage you and the entire organic sector to continue working towards a more sustainable food and farming system. Of course, this should be done in safe conditions and without risking your own or your colleagues' and families' health. At IFOAM Organics Europe, we will largely continue our activities from our homes to ensure the safety and well-being of our employees and network. Below I highlight our many activities for the following months.

The CAP negotiations' importance for the European organic movement

At a political level the negotiations of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) are picking up pace. With both the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers aiming to finalise their positions by end October, the negotiations of the next weeks are crucial. The EU will not achieve its vision for sustainable food systems, including reaching 25% of organic land by 2030, if the CAP is not aligned with the Green Deal and the Farm to Fork strategy. The organic movement urges MEPs and Agriculture Ministers to agree to an ambitious ringfencing of the CAP budget for environmental and climate action, ensuring better rewards for farmers who protect ecosystem services, and creating a level-playing field across all Member States.

We also need all governments to include a fair national target for organic land in their CAP strategic plans, and adequate support to reach it and reward organic farmers for the benefits they provide to nature and society. Under the leadership of our Interest Group of Organic Farmers (IGOF), we count on all our members to reach out to their national governments on these points in the next three weeks.

The European organic movement is also looking forward to the new EU Action Plan on Organic Farming. This is expected to be published by the end of the year, and the Commission opened a public consultation in August.



A fair market frame for 25% organic

For many of our members, the possibility of reaching 25% land managed under organic practices is not the main question (and this seems to be reachable in many regions). The key issue is rather: how do we develop a frame for our 'fair play – fair pay' approach in the organic value chain while boosting the demand for our produce? More focus and efforts from all of us are needed to propose adequate measures at EU and national levels. Beside the Organic Action Plan, the current national implementation of the Unfair Trading Practices EU regulation can be a good opportunity to transform value chains to more fairness.

A sprint to the end of the year

We will dedicate the final months of this year to two important online events. On 24 and 25 November, [TP Organics](#) organises the 6th edition of its [Organic Innovation Days](#). These days will feature innovations in organic and plant breeding, will cover the [LIVESEED project's results](#) and allow you to expand your network and get updated on the expected Horizon Europe calls. [Stay tuned for more information and registration.](#)

Furthermore, we will host the 3rd edition of '[IFOAM Organics Europe meets business – Bringing the organic food industry together](#)'. In the morning of 8 and 9 December we will virtually bring IFOAM Organics Europe and companies involved in organic together. For more information, [visit our website](#) and follow @OrganicsEurope on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

Once more, I would like to thank you for your hard work. I am convinced that together we can arise from this crisis even stronger and more resilient and continue making our Vision 2030 of transforming food and farming a reality.

Organic regards,

Jan Plagge
IFOAM Organics Europe President



POLITICAL HOTSPOT

State of the Union, CAP negotiations and green recovery

September marks the start of many things: the new school year, Autumn, or, if you frequent the EU bubble, the State of the Union speech.

This American tradition was brought to the EU for the first time by Mr Barroso in 2000, and Commission Presidents after him followed suit.

In 79 minutes and 8.179 words, Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen outlined her first, rather broad in scope, State of the Union speech on 16 September ([read the full text](#)). Ms. Von der Leyen touched upon a variety of issues; some of the main environment and health-related points were:

- 37% of NextGenerationEU, a new recovery instrument of 750 billion euro, will be spent directly on the European Green Deal objectives. Also, 30% of NextGenerationEU will be raised through green bonds;
- By next summer, the Commission will revise the current climate and energy legislation to make it “fit for 55”, i.e. fit to reach the 2030 target for emission reduction which increased from 40% to 55%;
- Building a European version of the U.S. BARDA, i.e. an agency for biomedical advanced research and development., which will support the EU’s capacity and readiness to respond to cross-border threats and emergencies.

Agriculture was only mentioned in the context of precision farming and artificial intelligence, specifically detailing that the use of technology needs rules. Food was mentioned in the context of unsustainable consumption.

Ms. Von der Leyen also touched upon other important points, ranging from migration policies to Covid-19:

- “Migration is a European challenge and all of Europe must do its part”. She referred to the painful images of the Moria camp and stated that the Commission will put forward its New Pact on Migration;
- Ms Von der Leyen highlighted that in the “last months we have rediscovered the value of what we hold in common” and that “as individuals, we have all sacrificed a piece of our personal liberty for the safety of others”. She added that the EU joined the COVAX global facility and contributed 400 million euro to help ensure that safe vaccines are available for everyone who needs it;
- On Brexit, Ms Von der Leyen quoted Ms Thatcher’s powerful sentence “Britain does not break treaties” as a rebuttal to Mr Johnson’s intention to break international law by going against the Withdrawal Agreement between the EU and the UK;
- On LGBTQIA+ rights, she clearly stated that “LGBTQI-free zones are humanity free zones. And they have no place in our Union”. In this context, the Commission will put forward a strategy to strengthen LGBTQIA+ rights;
- Fighting racism is as important as ever. In this context, the Commission will appoint the “first-ever anti-racism coordinator to keep this at the top of our agenda and to work directly with people, civil society and institutions”.

She ended her speech by saying that “The future will be what we make it. And Europe will be what we want it to be. So let's stop talking it down. And let's get to work for it. Let's make it strong. And let's build the world we want to live in. Long live Europe!”

The day following the State of the Union, IFOAM Organics Europe, along with [many other signatories](#) including 21 MEPs, signed a letter on [EU Green Recovery for Agriculture](#) initiated by Slovenian politician Potočnik, Environment Commissioner from 2009 to 2014 and chairman of the [RISE Foundation](#). The statement published on 17 September endorses the EU Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies as the blueprint for sustainable agriculture, and comes one month before the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is voted on by the European Parliament and national Agriculture Ministers. The signatories of the statement call for EU tax payers’ money to be used for ecological resilience, and for the future CAP to be geared towards implementing the Green Deal principles and their associated strategies, in order to help farmers’ transition to a long-term sustainable model.

Finally, the signatories commit “to work together to mainstream agro-ecological practices in Europe, and help farmers to transition, building a more resilient model that contributes to preventing—but can also better withstand—future ecological and other shocks”.

For a rundown on the CAP negotiations, read our article [‘EU Parliament and Council close to adopt their position on CAP regulations’](#).

1 NEWS

1.1 Policy

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

EU Parliament and Council close to adopt their position on CAP regulations

Are we entering the final stretch of the CAP negotiation process? After more than two years since the Commission published its proposal, both the Parliament and Council might finalize their positions on the three legislative texts in the next weeks. This in turn would allow institutions to begin trilateral negotiations, the so-called 'Trilogues'. But several key issues still need to be solved beforehand, such as the integration of Farm to Fork targets into the CAP strategic plans regulation (including the 25% organic land target by 2030).

On 21 July, the 27 EU leaders agreed on the EU's next seven-year budget of €1,824.3 billion that will contribute to the EU's economic reboot after the Covid-19 pandemic. The package combines €1,074.3 billion for the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and €750 billion for the new EU Recovery Instrument called Next Generation EU (NGEU). The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) budget is set at €336 billion, comprising €258 billion for the first pillar and €77 billion for rural development (in 2018 constant prices).

This decision now allows EU institutions to enter the last phase of the negotiations and reach an agreement on the three key regulations: the Common Market Organisation (CMO), the Horizontal Regulation and the Strategic Plans (merging direct payments and rural development regulations).

IFOAM Organics Europe has sent a [letter](#) to the heads of political groups in the European parliament, asking them to secure an ambitious ringfencing for Eco-schemes, and reminding the key role of conversion and maintenance payments. Moreover, to ensure adequate support for organic farmers, throughout Europe, IFOAM Organics Europe urges Member States to include in their CAP plans an analysis of their organic sector's production needs, and a national target to increase the share of agricultural land under organic management.

Members of IFOAM Organics Europe can read more details about the political process [on our member extranet](#). Are you an IFOAM Organics Europe member who does not have access to the extranet yet? Please contact communication@organicseurope.bio.

Are you interested in membership of IFOAM Organics Europe? [Have a look at the benefits](#) and contact IFOAMEU_membership@organicseurope.bio.

Call for a transformation of Europe's agriculture: Share your picture!

After a diverse and empowering mobilisation in [2018](#) and [2019](#), the Good Food Good Farming campaign calls for a third wave of campaigning activities in 2020.

Last year, the European Action Days gathered 22 different countries in with more than 100 events in towns and cities across Europe. An [open letter](#) was also handed over to the newly elected Members



of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, with IFOAM Organics Europe's staff present at the demonstration.

This year, October will be important for EU's main agricultural policy, the CAP, as MEPs will vote the new CAP in the European Parliament. Agriculture ministers will also try to have a common approach in Council about the three legislative texts.

Raise your voice and share your picture

It is a key moment to have your voice heard and help us convince political leaders to fully reward organic farmers! Join the campaign by posting your picture on social media. How can you do so? Cross a soup spoon and fork or shovel and a pitchfork and take a photo to show you are fed up with the current Common Agricultural Policy!

Let's collect as many photos as possible to show our governments and EU decision-makers that we are many demanding policies that support farmers in transition for future-fit practices, protect biodiversity and the climate, promote animal welfare and provide healthy food for all!

Share your photo on Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook with the hashtag #GoodFoodGoodFarming, add your demand for another agricultural policy in your post and tag MEPs in the European Parliament. Information with example posts and how to tag MEPs on gfgf.eu/online-actions. Please also send your photo to info@goodfoodgoodfarming.eu.

All photos shared and sent will be published on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts of Good Food Good Farming and its supporters and on websites and materials promoting the campaign and persuading European leaders to vote for a progressive Common Agricultural Policy.

Organic Regulations

Postponement of the organic regulation & Organic Action Plan consultation

On 4 September 2020, important steps on two important Commission's files were taken. Firstly, the EU Commission submitted a proposal to the EU Council and the EU Parliament to postpone the application of the New Organic Regulation (EU) 2018/848 by one year.

The new EU Organic Regulation was initially set to enter into application on 1 January 2021. Already in April 2020, IFOAM Organics Europe called on the three EU institutions asking for a one-year postponement. Part of the reasons are related to the Covid-19 pandemic putting stress on organic producers and the organic control system, making a smooth transition from the current legal framework to the new one very challenging. Before becoming official, the Commission proposal needs to be adopted by both the EU Parliament and Council, expected in October.

Secondly, the Commission launched a public consultation on the future EU Organic Action Plan. The publication of the public consultation '[Organic farming - action plan for the development of EU organic production](#)' can be seen in the context of the Farm to Fork strategy. It was announced as a tool that will "stimulate both supply and demand for organic products. It will ensure consumer trust and boost demand through promotion campaigns and green public procurement. This approach will help to reach the objective of at least 25% of the EU's agricultural land under organic farming by 2030 and a significant increase in organic aquaculture".



The deadline for replying to the roadmap is 23 October, while the deadline for replying to [the public consultation](#) is 27 November. In the coming weeks, IFOAM Organics Europe will mobilize its members and send them input on what elements to include when replying to the public consultation. This will allow us to advocate, as common voice, for a comprehensive and effective action plan that will contribute to the target of reaching 25% organic farming by 2030. Keep an eye on [our member extranet](#) for early access to this information (accessible by IFOAM Organics Europe members only).

Are you an IFOAM Organics Europe member who does not have access to the extranet yet? Please contact communication@organicseurope.bio. Are you interested in membership of IFOAM Organics Europe? [Have a look at the benefits](#) and contact IFOAMEU_membership@organicseurope.bio.

GMOs

Reveal of a detection method for a gene-edited rapeseed - What is the significance and why is there a controversy?

A regulation is only worth so much as it can be enforced. This is why on 7 September, an open source detection test was announced for the first gene-edited crop on the market, SU Canola, developed by US company Cibus. [The test was published in the peer-reviewed scientific journal, Foods](#). The work was funded by a consortium of NGOs (including Greenpeace) and non-GM industry food companies.

SU Canola is a rapeseed engineered with oligonucleotide-directed mutagenesis (ODM), a gene editing technique, to withstand spraying with certain herbicides. Products of gene editing fall within the scope of EU GMO law, according to a [European Court of Justice ruling of 2018](#). Gene-editing, refers to a technique that allows to add, delete, or change single base-pairs in the genetic code of plants and animals.

If applied, the test would allow national authorities (tasked with the enforcement of EU GMO law) to test imports for this GM rapeseed that is grown in the US and Canada and has no EU authorization. This would be a big step forward in ensuring that organic as well as non-organic products do not contain any products that should not be in there. The reveal came as a surprise to some since some developers claimed that gene-edited crops could not be detected in the marketplace and therefore could not be regulated under existing EU law.

The controversies: Nothing new & not even detecting a GM-organism?

The test stirred up some controversy because of two aspects. First, some seed sector representatives that advocate for the producer of the rapeseed, Cibus, claimed the test does not contribute anything new to the current state of knowledge because it cannot detect the technique with which the crop was engineered. This statement is misleading, as the detection method is the first of its kind that allows national authorities to detect a crop in which genetic engineering was applied to make small changes that have big impacts. In this case, one base-pair was changed to achieve resistance against a spraying with certain herbicides. It is correct that this test was not designed to detect the specific technique that has been used. However, it can detect the crop itself and therefore fulfills the requirements of a detection test, as confirmed by Austrian detection laboratories.



Secondly, the developer company Cibus claimed that the rapeseed was not gene-edited, unlike previously claimed. This came as a surprise, since the crop was listed as a GMO in the [EU GMO database](#) run by German regulator BVL and Wageningen University, and in the [Clearinghouse](#) of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. So, while the rapeseed was advertised as the first commercial seed product using a gene-edited tool, it is now claimed to be a spontaneous mutation that occurred randomly.

In conclusion: Detecting gene-edited crops is possible & EU GMO law is enforceable for new techniques of genetic modification

Apart from the fact that these controversies shine a new light on the claims of the developer company Cibus, what can we conclude? The revealed detection method has shown that it is possible to detect gene-edited crops in principle and that the current EU GMO law can be enforced also for products from these new types of genetic engineering. This allows the EU to make sure that no unauthorized foods are entering the EU market and to protect our high standards on food safety. Even if the rapeseed is actually a random by-product of the genetic engineering process that was not intended, this conclusion still applies.

The organic movement and sector will continue providing constructive input in the debate around New Genomic Techniques on which the EU Commission will present a study in April 2021.

Further reading

- [Greenpeace's press release 'First open source detection test for a gene-edited GM crop'](#)
- [Letter to Commissioner Kyriakides on open-source detection test for first commercialized gene-edited plant ready for integration in routine EU GMO controls](#)
- [The organic movement's position on new genetic engineering techniques](#)
- [Our work & publications on GMOs](#)

Seeds

LIVESEED workshop on vegetative propagating material – Why organic vegetative material has a long way to go compared to organic seeds

Vegetative propagation material such as seed potatoes, rootstocks and cuttings were in the spotlight of a LIVESEED workshop on 10 September. This type of plant propagating material is used for the production of certain crops, like apples, vines, and potatoes. However, all vegetative propagating material is going to be included in the category of 'plant reproductive material (PRM)' in the New Organic Regulation and therefore an important part of the strategy to work towards 100% organic PRM.

First of its kind

The workshop was the first of its kind in the context of the LIVESEED project and participants were eager to learn more about potential policy measures to increase the production and use of organic vegetative propagating material.

The workshop started off with a discussion on seed potatoes, a product for which already a solid supply is available on the market in organic quality. According to Maaïke Raaijmakers, Project Leader Knowledge and Innovation at Bionext, a key success factor for organic seed potatoes in the



Netherlands was the introduction of a pre-ordering rule. This means that a derogation (to use non-organic seed potatoes) can only be requested if the producer showed they ordered the organic material in time. This measure is effective against fraud and prevents a degradation in the quality of the supply due to long storage times.

The database is the place to be

This example demonstrates the crucial role of the national seed databases, where seed potato supplies are listed. With the entry into force of the new EU Organic Regulation, supplies of all other vegetative propagation material will have to be inserted into the database as well. In this context, one participant in the workshop raised the point that a great amount of sales deals are sealed directly between the supplier and the customer. In this well-established business practice, the database is not used as a marketplace, but suppliers still have to make sure to insert their offers also in the database to act in compliance with the Organic Regulation. This is important because the supply in the database is the basis on which national authorities decide whether a derogation request is granted or not.

Production techniques and consumer expectations are challenges

While organic seed potatoes are widely used, the situation is different for other crops like hard fruit (apples, pears), soft fruit (berries) and vines. Even though organic apple breeding is ongoing in Germany and Switzerland, for example, mostly non-organic propagation material is used, as explained by Freya Schaefer (FiBL). A bottleneck for the production of organic soft fruit (berries) is the fact that the production process includes an in-vitro stage (without soil), which does not align with the definition of 'organic plant reproductive material' in the EU Organic Regulation. At the same time, an expert in fruit tree production emphasized that the in-vitro stage is crucial to ensure that growers receive healthy starting material. The participants agreed, however, that progress could be made by producing the following stage (long/short canes, rooted cuttings) under organic conditions. After that, the next step would be to breed organic mother plants as well.

The situation is unique for organic grapevine material, as highlighted by an organic winemaker. Due to the limited options for plant protection options in organic systems, growing propagation material for grapevines is a challenge in North/Western Europe due to fungal diseases. At the same time, consumers and retailers still demand the classic (conventional) varieties such as Chardonnay, Riesling etc. which is why breeding varieties that are suitable for organic input conditions are currently not economically viable. A possible solution to this problem is research on innovative production techniques that manage the fungus problem. One project on this topic is currently financed by the German Ministry of Agriculture.

Small steps rather than big leaps

In summary, it is evident that for many vegetative crops, progress should be made and measured in small steps, as it is not in all cases an easy undertaking to produce organic starting material. The participants of the LIVESEED workshop agreed that national and EU-wide roadmaps per individual species and an EU expert group on vegetative material could be a decisive factor to gradually increase the percentage of organic PRM. These and other key success factors will be presented in the European workshop on 25 November.

The [LIVESEED](#) project will increase transparency and will provide policy recommendations on organic seeds. The project partners analyse national seed databases and factors influencing organic seed production and use. They also explore national policies, smart practices, build EU infrastructure and

analyse issues on propagation. The partners also want to advance testing protocols to improve the availability of organic seeds, ensuring they are adapted to the realities of organic farmers.



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Climate change

Help protecting our forests by demanding deforestation free supply-chains – Together4Forests

Forests and other ecosystems are under pressure worldwide: A total of 13 million hectares are deforested each year and almost all of it is happening in tropical forests (96%). The main driver of deforestation is expansion of agricultural land that is needed to meet the global demand of certain products (80%).

Europe accounts for a third of the world's deforestation

Europe and its citizens play a significant role in this. The EU imports and consumes around one third of the globally traded agricultural products associated with deforestation. This accounts for 7-10% of the global total consumption (consumption of exporting countries included) of crops and livestock products that are directly and indirectly linked to rainforest deforestation. The EU is among the major global importers of a number of these so called 'forest and ecosystem risk commodities', such as palm oil, soy, beef, rubber, maize, cocoa and coffee. Even though the latter two have a relatively small forest footprint globally, their production is often highly concentrated in a few countries, leading to negative impacts that are very high in those areas.

As Europeans, what can we do to stop deforestation?

At the moment, there is nothing that stops these products linked to deforestation ending up on the market and on our supermarket shelves all across the EU, fueling biodiversity loss, climate change and human rights violations. With the launch of the European Commission's public consultation on the assessment of additional legislative and non-legislative measures to address deforestation, we have a unique opportunity to get into action and mobilize citizens to take part in this.

The European Commission presented a number of actions to address the EU's role in deforestation in 2019. One of these actions is the assessment of new legislation. We have an opportunity to make a difference through our participation in the Commission's public consultation. This consultation can send a clear signal to the Commission – reducing the impact of products placed on the EU market on forests and other ecosystems and on those depending on them.

This is a unique occasion to stop products that are linked to deforestation, forest degradation and ecosystem conversion or degradation from entering the EU market, as well as to stop the human rights violations linked to it. This way, we will protect the world's last remaining forests and savannahs, peatlands and other unique places that are being destroyed for our consumption.



Take part in #Together4Forests

Therefore, IFOAM Organics Europe actively participates in #Together4Forests. The aim of the campaign is simple: mobilize thousands of citizens across the world to stand up for the world's forests, grasslands and savannahs and call on the EU to pass binding legislation that protects these ecosystems by promoting deforestation-free supply chains.

The EU's public consultation is the only opportunity for citizens and civil society to make their voice heard in this debate. If a critical mass of people were to take part in the public consultation and stand up for this law, it could be a game changer in the fight to protect the world's forest and other ecosystems. Join the fight and [sign the petition here](#). You can also engage on social media [by sharing one of our tweets](#) or using one of the messages below.

- We are in the deforestation fast lane. But [@EU Commission](#) can hit the brakes and ensure a safe future for all people and wildlife! Join the [#Together4Forests](#) movement, call on the EU to stop [#deforestation](#) around the world & spread the word! <http://ow.ly/vgei50BnQJD>
- RT if you agree! 5 reasons to protect forests: (1) For our oxygen & water supplies; (2) They are homes to millions of people; (3) For forest livelihoods; (4) For biodiversity; (5) To fight climate change. Sign NOW to secure our forests! Pls RT! <http://ow.ly/vgei50BnQJD#Together4Forests>



Biodiversity, soil and water



Food policy

In case you forgot after the summer break: Key points of the Farm to Fork strategy

As we reported about in our previous newsletter, the European Commission unveiled its Farm to Fork (F2F) strategy and EU Biodiversity strategy on 20 May 2020.

Both are among the strategies to realise the [European Green Deal](#) (EGD), unveiled by the European Commission in December 2019. The EU Green Deal aims for Europe to become the first carbon-neutral continent and is a “new growth strategy that aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use”.

The F2F strategy is composed of [a main communication and an annex](#), serving as an action plan for the F2F strategy. The strategy is meant to lead a global transition towards competitive sustainability from farm to fork. Its goals are:

- Ensure that food production, transport, distribution, marketing, and consumption have a neutral or positive environmental impact,
- Preserve and restore the land and sea-based resources,
- Mitigate climate change,
- Reverse the loss of biodiversity,
- Ensure food security, nutrition, and public health.

The Commission published its Farm to Fork strategy on 20 May 2020. It is available [on the Commission's website](#).

We have put together a more detailed breakdown of what the Farm to Fork strategy puts forward on organic, the CAP, fertilisers, pesticides and much more for IFOAM Organics Europe’s members [on our member extranet](#).

For more information about IFOAM Organics Europe’s work on the Farm to Fork strategy, contact silvia.schmidt@organicseurope.bio.

1.2 Research and innovation

Research and innovation advocacy / TP Organics

TP Organics and other European Technology Platforms propose joint research & innovation priorities for a sustainable food system

The European Technology Platforms (ETPs) [TP Organics](#), [Plants for the Future](#), and [Food for Life](#) have jointly published a [policy brief](#) with Research & Innovation (R&I) recommendations addressing our food system’s most pressing challenges on primary production and consumer aspects.

The policy brief is a response to the European Commission’s [European Green Deal](#) and [Farm to Fork strategy](#). The Farm to Fork Strategy is supposed to kick-start a transition towards a fair, healthy and



environmentally-friendly food system in Europe. R&I are mentioned as key drivers in accelerating this transition. The ETPs recommend focussing R&I efforts on:

- Creating an environmental performance toolbox allowing farmers to make the best management decisions;
- Smartly reducing pesticide use;
- Improving consumer knowledge and choice on healthy and sustainable diets;
- Designing diversified farming systems for diverse diets.

Bram Moeskops, Senior Scientific Coordinator at TP Organics' said: "The Farm to Fork strategy sets out ambitious targets to reduce dependency on pesticides and antimicrobials, reduce excess fertilisation, increase organic farming, and reverse biodiversity loss. R&I investments need to be well chosen in order to minimise unfavourable trade-offs and to develop scalable solutions. That is why we have developed this policy brief."

Amrit Nanda, Executive Manager at 'Plants for the Future' stated: "The R&I recommendations are meant to address the four most important challenges of our food systems, which are climate change, biodiversity loss, lack of consumer awareness and trust, and malnutrition. These are the challenges identified in our policy brief and they are also put forward by the Farm-to-Fork Strategy."

Jonas Lazaro-Mojica, Manager Food Policy, Science and R&D at 'Food for Life', added: "I am proud that we could agree with the three ETPs on a common list of policy recommendations for R&I, which are focused on primary production and consumer aspects. Given the challenges that lie ahead of us, joint action is needed. We need to focus on common solutions rather than dilute our efforts by differences in opinion."

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TP Organics is one of the 40 European Technology Platforms (ETPs), recognised by the European Commission. IFOAM Organics Europe hosts its Secretariat.



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Knowledge for organic

Identifying the needs and knowledge gaps in organic fruit growing – Last days to fill out BIOFRUITNET's questionnaire – Deadline 30 September

Protection against pests and diseases is a big issue for organic fruit growers, as fruit is a very sensitive produce. Many organic farmers in Europe have adapted their own practices and techniques to successfully deal with the challenge of organic plant protection. This valuable practical knowledge



often remains at the local level, instead of being shared with fruit growers facing the same problems in other regions.

To get an up-to-date picture of what challenges organic fruit growers in Europe are facing as well as the strategies they are using to face these challenges, [BIOFRUITNET](#) launched a questionnaire in June 2020. The intention is to find out about current needs and knowledge gaps regarding stone, pome, and citrus fruit as well as best-practices and to inquire in which way farmers would prefer to access technical information about such issues. The results of the questionnaire will allow us to identify, what kind of knowledge and information is needed where. They will provide the basis to produce various communication formats such as videos, podcasts, and e-learning courses, which shall be both informative and easy to understand.

We encourage fruit farming advisors, practitioners as well as selected researchers in 20 European target countries to fill in this [questionnaire](#) and to suggest combinations of practices in their local contexts by 30 September 2020.



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OK-Net EcoFeed joins the EIP-AGRI animal welfare communication campaign

In July 2020, [OK-Net EcoFeed](#) joined the agricultural European Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI) communication campaign on animal health and welfare. It highlighted outcomes of EIP-AGRI related activities, inspirational ideas and research needs.

The campaign kicked off with a social media campaign on animal welfare #EIPagriAnimal and it was followed by a dedicated newsletter. The OK-Net EcoFeed consortium contributed to the EIP-AGRI newsletter and campaign by publishing the handbook "[A tool improving health and welfare of pigs](#)". The handbook is targeted to organic pig farmers and advisors and it is currently available on the [Organic Farm Knowledge \(OFK\) platform](#) in 8 languages including English, German, Czech, French, Italian, Dutch, Albanian and Serbian.

The OK-Net EcoFeed project helps organic pig and poultry farmers to achieve the goal of 100% use of organic and regional feed. The three-year project will extend the OK-Net knowledge platform. IFOAM Organics Europe coordinates the project consisting of 11 partners and 8 third linked parties from 12 countries. Dissemination towards all actors in the EIP-AGRI network is an integral part of the OK-Net EcoFeed activities.



OK-Net EcoFeed has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 773911. This communication only reflects the author's view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.

Farm gate nutrient budgets in organic agriculture



The [RELACS project partners](#) issued practical guidelines informing farmers about assessing the main nutrient flows in and out of their farm with a dedicated Excel tool. The tool reveals whether farms have a nutrient surplus or deficit. Based on the results, farmers are enabled to adjust their nutrient flows to achieve a balanced nutrient budget.

[Read the full Practice Abstract](#) and follow the RELACS project's development on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

Publishing partners are the [University of Hohenheim](#), the [University of Copenhagen](#), the [Research Institute of Organic Agriculture \(FiBL\)](#) and [IFOAM Organics Europe](#). Practice abstracts contain practical guidelines for different actors of the food and farming system to solve a given problem, in this case farmers.

[RELACS](#) seeks to promote the development and adoption of environmentally safe and economically viable tools and technologies to reduce the use of external inputs in organic farming systems.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 773431. This communication only reflects the author's view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.

Replacement of copper in organic farming – First results of RELACS experiments conducted by ÖMki

Copper is currently used as a plant protection product (PPP) and/or leaf fertilizer in organic and conventional farming in several European countries. However, its use is controversial, which is why the European research project [RELACS](#) (Replacement of Contentious Inputs in Organic Farming Systems) is looking for alternatives.

To understand the significance of copper usage and how it may be reduced, RELACS partner [ÖMki](#), the Hungarian Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, is conducting a range of experiments to evaluate the role of copper in plant nutrition, its importance in plant protection and its environmental effects.

First results indicate that the copper-free alternative PPP called BPA038F is more effective in preventing downy mildew in grapes than its copper-containing counterpart. To confirm these findings, the experiments will continue throughout 2020 and 2021.

[To learn more about the results of the first experiments on substituting copper in organic farming in Hungary, read the full article here](#) and follow the latest RELACS project's development on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

[RELACS](#) seeks to promote the development and adoption of environmentally safe and economically viable tools and technologies to reduce the use of external inputs in organic farming systems.





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Organic wine and fruit propagation in Germany and Switzerland

Experts from seed companies, organic farmers, farmer advisors, researchers and agricultural trainers can now read [a report on a virtual cross visit to Germany and Switzerland](#) on organic wine and fruit propagation.

The report introduces the VITIFIT project, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture focusing on breeding for fungus-resistant grape varieties (PIWI) and the "VitiMeteo Rebenperonospora" forecasting system. It details the collaboration of three organic experts in the selection, propagation and marketing of robust vine varieties and the introduction of these varieties to the value chain in Germany.

It describes an orchard museum in Glems, Germany, and the practices of preserving old fruit varieties for organic. Apple breeder Niklaus Bolliger provides insights into organic apple breeding in Switzerland, while FiBL Switzerland, one of the world's leading institutes in the field of organic agriculture, shares their research priorities and some of their results in organic plant protection measures, and in cultivation technology on apple, cherry, apricot and berries.

The Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) Germany, FiBL Switzerland and IFOAM Organics Europe produced this report.



LIVESEED is funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 under grant agreement No 727230 and by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) under contract number 17.00090. The information provided reflects the views of the authors. The Research Executive Agency or the SERI are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.



Stimulating digital innovations – The SmartAgriHubs' RESTART and EXPAND calls are still open!

As Europe continues facing the Covid-19 crisis, it must further stimulate the development of digital innovations which can tackle the challenges currently faced by the agri-food sector. The SmartAgriHubs project investigated the possibilities for funding research that helps our sector. Open calls were launched in May 2020 as an immediate RESPOND to the crisis. Now, SmartAgriHubs is following-up with the RESTART and EXPAND open calls, addressing the agri-food economy on the medium term.

SmartAgriHubs will assign up to 5,000,000 EUR funding to the RESTART and EXPAND open calls, addressing Digital Innovation Hubs supporting diverse stakeholders in the agri-food economy and specifically SMEs as drivers for digital innovation.



Why participate?

Digital innovations implemented throughout the organic value chain have a huge potential to contribute to the current and future societal challenges.

Are you a Digital Innovation Hub, or any other form of public-private partnership for innovation? Are you involved in one or more innovation experiments addressing the consequences of Covid-19? And are you looking for potential funds to support your project? [The open call is your opportunity](#).

SmartAgriHubs' open call is also a unique chance to connect with a wider community and exchange on latest knowledge and expertise.

Who can participate?

Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH) as defined on the [SmartAgriHubs](#) website¹, based in one of the EU Member States or a H2020 Associated country².

How to participate to the RESTART and EXPAND open calls?

- RESTART the economy around food systems

This open call will focus on **hackathon type of activities** that will RESTART the economy around the agri-food related sectors and affected food systems. The objective is to generate ideas for potential Innovation Experiments that can be realised by related teams and that go beyond initial conceptual implementations.

Proposals could realise hackathons, challenges and datathons that have a direct as well as an indirect impact to mitigate effects of the corona/Covid-19 or similar (future) pandemics.

[Check the RESTART open call fiche for more information.](#)

- EXPAND the network

The major amount of funding will be assigned to **the implementation of programmes by DIHs to support the realisation of Innovation Experiments**. This shall specifically contribute to the expansion of the network of DIHs and Competence Centres (CCs) as well as making available new knowledge and results from digital innovation activities.

The EXPAND open call is specifically targeting at DIHs as the main proposers facilitating the realisation of innovation experiments.

Key characteristics to submit an eligible proposal for the EXPAND the Network open call:

- The funding that is provided by SmartAgriHubs is exclusively available for developing, maturing, and providing Digital Innovation Hub innovation services
- For being eligible to receive this funding, DIHs need to support one or more Innovation Experiments (IEs) with their services.
- The overall proposal budget shall assign a maximum of 20% for DIH service provision and a minimum of 80% for realising the supported Innovation Experiment(s)
- The maximum of 20% for DIH service provision can be requested as funding from SmartAgriHubs, where the 80% should be mobilised by additional public or private sources.
- One DIH could ask for a maximum of 100,000 EUR funding in total from SmartAgriHubs in one or also several proposals.

[Check the EXPAND open call fiche for more information](#)

Are you eligible? Register to the **SmartAgriHubs' Innovation Portal**. It will give you access to all information needed and direct communication to the community if any questions on the application arise. After that, **start applying!**

Proposal submission and timeline

Proposals are called under a continuous submission scheme. They can be submitted for evaluation until closure of the open call and will be evaluated in batches at regular points in time. Currently the following dates are planned for evaluating delivered batches of proposals:

- The First batch evaluation was closed on 3 September 2020 (17:00 CEST)
- Second batch evaluation of proposals that were submitted: **before 5 November 2020, 17:00 (CEST)**
- Dates for batch evaluations in 2021 will be published after closing the second batch evaluation.

Any questions about the open call?

Read the [call documents](#) on the dedicated page of the SmartAgriHubs Innovation Portal.

Check the FAQ and leave your question on [the SmartAgriHubs Open Call forum](#). A Q&A webinar on the open call was held on 8 July. You find the recording on SmartAgriHubs [YouTube](#) channel.

SmartAgriHubs is a €20 M EU project under the Horizon 2020 instrument and brings together a consortium of over 164 partners in the European agri-food sector. The project aims to realise the digitisation of European agriculture by fostering an agricultural innovation ecosystem dedicated to excellence, sustainability, and success.

Notes

(1) Digital Innovation Hubs as defined on the Smart Agri Hubs website are public-private partnerships for innovation, providing a mix of different services to their clients. These include technology services such as R&D, provision of lab facilities, testing and validation are mainly the domain of the competence centres. Innovation ecosystem support services include community building lobbying, brokerage, knowledge sharing and advocacy.

(2) See the full list of eligibility criteria in the Programme document on the SmartAgriHubs Innovation Portal.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 818182. This communication only reflects the author's view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.

Organic farming and the Internet of Things (IoT): synergy or conflict?

This article first appeared on 9 June 2020 on the [IoF2020 website](#).

It is common thinking to consider organic farming and technology playing in opposing fields. A frequent reaction when presenting the Internet of Things (IoT) applications within organic farming is a sort of: “What? You are using high-tech as well? Isn’t organic a happy old times way of farming?” This is a good occasion to explain how using IoT in organic farming and food production is not a step back to ‘good old times’, but a couple of jumps forward, pushed by the experiences from old times (that often were not that “good”) and the knowledge and clean instruments that became recently available. Overall, IoT and other technologies can help organic farmers to better deal with diversity, maintaining and enhancing it.

There are at least four reasons why IoT can be, and in certain cases already is, of great help to organic:

1) Organic farming is knowledge intensive and the more information farmers have, the better they can apply prevention strategies, take sound decisions and act (or not act!) timely. This is true in plant production as well as in animal husbandry. Here is a crucial plant protection example: how to reduce copper use in viticulture using knowledge and information that are site specific, system specific and timely? There are at least three options: [an app that allows to share observations among farmers and advisers working in the same area](#), a Decision Support Tool (one of many available) to identify precisely the need for spraying and the best moment, and an image reading tool able to quantify active copper on the leaves (still under development).

Another example for bridging plant production and animal husbandry: crop rotation and crop diversification are key in healthy and successful organic arable farming. But the crop used as feed, especially for monogastrics, are quite few. Considering the protein sources soybean plays a major role, as in conventional systems, but it is grown in limited areas in Europe. A solution lays in using diverse sources (pea, lupin, faba bean, food industry side-products etc.) according to their availability during the year. Which knowledge is needed to implement such idea? a) the exact composition of the different feedstuffs; b) animals’ needs; c) a fast way to calculate a balanced ration.

Two IoT tools can be helpful at farm level: an on-farm equipment to measure nutrients in feedstuff and a ration planner able to balance the nutrition of the animals while changing the crops used as feedstuff. The first is already on the market: [a portable near-infrared device that in few seconds and using few kernels can measure proteins, moisture, carbohydrates and oils](#). The second will be soon available as an outcome of the Horizon 2020 project [OK-Net EcoFeed](#): a ration planner to allow farmers to adapt the diet of their animals according to seasonal availability.

2) Several activities imply heavy labor, for example weed management and harvesting in vegetables or saffron selection. These are unpleasant tasks, often underpaid, too time consuming and too often economically unsustainable. Optical tools or GPS guided tools can be of great help, as well as weeding robots. Those technologies should not be seen as competing with human labor, because they can reduce and make a kind of labor that nobody is really willing to do less heavy.

[For such there are several ongoing experimental activities and solutions available on the market.](#)

3) Enhance diversity having information at the finest detail. Organic farming is strongly characterized by its efforts to make the best and most sustainable use of local diversity. The IoT technology is useful for plant production - where the farmers' skills and experience allow to fit practices to specific field conditions and potentials. It is also beneficial for animal husbandry where knowing the specific needs of each animal is key for animal welfare as well as productivity. In food processing it also makes a difference for the quality of the final product as a deep knowledge of materials, specific per variety, lot, origin etc. is required.

A wide range of sensors and actuators became available in the last years. A rational use of the information they provide can allow a thorough "precision farming" in the sense of farming in tune with site specific needs, potentials and environmental sensitivities, so escaping from the need to simplify farming operations that lead to homogeneous practices. The possibility to monitor conditions remotely can also allow to bring back areas in agricultural use that have been considered too remote or too marginal ([see this IoF2020 case of cow grazing monitor](#)).

4) The organic certification system badly needs to strengthen its reliability and get rid of the bureaucratic burden. A key element is to make full use of available data and interlink the sources of such data, that are managed by different public authorities or private bodies. A theoretically "simple" connection of data sources would already benefit the certification system and relieve farmers. Besides, sensors at farm, stable, plant etc. level can support the certification process and maintain the control in-between the audits. The Covid-19 emergency made the search for remote alternatives to "live" audits even more urgent, or at least for mixed systems. [An example in an IoF2020 case.](#)

Any concerns? As in the case of the majority of IT systems, **data ownership** is still an open question and farmers risk losing control over their own data to the actors who find it extremely valuable such as tech sellers, input providers, and value chain managers.

The interoperability of systems and databases is urgent, but far from being achieved. Farmers need tools that can deal with all their data, preferably in one app, are intuitive, user-friendly and not requiring multiple subscriptions or providers to run. Overall, commercial interests, data ownership and privacy constraints are posing serious questions on how to manage it, but a solution should be found.

To conclude, the road to a full and successful exploitation of IoT potential in the farming world should reverse the current approach: **farmers needs should lead the development and not the tech business.**

Authors: Yulia Barabanova ([IFOAM Organics Europe](#)) and Cristina Micheloni ([Associazione Italiana per l'Agricoltura Biologica](#)).

The [Internet of Food & Farm 2020](#) project is a large-scale pilot under Horizon 2020 investigating and fostering large-scale implementation of the Internet of Things in European food and farming. IFOAM Organics Europe is a project partners and represents that European organic movement.



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2 IFOAM ORGANICS EUROPE DEVELOPMENTS

In case you missed it: IFOAM EU continues growing as IFOAM Organics Europe (and has a new website!)

It has been more than 15 years since we started our work of making Europe more organic. Since then, we have grown significantly alongside the organic movement and sector and we have witnessed the increasing interest, visibility, and relevance of our organisation.

To update our presence and mark this evolution, we rebranded to IFOAM Organics Europe and created a new and improved website to better communicate about what we are doing and what we have achieved.

To learn more about our updated presence, read our [press release of 30 June](#).

We invite you to explore www.organicseurope.bio and follow @OrganicsEurope on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

Our email addresses have also changed and are now ending on @organicseurope.bio instead of @ifoam-eu.org. Please remember to change this in your address books. We have archived our [old website](#).

A special ‘thank you’ goes out to [Atto](#) and [Dehlic](#) for their excellent work and support.

Develop your own vision and strategy using our member-only toolkit

By 2030, the organic movement wants fair, environmentally conscious, healthy and caring food and farming systems across Europe. That is the [vision](#) set out and shared by the European organic movement.

How did we lead that process? What is a vision? Why is it important to design one? How do you build it?

To help you answer those questions, we put together a [toolkit](#) for our members, collecting techniques, practices and materials, tips and advice that we hope will inspire you and allow you to develop the vision of your own organisation.

Through various methodologies and strategic conversations, IFOAM Organics Europe aims to share its experience. If you want to dig deeper on this, you will find more information and resources on the [Member Extranet](#).

Civil Dialogue Groups – New members + new space on the extranet!

As the voice of the European organic sector, IFOAM Organics Europe is in contact with EU institutions through different channels. One of these are the Civil Dialogue Group meetings.



Civil Dialogue Groups (CDGs) assist the Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) of the European Commission and act as a forum of consultation between it and stakeholders' organisations at the EU level. Stakeholders range from farming associations, socio-economic interest groups, civil society groups and trade unions. IFOAM Organics Europe represents the movement and its vision in all 13 different CDG's, each of which focuses on a different topic, ranging from the Common Agricultural Policy to organic farming, arable products and much more.

The range of expertise needed for this, could not be provided by IFOAM Organics Europe's staff alone. We rely greatly on our members to represent the organic movement at these meetings.

Following a short and easy application process, interested members are assigned a two-years mandate by our board. This spring, our members received a call to represent the EU organic movement at CDGs for the next period. A [list of new members](#) is available on the member extranet.

To facilitate our interaction with our members in CDGs and share information with all of our members alike, we have created a [new space on the extranet](#). It gives you easy access to agendas, presentations, and minutes of these meetings, shows upcoming CDGs and provides you with useful links.

Should you have any questions regarding Civil Dialogue Groups, please write to civildialoguegroups@organicseurope.bio. Are you an IFOAM Organics Europe member who does not have access to our member extranet yet? Contact communication@organicseurope.bio.

Making Europe more organic using the EcoLocal Market app

Get inspired by a Spanish app! To make the organic value chain fairer and more transparent, two women developers have created the EcoLocal Market app. This app helps minimise the carbon footprint generated by the everyday consumption of food and beverages and enhance dialogue between all value chain actors.

Operating for over a year, EcoLocal Market aims to (re)connect local organic food producers and consumers, all the while improving the environmental performance of the food supply chain by reducing food miles. The innovation? "Green Logistics for a Km Zero Organic Distribution" is the latest release of the mobile app and uses geo-localisation to optimise food distribution, consolidate deliveries and improve transport efficiency in the city centre.

The creators keep on building their start-up to deploy a stronger community and made it to finalists of the Tech Challenge Women for Climate.

Read more about this initiative and others on euorganic2030.bio and on social media using #EUorganic2030. Do you have an initiative that is transforming food and farming and that is less than four years old? [Submit it now!](#)



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Saying goodbye to our colleague

Carolina Ana Ferreira

Carolina started as volunteer in 2018 in the event and membership unit. After one year of volunteering she became Finance and Office Assistant. Carolina did a great job improving office equipment, especially IT equipment, and improving work environment. She was also a great support in the daily management of the office, namely on the financial side. Carolina left IFOAM Organics Europe in August 2020 to go back to Portugal to finish her Master's Degree. We would like to thank Carolina for her commitment to IFOAM Organics Europe's work. She will be missed by her colleagues, especially her colleagues from the Finance, Legal, Operations and HR unit.

Welcoming our new colleagues

Julie Goeseels

Julie is a Belgian national with a Bachelor's Degree as Travel Agent. She brings more than seven years of experience as an administrative assistant and travel agent to IFOAM Organics Europe. Julie is oriented toward quality service to customers, suppliers, and colleagues. She is used to work in an international and multicultural environment. Julie has an ethical way of working, a talent for smooth contact with other people, and a good sense of communication in English, French, and Spanish. During her career, Julie developed organisational skills, flexibility, and sense of service. She is polyvalent, solution-oriented, and very enthusiastic to start working at IFOAM Organics Europe.

Our new volunteers

IFOAM Organics Europe is excited to welcome its new volunteers. They joined our team in September and will work with us until July 2021. Here they are:

Amélie Steu

Amélie is a French national who holds a joint Master's Degree in International Politics and Development Studies from Sciences Po Toulouse. She is convinced that the shift to organic farming systems is crucial to implement the ecological transition, protect the environment and human health. Amélie is glad to join IFOAM Organics Europe. Her previous work experience at the United Nations (IFAD in Italy, UNU-FLORES in Germany) enabled her to acquire partnerships and communications skills, as well as knowledge in agricultural development and natural resources. From this experience at IFOAM Organics Europe's Fundraising and Projects team she expects to gain project and fundraising skills, and a sound knowledge of organic agriculture.

Gaëlle Cau

Gaëlle is a 24-year-old French national, holding a Master's degree in Public and Corporate Communication from Sciences Po Lille, where she wrote a thesis on the different CSR communication strategies in the fashion luxury sector. Before IFOAM Organics Europe, she gained experience as a press attachée assistant in a press relations and digital influence agency in Paris. Because of her long-time sensitivity for environmental issues, she decided to look for meaningful opportunities allowing her to defend values she shares and believes in. That is why she is excited to join the Communications team at IFOAM Organics Europe and further her knowledge in organic farming.

Lili Barta



In February 2020, Lili completed her Horticultural Engineering BSc studies in Budapest at Szent István University, majoring in organic farming and nature conservation. During her university study as part of the Erasmus + Study Mobility Program, she attended the Università degli Studi di Perugia for one semester, which was one of the defining elements of broadening her vision. She spent her internship at ÖMKi, the Hungarian Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, where she had the opportunity to participate in an experiment supported by SolACE, a Horizon 2020 Research Framework Program. She snatched out a part of this experiment that she wrote her thesis on. It seems logical that she continues her experience in IFOAM Organics Europe's Research & Innovation team. Lili is committed to the protection of nature; in her free time, she likes to go on trips with her family and friends. When she is not with her loved ones, she is spending my time meditating with some puzzle or embroidery.

Nuria Alonso Suárez

Nuria is a 21-year old Spanish student of International Relations. She studied the degree in Barcelona, except for an exchange semester in Beijing. She learnt English by living in Leeds, and French, by living in the South of France. She also did one volunteering project in the refugee camps in Greece. She loves travelling, cooking, and learning new languages. She is excited about getting to know the Belgian culture, (food and drinks super included), and is looking forward to meeting the IFOAM Organics Europe team and contributing to IFOAM Organics Europe's Events and Membership team.

Pia Müller-Cyran

Pia is a 25-year old who grew up in Munich. She did her bachelors in Agricultural Science at a small university in Northern Bavaria. As she has always been curious about alternative food production methods and different approaches to food security and safety, she chose to do her masters in Organic Agriculture and Food Systems at University of Hohenheim, Stuttgart. In her spare time, she loves to go hiking, canoeing or horse riding. She is looking forward to having the opportunity to start working with the IFOAM Organics Europe team, and its Policy team in specific.



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3 EVENTS

Member of IFOAM Organics Europe find an overview of all upcoming internal and external policy events on the [landing page of the member extranet](#). Scroll down to 'Network: next meetings and events' to consult it.

3.1 Preview of events

Save the date: Organic Innovation Days 2020: A cooperation of TP Organics & LIVESEED

24-25 November 2020, online

For this year's Organic Innovation Days, TP Organics is partnering with the [LIVESEED](#) project, coordinated by IFOAM Organics Europe. Bringing together important and diverse actors of the organic food and farming movement

On 24 November, the opening day, the LIVESEED Final Stakeholder Event will take place. This EU Horizon 2020-funded project aims to boost organic seed and plant breeding across Europe. The results and policy recommendations from the project will be presented and discussed. Exciting innovations in the organic seed and plant breeding sector will be showcased. The consortium consists of 50 partners (research institutes, breeding and seed companies, organic associations, and national authorities) covering 18 EU countries. IFOAM Organics Europe and FiBL Switzerland coordinate the project.

25 November, the second day will be dedicated to opportunities for organics in Horizon Europe, the EU's next research & innovation framework programme starting in 2021. Emile Frison, member of the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food) and member of the Mission Board for Soil Health and Food, will give a keynote. The following policy debate will shine a light on the Missions as new instrument in Horizon Europe. European Commission representatives Nathalie Sauze-Vandevyver, Deputy Director-General at DG AGRI and Peter Wehrheim, Head of Unit for Bioeconomy & Food Systems at DG Research & Innovation, will be joined by organic farmer Alfred Grand, member of the Mission Board for Soil Health and Food, and Mute Schimpf, Food Campaigner for Friends of the Earth Europe and member of TP Organics' Steering Committee.

In the afternoon, the Stakeholder Forum will bring together TP Organics' members. In parallel, the LIVESEED European workshop on organic seed production and use will be held. Project partners from several EU Member States will present their progress and smart practices in the implementation of the Organic Regulation with regards to organic seed at the national and regional level. EU and national policymakers, key stakeholders involved in the organic seed sector will exchange national experiences and best practices.

The event will offer the opportunity for stakeholders and researchers to network. Mark the date in your calendar and stay tuned for the registration opening by visiting [TP Organics' event page](#) and following LIVESEED on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).



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IFOAM Organics Europe meets business online on 8-9 December

8-9 December 2020, online

IFOAM Organics Europe is happy to announce the date of third edition of [IFOAM Organics Europe meets business](#). The event will take place online and will consist of two morning sessions on 8-9 December 2020.

To keep this successful exchange platform between different players from the supply chain and IFOAM Organics Europe's members we are putting together a mix of presentations and interactive sessions.

On 8 December, the spotlight will be on political developments. Topics like the role of organic in the new Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies as well as the impact of Brexit on the organic market will be covered. The session of 9 December will be more technical and provide participants with an overview and updates of the new EU organic regulation.

IFOAM Organics Europe meets business is open to the whole supply chain, including processors, traders, retailers, and certifiers, as well as associations thereof, and IFOAM Organics Europe members, their members and companies interested in organic.

Stay tuned and check the [website](#) of the event! Registration and more details about the agenda will be available soon.

BIOFACH

into organic



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3.2 Review of events

Discussing Organic Farm Knowledge: learning from users how the online platform can be improved

6 July 2020, online

On 6 July, IFOAM Organics Europe held a successful digital cross-exchange about the online platform [Organic Farm Knowledge](#) as an exemplary online knowledge platform. The webinar took place within the framework of the Horizon 2020 [EURAKNOS](#) project. It was attended by 24 participants from different European countries and beyond, mostly advisors and researchers. It served to discuss how the platform can be improved.

The discussion zoomed in on four topics, starting with: “How to improve the user experience & navigation? How should the user interface look like?” Next, participants talked about improving the discussion forum and integrating it with social media. It turned out that the preference largely depends on the country. Twitter for example is widely used in Italy, Spain and the UK whereas in Hungary and Bulgaria, Facebook is the platform of choice. Similarly, the preference depends on the target audience. Farmers could find the website too complicated and would prefer Facebook or a mobile app in the national language.

The third topic centred on the funding model. Participants largely agreed that the platform should remain free (i.e. open access) to be widely known and used. However, new knowledge produced can be used for online courses, trainings, webinars, etc. for which a fee could be charged. Research projects could be asked to pay a fee to have their content on the platform.

Finally, the channels to promote the platform were discussed. Promoting the platform locally, through national organic associations and research networks (their website, magazine, newsletter etc.), turned out to be key.

Visit the Organic Farm Knowledge platform on organic-farmknowledge.org or contact organic-farmknowledge@fiabl.org.



Organic Farm Knowledge is a product of OK-Net Arable and OK-Net EcoFeed. These projects have received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreements No. 652654 and No. 773911 respectively. The information contained within this platform only reflects the author's view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided. EURAKNOS has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 817863.

Lively exchange at the second EUREKA consortium meeting

26-28 August 2020, online

IFOAM Organics Europe participated in the second [EUREKA](#) consortium meeting, which took place online from 26-28 August and brought together all the partners to exchange about the progress and look ahead.



EUREKA is the sister project of [EURAKNOS](#) and aims to promote wide and long-term use of the practical knowledge and innovative solutions of Horizon 2020 multi-actor projects by farmers, foresters and other rural businesses. After an extensive mapping of existing multi-actor projects and review of the knowledge and data they generated, the most useful outputs will be selected. These will be included in a new, centralised, and open-source database (“FarmBook”). The content of this easily accessible and searchable platform should fit the needs of the end users (farmers, advisors, policymakers and researchers).

[Visit the EUREKA website](#) and subscribe to the newsletter for project updates and related news and stories.

The EUREKA project is an EU-funded action that aims to help ensure the longer-term and wider use by farmers, foresters and other rural businesses of the practical knowledge and innovative solutions that are generated by Horizon 2020 multi-actor projects. IFOAM Organics Europe’s role in the project is to make sure that the future FarmBook suits the needs of the organic actors, and to engage the organic sector in its development.



EUREKA has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 862790. This communication only reflects the author’s view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.

Representing environmentally-friendly farmers at the Commission’s ‘Farmers of the Future’ workshop

1-2 September, online

What will agriculture look like in 2050? How can we ensure that enough food is produced, while ensuring that environment and climate are not harmed by it? Important questions like these are getting asked more and more and long have found its way on high-level political agendas. What might be easily overlooked however, is the question about the farmers themselves: What will their role be? What will their profile look like? What difficulties could they meet and what would be their needs to successfully face them?

An almost finished study by the Joint Research Center and the European Commission’s Directorate General for Agriculture (DG AGRI) seeks to address exactly that. Using a participatory approach they developed twelve different farmer profiles for the year 2040. These profiles range from *adaptive* to *corporate*, *intensive*, *cell*, *regenerative*, and so on. Positively noted was the fact that organic and agroecological principles often was mentioned as their applied “environmental approach”.

For the last workshop during the study, IFOAM Organics Europe was invited 1 and 2 September as one of a few stakeholders to slip into the shoes of these imagined farmers, identify their needs and possible collaborations, and think about possible policy approaches to support them.

We pointed out the need to adapt and better tailor the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to farmers’ needs, as currently there is a significant disconnect, especially when it comes to environmentally friendly farmers. These can mainly be found in the younger age group, but currently only ~6% of EU



farmers are under 35 years old. IFOAM Organics Europe further stressed that need to increase their support. This includes ensuring easier access to land, which is also indirectly hampered by the CAP.

Smaller, greener, healthier? Sustainability of livestock farming in Europe

9 September 2020, online

On Wednesday 9 September, Kurt Sannen, Chair of IFOAM Organics Europe's Interest Group of Organic Farmers, participated in the online debate "Smaller, greener, healthier? Sustainability of livestock farming in Europe" organized by [AnimalHealthEurope](#). The aim of the meeting was to discuss the implications of the Farm to Fork Strategy for the European livestock sector, and how this sector can deliver on sustainability demands.

After an introduction by Health & Food Safety Commissioner Stella Kyriakides underlining the need to reduce antimicrobials, Kurt Sannen presented the organic model and its potential to inspire European farmers. He explained that the question should not be how to produce more, but rather how to produce sufficient nutritious food in a sustainable way. Kurt gave inspiring examples from his own organic farm [Bolhuis](#), in Diest (Flanders, Belgium).

Kurt also reminded that the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) must provide the necessary remuneration for the benefits of organic conversion and maintenance through existing rural development policies or innovative tools like eco-schemes.

[Read more in AnimalhealthEurope press release.](#)

Learn more about [IFOAM Organics Europe's interest groups](#). Are you an organic farmer who is interested in being part of IFOAM Organics Europe's Interest Group of Organic Farmers? Contact léna.brisset@organicseurop.bio.

EIP-AGRI Seminar "CAP Strategic Plans: the key role of AKIS in Member States"

16-18 September, online

From 16-18 September, the European Innovation Partnership ([EIP-AGRI](#)) held an online seminar about the development of Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) as part of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Strategic Plans post 2020. The seminar was organised together with the European Commission's Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) and attended by over 150 participants.

IFOAM Organics Europe provided input on the discussion topics beforehand and participated in the three-day seminar. To achieve the Farm to Fork targets, including 25% organic land in Europe by 2030, it is crucial that the CAP Strategic Plans make the link to the European Green Deal and the [Farm to Fork strategy](#) of the European Commission. The EIP-AGRI network will be part of the single European CAP Network. It was stressed repeatedly throughout the seminar that the European Commission wants to combine CAP and Horizon Europe objectives, systematically interlinking people and projects.

[IFOAM Organics Europe](#) calls on Member States to introduce a national target for organic land in their CAP Strategic Plans, to describe the relevant policy mix to increase production and demand for



organic products and to ensure independent and well-funded AKIS, geared towards agroecology. Participatory methodologies which empower and engage all potential AKIS actors are key to co-design a common understanding and vision. All types of farming should be represented in the AKIS coordination body, including organic farming, in particular with regards to the 25% organic farmland target of the Farm to Fork strategy.

The participants of the seminar largely agreed that the main benefit of well-functioning AKIS lies in developing more holistic solutions for farmers, and that the future role of advisors consists in giving holistic advice according to farmers' needs, while picking up good ideas and opportunities. Likewise, advisors can build the bridge between CAP and Horizon Europe as innovation support services. The seminar provided concrete examples from different European countries and also introduced the [EURAKNOS](#) and [EUREKA](#) projects that are making the increasing volume of practice-oriented agricultural knowledge easily accessible, interactive and attractive. IFOAM Organics Europe is a partner in both projects.

Presentations will be available on [the event webpage](#).

Launch of the Green Deal call at the European Research & Innovation Days 2020

22-24 September, online

From 22-24 September, the European Research and Innovation Days, the European Commission's annual flagship event, brought together policymakers, researchers, entrepreneurs, and the public online to debate and shape the future of research and innovation in Europe.

TP Organics participated in the policy conference. A session on 'Building a post-Covid food system economy' showed that most participants view the inclusion of environmental externalities in food prices as the most transformative action. True cost accounting is also a priority of IFOAM Organics Europe. In the session on the [Mission area: Soil health and food](#) with organic farmer Alfred Grand, it was highlighted that cooperation across sectors and citizen engagement as well as co-implementation will be at the core of the mission. Living labs will create knowledge and design, test and disseminate innovative solutions while lighthouse farms will test and demonstrate good practices. Soil health is the starting point for systemic transformations across value chains and territories.

The event also provided the possibility to learn more about the new Horizon 2020 call on the European Green Deal. With a budget of 1 EUR billion, the Green Deal call will fund research & innovation projects in 8 thematic areas. Area 6, Farm to Fork makes a reference to organic: "*The Farm to Fork Strategy, which is at the heart of the European Green Deal, [...] requires and builds on innovative solutions that can be scaled up, such as **agro-ecological and organic practices** [...].*"

Read the full call for proposals on [the European Commission's website](#). Deadline for submissions is 26 January 2021. The projects selected for funding are expected to start in autumn 2021.

Report of the Mission Board "[Caring for soil is caring for life](#)".



4 MAKING EUROPE MORE ORGANIC – SUPPORT IFOAM ORGANICS EUROPE

IFOAM ORGANICS EUROPE MAIN SPONSOR 2020

The contributions of sponsors allow IFOAM Organics Europe to focus on its most important work – representing organic stakeholders. This funding is a means to co-finance IFOAM Organics Europe events, projects and publications and is a highly valued contribution to our work.



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5 CALENDAR OF EVENTS



1-31 October 2020

[#GoodFoodGoodFarming European Action Days](#)

On- and offline (see the map of actions)

24-25 November 2020

[Organic Innovation Days 2020](#), [LIVESEED Final Conference for Stakeholders & Policy-makers](#), and [LIVESEED European Workshop on Organic Seed Production & Use](#)

Online

8-9 December 2020

[IFOAM Organics Europe Meets Business 2020](#)

Online

25-26 January 2021

[Improving sustainability and welfare in organic poultry and pig production](#)

Joint conference OK-NET EcoFeed, PPILOW, POWER, FreeBirds

Online

17-20 February 2021

[BIOFACH](#)

Nuremberg, Germany

8-10 March 2021

[EUCARPIA-LIVESEED Conference -Breeding and seed sector innovations for organic food systems](#)

Cēsis, Latvia

23 March 2021

[ReMIX final conference](#)

Brussels, Belgium

April 2021

[loF2020 final event](#)

To be determined

April 2021

[XF-Actors final event](#)

To be determined

6-10 September 2021

[Organic World Congress 2021](#)

Rennes, France



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