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WELCOME NOTE

Dear readers,

Welcome to the April edition of our newsletter. Already [in February's special newsletter](#), we highlighted European farmers' grievances that had spilt onto the streets of Europe, catapulting farming to the top of EU policymakers' agendas with concerns ranging from environmental legislations and unfair competition, to the financial plights of farmers. Despite policymakers meeting some of the farmers' grievances by backtracking on some environmental legislation, the past weeks [saw yet another wave of protests](#), culminating in Brussels with smoke plumes of burning tires and columns of tractors bringing the city to a halt once more.

While farmers have real concerns, ranging from stark price increases and insufficient financial support, some like to paint the EU Green Deal as the true culprit. However, the real issue that needs addressing is the inadequate remuneration for farmers transitioning to more sustainable agricultural practices under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), as well as fair pricing by market actors by market actors throughout the food value chain.

Despite the farmer protests catapulting the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to the top of Europe's priority list, the Commission's long-awaited proposal on 15 March to [review the CAP and better support farmers has left](#) much to be desired. Rather than addressing their concerns, the proposal disappointingly erodes crucial environmental provisions such as soil cover during sensitive periods, crop rotation and biodiversity features. Adding insult to injury, farmers seeking to transition to sustainable farming practices find little support for their environmental ambitions. Essentially, the Commission is turning its back on farmers' demands for fair prices and a stronger role in the food supply chain.

With the EU elections on the horizon, politicians from various ideological backgrounds are hastily attempting to secure support from their respective bases, often prioritizing expediency over thorough scrutiny in legislative processes. From [shelving a much-needed legislative proposal on pesticide reduction](#) to [rushing supposedly democratic decision-making on New Genome Techniques \(NGTs\)](#) – disregarding critical perspectives. While the legislative file on NGTs is concerning biosafety and consumer choice and disregards a systemic solution to complex issues, the European organic movement appreciated the efforts to maintain transparency requirements and reintegrate traceability measures, which Member States should build on to safeguard farmer's decisions to reject NGTs.

With the EU elections only months away, we look forward to continue showing how organic is an easy solution to complex challenges like the climate and biodiversity crises and resource dependence.

If you are an IFOAM Organics Europe member, we would also like to point you to our section on debunking common myths about organic, available on [our member extranet](#) (for access / access issues, please contact membership@organicseurope.bio). Should any of our visuals and materials in this newsletter catch your eye and you would want to have it translated into your respective language please contact us at communication@organicseurope.bio.

As always, we invite you to continue reading to learn more about EU organic. To stay ahead of the curve and learn more about the latest developments relevant to organic and other agroecological practices, [subscribe to our newsletter](#) and follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [X](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Best wishes,

Thomas Fertl

Board representative of the Interest Group of Organic Farmers*

*[Read more about our Board and Interest Groups](#)



POLITICAL HOTSPOT

In this political hotspot we will zoom in on two topics that are being negotiated within the EU institutions that could heavily impact organic food and farming: green claims and the carbon removal certification framework. New Genomic Techniques (NGTs), another topic of vital importance is touched upon in the welcome note and its dedicated section.

Green claims

In March 2023, the European Commission published its proposal for a directive on substantiating green claims. Since then, the European Parliament has worked on this proposal, with its the final vote in Plenary on 12 March. [Read IFOAM Organics Europe's response to the vote in our press release.](#)

What does this legislation entail and what does it mean for organic?

As IFOAM Organics Europe, we fully welcome and support the aim of the Green Claims Directive, namely preventing greenwashing. However, we have two major concerns.

Our first concern is about the proposed methodology to measure a product's environmental impact. In the Commission's proposal, this legislation measured a product's impact on the environment only using the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF). Thanks to the organic movement's advocacy, the proposal now allows for substantiation of green claims through other methodologies. This is great news for the transition to sustainable food systems, as the PEF's environmental impact assessment excels at distinguishing *between* product categories, but unable to differentiate a product's impact within those categories. This leads to absurd results where all fruits and vegetables are awarded an A, irrespective of the farming practice used, seasonality, or transport time. **We therefore welcome that the Parliament has confirmed that there are methodologies than only the PEF to substantiate a green claim.**

Our second concern relates to private organic standards. Because organic's demonstrated environmental benefits, the Directive has excluded the organic label as defined in Regulation 2018/848 from its scope. Organic as detailed in the EU Organic Regulation is the EU's only legally regulated agricultural system which is recognised for its environmental performance. However, while the EU organic label is excluded from Directive's scope, private organic standards are not, even though these standards go beyond the EU Organic Regulation in terms of their environmental and social requirements. Nevertheless, as it stand now, private organic standards fall under the Green Claims Directive which would result in an extra, unnecessary, burden to private organic standards which already meet all requirements in the EU Organic Regulation. **The Parliament did not introduce exemptions for private organic standards, but there could be the possibility for a fast-track procedure for such standards.**

What are the next steps?

The EU's Member States (Council) are currently working on this Directive's proposal, and we expect the Council's conclusions in June. This would mean that negotiations on this Directive between the three EU institutions, or so-called 'trilogues', are likely to start after the EU elections. As IFOAM Organics Europe we will keep up our advocacy work.

For more information on green claims and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please [visit our website's food policy page and scroll down to 'Food labelling'](#) or contact silvia.schmidt@organicseurope.bio. Do note that we prioritise our members' requests.

Carbon Removal Certification Framework

The co-legislators achieved a provisional agreement on the certification framework for permanent carbon removals, carbon farming and carbon storage in products (CRCF). The European Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (COMENVI) already approved the agreement. As final 'rubber stamp' the Parliament's Plenary and Council should adopt this agreement.



What is it about and what does it mean for organic?

According to the legislation, carbon farming can be certified with a temporary certificate with a minimum duration of 5 years. **Two different types of carbon farming activities can be certified**: carbon sequestration and soil emission reductions. By 2026 the Commission should review the possibility to include livestock emissions reductions in the scope of the legislation.

A **standardised baseline** should be “representative of the standard performance of comparable practices and processes in similar social, economic, environmental and technological circumstances and take into account the geographical context”. Such tool would “positively recognises the action of first movers who have already engaged in eligible activities”. However, these standardised baselines still need to be developed and in the meantime, and where it is not possible to set a standardise baseline, a project-specific baseline will be used. **The project-specific baseline would not be able to recognise the efforts of first movers, such as organic farmers.**

For carbon farming activities it is mandatory to demonstrate a **biodiversity co-benefit**. However, the definition of this objective expands in the final agreement from restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems to “soil health, as well as avoidance of land degradation”. If soil carbon sequestration in itself was to be considered a contribution to soil health, this could the biodiversity objective is weakened.

What is next?

The European Parliament and the Council need to adopt the agreement. The impact of the legislation depends very much on aspects not defined within the CRCF – namely the definition of methodologies and the possible use of generated certificates.

For more information on organic and climate and IFOAM Organics Europe’s work related to carbon farming:

- Get a visual overview of [organic’s many benefits for climate and biodiversity in our infographic](#),
- Read our [document on organic’s benefits for climate and biodiversity](#), and
- Check out our [infographics on soil](#) and [biodiversity & climate change](#).

Could not find what you were looking for? [Visit our website](#) or contact hanna.winkler@organicseurope.bio. Do note that we prioritise our members’ requests.



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NEWS

1.1 Policy

Organic Regulations

Insights in international trade for EU and third country operators

On Monday 11 March, the [European Organic Certifiers Council](#) (EOCC) and IFOAM Organics Europe united experts providing insights into two important topics:

- The implementation of Regulation 2018/848 in third countries from 2025, and
- Control body recognition for the purpose of compliance with EU organic regulations.

Two experts, Aurélie Quintin, EOCC representative and Antoine Faure, EOCC Board member and Vice President, shared what they have learnt from the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development's (DG AGRI) Organic Unit on the state of play and on specific implications for organic operators in the EU and third countries.

Control bodies' technical dossiers

During the latest digital meeting, on 28 February, the Commission informed the EOCC that 47 control bodies submitted their technical dossiers with over half of them already assessed. The Commission continues to evaluate the others, having expedited their assessment process. It is confident to finalise the task this year and be ready to start the new system on 1 January 2025.

Control bodies will receive individual letters as soon as they are fully or partially recognised. The list of recognised control bodies (for the purpose of compliance) will be published as an implementing regulation. In March, the draft proposal with the first part of the list will be known. Member States will vote on it in the Committee on Organic Production (COP) in early June.

Regular regulatory updates will follow

It is important to be aware that this will be only the first part of the list and will be followed by regular updates by the Commission during the year on a monthly basis (voted and then published in July, September, November and December). Knowing about this continuous procedure is important to avoid switching from one control body to another due to fear of loss of certification continuity.

If a control body is not or only partially recognized in the first or second etc. list, it does not mean that it will not be recognized by the end of the year! [The EOCC has published a letter](#) confirming this gradual recognition process to the CBs.

In the first few months of 2024, operator certificates are still issued on the basis of equivalence under Reg. 834. These certificates originally should last to be valid for one year. Therefore, there will be a period while certificates issued under Reg. 834 and under Reg. 848 coexist. Even though CB recognition is given priority, the Commission confirmed to be working on a solution establishing a transition period and proper transition measures ensuring a smooth switch between the two systems.

Our members have early information to this information and can also read more in [detailed minutes](#) on our Member Extranet.

IFOAM Organics Europe's work on the EU Organic Regulation

Since March 2022, we are offering [guidelines to help practitioners interpret the EU Organic Regulation](#). These guidelines help readers to navigate the regulation, its implementing and delegated acts and links to definitions, recitals, other EU legislation and more. We will update the guidelines in the first quarter of 2024.

For more information on the EU organic regulation and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please [visit our website](#) or contact lea.bauer@organicseurope.bio. Do note that we prioritise our members' requests.



IFOAM Organics Europe members have early access to information on the EU Organic Regulation [through our Interest and Expert Groups](#) and our [member extranet](#). They also have one free access to the [EU Organic Regulation guidelines](#).

For information about what you can gain from being a member, read [our membership page](#) and contact membership@organicseurope.bio.



VALORITALIA



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Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

A CAP simplification without vision – Farmers and organic sector's demands left behind

On 15 March the Commission unveiled its [long-awaited proposal](#) to review the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to further support farmers. While the organic movement believes that measures to support farmers and answer the concerns expressed during last months' protests are necessary, the Commission's proposal fails to address the actual issues the agricultural sector and farmers are facing.

Why is the proposal bad for farmers and our environment?

The core of the proposal is scrapping several '[good agricultural and environmental conditions](#)' or GAECs. Specifically the conditions (or GAEC's):

- GAEC 1 and 8 on non-productive features,
- GAEC 7 on crop rotation,
- GAEC 6 on soil cover during sensitive periods, and
- GAEC 9 on damage to permanent grasslands.

Even though we believe that the current CAP's [conditionality](#) was poorly designed and not adapted to [the principles \(and practice\) of organic farming](#), simply removing them lowers the CAP's environmental ambitions even further. It is especially discouraging for farmers who want to transform their farm and farming practices to more sustainable systems because this CAP proposal:

- Does not provide comparative advantage to more ambitious farmers, like organic farmers, who wish to invest in sustainable methods of production;
- Lacks general support for all sustainable production methods.

Even a stronger role for farmers is missing

Adding insult to injury, in its current proposal, the Commission did not provide enough guarantees on the main reason why farmers have been taking to the streets: fair prices and a stronger role in the food supply chain. This is why [as organic movement we resoundingly reject this new CAP proposal as](#). Countless environmental NGOs and small farmers' organisations reacted the same way, deploring the missing opportunity of this review, as well as the lack of civil society's participation and a truly democratic process.

What happens next?

On 19 March, Members of the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (COMAGRI) exchanged views on the proposal with Commissioner for Agriculture Janusz Wojciechowski. However, the role of the Committee is limited since it does not have the opportunity to intervene in the process; the rules of procedure used for this urgent process only require the intervention of the European Parliament's Plenary. During the week of 22 April, the European Parliament's Plenary will decide whether they accept to vote on the proposal or not. If the plenary agrees to vote, voting will follow immediately.



Organic farmers, your voice matters!

In parallel, on 7 March the Commission opened a [farmers' consultation on simplification](#) giving farmers month to provide their input. However, once again the survey is not adapted to small-scale and organic farmers. As IFOAM Organics Europe, we are raising this problem with the Commission and we are calling on our members to mobilise so the voices of organic farmers are not forgotten. As IFOAM Organics Europe, the Steering Committee of our interest group of organic farmers (IGOF) worked on a template to answer the consultation. We shared this with all members of our IGOF, encouraging our farmers to reply to this consultation. If you wish to be involved, contact laura.sauques@organicseurope.bio.

Organic farmers' involvement within IFOAM Organics Europe

Organic farmers have a voice within IFOAM Organics Europe! Specifically in our Interest Group of Organic Farmers (IGOF), one of our [interest groups](#) that provide direct input from the different sectors in IFOAM Organics Europe's organisation. They formulate policies and positions relevant to their sector.

IFOAM Organics Europe's members can access [a list of its current members](#) and [the terms of reference](#) on the member extranet. Are you an IFOAM Organics Europe member who is:

- An organic farmer interested to become part of the IGOF? Contact laura.sauques@organicseurope.bio;
- Having issues accessing the member extranet? Contact membership@organicseurope.bio.

Are you interested in becoming part of the IGOF? You have to be a member of IFOAM Organics Europe to do so. Contact membership@organicseurope.bio for details.



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GMOs

Myth busting: NGTs and organic

With an eye on this year's elections, the EU institutions have geared up work on many important dossiers and are trying to advance progress on certain legislative proposals. But **rushing legislative processes is not necessarily a good thing for food, farming and our environment.**

Agrochemical industry pushes New Genomic Techniques on Europe

This is clearly visible in the sped-up timeline on the Commission's proposal on New Genomic Techniques (NGTs), a controversial topic with high stakes, such as environmental protection and citizens and food producers' freedom of choice. Following the proposal's publication, two parallel political processes started : negotiations in the Council of Agriculture Ministers on the one hand and negotiations and votes in the European Parliament on the other hand.

The Council presidency did not reach an agreement in the Council of Ministers, neither when put to a vote in December nor in February. Among the reasons are major concerns about the impact of deregulation on European breeding ([due to the issue of patents](#)) and the lack of workable solutions for co-existence with organic (and GM-free agriculture).

The European parliament reached a position in the plenary vote on 7 February 2024. [According to IFOAM Organics Europe](#) the outcome is a step backwards in terms of biosafety and freedom of choice for consumers, but MEPs safeguarded some minimum transparency requirements and even re-integrated traceability provisions that Member States should build on to secure the freedom of farmers not to use genetic engineering.

With so much at stake and unresolved concerns, more time and discussions are needed to address unanswered concerns about biosafety and patents, and to establish a robust framework that supports freedom of choice for producers and consumers.



Organic food & farming – Under ever-increasing attack

In this political context, the organic sector is increasingly being attacked by NGT proponents. Below you can find a summary of common arguments used to try and discredit the position of the organic movement, as well as our rebuttals to these misleading statements.

Myth 1: “Organic uses GMOs”

One of the most recurrent arguments is that “organic is lying to consumers about its use of old GMOs and doesn’t want them labelled”.

The techniques mentioned by these individuals, known as mutagenesis by irradiation or by chemical treatment, have been exempt from the EU legal framework on GMOs since as early as 1990 and served as the precursor to the to Directive 2001/18. Their exemption was granted based on their “long history of use at the time”.

In 1990, organic farming was not even regulated at EU level, and nobody cared to ask any representative of the organic movement what they thought about this exemption. These old mutagenesis techniques, dating back to at least the 1960s, have nothing in common with the recent genetic engineering techniques, that are also referred to (confusingly on purpose) as “mutagenesis”, and that are part of the so-called “novel genomic techniques” (NGTs) in EU jargon.

Organic breeders and operators would be more than happy to be able to exclude such varieties from the organic production process, but...they can’t! Precisely because the legal requirements of traceability and labelling do not apply to these old mutagenesis techniques. And this is exactly what the organic sector wants to avoid for the new genetic engineering techniques (however you call them, NGTs, gene editing, targeted mutagenesis, etc.). If products designed with these NGTs are not subject to mandatory traceability and labelling, their use would de facto be imposed on all farmers, organic or not, because there would be no way to know where they are, and no way to avoid them.

Myth 2: “Organic wants to use NGTs”

In a resolution adopted at the European organic movement’s June 2023 General Assembly, [European organic reaffirms that organic production should remain free from GMOs including from New Genomic Techniques](#) (NGTs). An overwhelming majority (97.69% of votes in favour, 2,31% against) of the organic movement voted in favour of a system-based approach of innovation and sustainability on Wednesday 21 June 2023. [Read the press release and resolution](#). The clear result of the resolution is also the outcome of a very arduous and democratic consultation on the position of the international and European organic movement on this issue. These time-intensive and thorough discussions were held over two years and culminated in a clear position [paper](#) adopted in 2017.

Myth 3: “Organic is bad for food security”

TP Organics, the European Technology Platform for Research & Innovation into Organics and Agroecology, published a clear [policy brief on food security and organic and agroecological farming](#). Its main message is to achieve long-term food security, we need to rethink our food production systems, making them less reliant on external inputs (fossil fuels, synthetic pesticides and fertilisers, imported feed, etc.) and more resilient, as outlined in the EU’s Farm to Fork Strategy. Despite enough food being produced worldwide, food security can be threatened by some intensive farming practices, unequal food distribution and income inequality, combined with inflation/increase in food and energy costs.

Further reading

Official positions

- [European organic movement’s resolution on new GMOs](#)
- Global organic movement position paper on [Compatibility of breeding techniques in organic systems](#)

Other materials

- Read the paper [Sustainability in organic breeding](#)
- Watch [our video explaining what new GMOs are and why we need to keep them regulated](#)



- Read our leaflet and learn why [all techniques of genetic modification must be regulated](#) – available in all European official languages: [\[BG\]](#) [\[CS\]](#) [\[DA\]](#) [\[DE\]](#) [\[EL\]](#) [\[EN\]](#) [\[ES\]](#) [\[ET\]](#) [\[FI\]](#) [\[FR\]](#) [\[HR\]](#) [\[HU\]](#) [\[IT\]](#) [\[LT\]](#) [\[LV\]](#) [\[MT\]](#) [\[NL\]](#) [\[PL\]](#) [\[PT\]](#) [\[RO\]](#) [\[SK\]](#) [\[SL\]](#) [\[SV\]](#)
- [New GMOs – Key resources](#), living article which is updated periodically
- [Young German organic farmers calling for their right to choose](#) (in German – January 2023)
- [Our webpage on old and new GMOs](#)

Contact helene.schmutzler@organicseurope.bio for more information. Please do note that we prioritise our members' requests.

IFOAM Organics Europe members can find more information on [the member extranet](#) and background materials in the [arguments database on the member extranet](#) (main messages, arguments/FAQs, visuals & videos). Contact membership@organicseurope.bio for access rights (issues).

For information about what you can gain from being a member, read [our membership page](#) and contact membership@organicseurope.bio.



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Seeds

[Proposal integrated Plant Reproductive Material Regulation improves after Parliament's inputs](#)

The EU is revising legislation on plant reproductive material, such as seeds, cuttings, trees, roots, tubers, and clones. Currently, [rules for the production and marketing of plant reproductive material \(PRM\) are spread across several directives](#) since the 1960s.

This revision aims to integrate everything in one regulation, harmonising implementation across all EU Member States. Some of the rules that will be adjusted concern:

- Market access for organic and conservation varieties,
- PRM intended for end users such as amateur gardeners,
- PRM intended solely for, and retained by, certain gene banks, organisations, and networks; and
- PRM exchanged between farmers.

Shortcomings for the organic sector

The Commission's proposal does however have some shortcoming relevant to organic breeding and conservation activities. Amongst other, the Commission proposes to expand the testing system for new varieties (value for sustainable conservation and use, VSCU) to crop types that were previously not subject to these tests, creating a considerable additional burden for crop breeding.

The proposal also contains amendments to the organic regulation that are not in line with the wishes of the organic sector. These changes would, amongst others, affect the production of organic heterogeneous material (OHM).

Discussions in Parliament's committees improved the proposal

The European Parliament's committees on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) and Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) have been discussing the proposal over the last months. As IFOAM Organics Europe, we have been advocating for amendments ensuring the organic breeding and farming sector can flourish.

The AGRI and ENVI committees, with votes on their respective positions in March, have contributed to considerably improve the original regulation proposal, addressing important issues such as the VSCU testing and



supporting the preservation of agrobiodiversity. They also had an ear for the concerns of the organic sector on the amendments of the organic regulation.

What comes next and more information?

The next steps are the European Parliament's vote in Plenary in April, and further work on the regulation proposal by European Member States in the Council. We will closely follow the further development of the regulation.

For detailed information on organic seeds:

- Read the paper [Sustainability in organic breeding](#),
- Read [LiveSeeding's Policy Brief 'EU reform on seed marketing regulation and its implications for the organic seed sector'](#),
- Watch [LIVESEED's video about organic plant breeding](#),
- Check out [the LiveSeeding project](#),
- Visit our website pages on [seeds](#) and [new GMOs](#), or
- Contact maria.zintl@organicseurope.bio for questions about the PRM regulation, helene.schmutzler@organicseurope.bio for questions about (new) GMOs and seeds and ilsa.philips@organicseurope.bio about the LiveSeeding project (do note that we prioritise our members' requests).

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Plant health care

[Von der Leyen yields to farmer's groups demands to shelve the Sustainable Use of Pesticide Regulation proposal](#)

This week the European Commission's President Ursula von der Leyen announced in a concession to farmers, after weeks of protests across Europe, that the **Sustainable use of Pesticides Regulation (SUR)** will be shelved. The regulation which was first tabled in June 2022 aimed to curb pesticide use by half by 2030.

While this move was unexpected, it was shocking nevertheless for proponents of stricter rules on pesticides, including IFOAM Organics Europe, because it marks yet another piece of the EU Farm to Fork strategy being scrapped. **Notably, it is seen as undermining the hard-won gains made through the EU Green Deal to meet the bloc's ambitious climate ambitions and protect biodiversity.**

The Commission justified the withdrawal of SUR on the grounds that it constitutes "a symbol of polarisation". The decision comes on the heels of a decision in the European Parliament back in November to reject SUR, and a vote against a proposal to send it back to the parliamentary committee. In expert circles it was already considered dead back then.

A new draft of the legislation is not expected any time soon.

Against this background, currently there is only one solution to actively reduce the use of synthetic pesticides in the EU: to have more organic food on our plates. Buying and eating organically farmed products is an active contribution to reducing the use of pesticides.



Learn about organic's system approach ensuring healthy ecosystems and [why organic farming does not use synthetic pesticides](#).

Find out more about [the pesticide load in conventional versus organic food](#).

For more information on pesticides and plant health and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please [visit our website](#) contact maria.zintl@organicseurope.bio. Do note that we prioritise our members' requests.

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Biodiversity, soil and water

Nature restoration in jeopardy – Member States' Environment Ministers endanger another EU law

After reaching a trilogue agreement on the Nature Restoration Law last November, adoption of a piece of European Union legislation by the Parliament and Council should be a rubber stamp. Not so with the Nature Restoration Law.

Sabotaging nature restoration...

In June 2022, the European Commission presented [two important pieces of legislation](#) – its legislative texts for an EU-wide Nature Restoration Law (NRL) and its [Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation](#) (SUR).

Both pieces of legislation would improve the health of farmers, consumers, and our environment. However, Member States and the agrochemical industry were quick to use Russia's invasion of Ukraine to sow fear about food security to keep the status quo and get rid of environmental ambitions – first [successfully focusing their efforts on the SUR](#) and now continuing with the NRL.

Doubling down on their efforts in run-up of the European Parliament's Plenary on 27 February 2024, the Parliament's right-wing groups again called for a vote against the much-needed nature restoration legislation, echoed by the centre-right European People's Party. Nevertheless, a majority of the Members of the European Parliament voted in favour of the NRL compromise text (the result of negotiations between the Parliament and the Council of the European Union).

On 25 March it should have been the turn of the Member States' Environment Ministers to adopt the agreement in the Council. However, an unexpected change in Hungary's position means that there was no majority. This means that EU's Member States blocked the adoption of an important and already negotiated piece of legislation.

... while we need to a resilient ecosystem

For the organic movement the Nature Restoration Law is crucial. A sustainable food system needs a healthy environment to work in and a resilient farming system to provide long-term food security.

Organic farming shows that productive farming systems that do not use synthetic pesticides can go hand in hand with biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration.



Farmers, nature, and our future should not be taken hostage by politicians playing at culture wars and undermining the democratic decision-making process. We call on the Council and its Belgian Presidency to break the deadlock and ensure the EU adopts the Nature Restoration Law!

For more information on the Nature Restoration Law and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue:

- Get a visual overview of [organic's many benefits for climate and biodiversity in our infographic](#),
- Read our [document on organic's benefits for climate and biodiversity](#), and
- Check out our [infographics on soil](#) and [biodiversity & climate change](#).

Could not find what you were looking for? [Visit our website](#) or contact hanna.winkler@organicseurope.bio. Do note that we prioritise our members' requests.

We invite our members to translate our materials and the infographic [Organic's many benefits for climate and biodiversity](#). The source materials for this are available on our member extranet > [hot topics](#) > [Water, soil & biodiversity](#). For information about what you can gain from being a member, read [our membership page](#) and contact membership@organicseurope.bio.



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Food policy

Only two more months to apply for EU funds to promote organic food & farming

Are you a trade or inter-trade organisation in an EU country? Are you working with or promoting organic products? You have less than 2 months to apply for co-funding of your promotion activities about organic!

[Find out if you can apply](#) and if your products are eligible on the Commission's website (available in all official EU languages), [in its factsheet](#) or [in its video](#)! They also offer tools and networks to [help find project partners](#).

In 2024, the European Commission pledged 185.9 million euro to fund promotion activities for sustainable and high-quality EU agri-food products in the EU and worldwide. **This includes 40 million euro dedicated specifically for organic.**

Specifically, the EU promotion policy budget co-funds the promotion of (among others) organic products, and the [deadline to apply is 14 May](#). [A Q&A by the Commission](#) details successful funded examples, the continuation rules, and much more.

If you are an IFOAM Organics Europe member and you would like to apply to a promotions policies scheme? You can find more information on our [member extranet](#). If you cannot find the answer there, please contact silvia.schmidt@organicseurope.bio.

For access to our member extranet and information about what you can gain from being a member, read [our membership page](#) and contact membership@organicseurope.bio.



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Apply to be the next winner of the European Organic Awards 2024!

Applications for the [third edition of the EU Organic Awards](#) will close on 12 May 2024. If you know of excellent examples along the organic supply chain, please share this article with them so have a chance to get the visibility they deserve!

EU organisations and actors from across the organic value chain [matching the eligibility criteria](#) – **including past applicants!** – are encouraged to apply.

Seven categories will be awarded with eight awards:

- Best organic farmer (female and male)
- Best organic region
- Best organic city
- Best organic “bio district”
- Best organic food processing SME
- Best organic food retailer
- Best organic restaurant/food service

The [Commission’s EU Organic Awards webpage](#) is available in all EU languages, as are [documents with practical guidelines and an introduction](#).

Get inspired in the videos of the [2022](#) and [2023 winners of the EU Organic Awards](#).

The annual [European Organic Awards](#) reward excellent and innovative actors in the organic value chain. The EU Organic Awards are jointly organised by the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Committee of the Regions, COPA-COGECA and IFOAM Organics Europe, with support of the European Parliament and of the Council. The awards ceremony takes place on [the official EU Organic Day](#).

[Documents with practical guidelines and an introduction](#) are available to potential applicants in all official EU languages. More information about the winners of EU Organic Awards:

- Articles about past [EU Organic Awards winners on our website](#),
- On social media using #EUOrganic,
- 2023: [Videos winners #EUOrganic Awards 2023](#) and [our article](#),
- 2022: [Videos winners #EUOrganic Awards 2022](#), and [our article](#).



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How school canteens can support a healthy, just, and sustainable European food system

On 12 March, three inspiring speakers showed how school canteens can change and integrate sustainability criteria –in urban, rural and semi-urban areas.

An NGO coalition we are part of, the [Buy Better Food](#) coalition, organised a session showing public food procurement’s power in fostering healthy, just, and sustainable European food systems at the [Open Food Conference](#) hosted by the Belgian Presidency.

We heard from 3 amazing speakers, telling us about their journeys to transform school canteens:

- Vincent Demaison from the Dordogne region, in the South-West of France told us about a local programme ensuring 100% organic food in schools. It re-connects children to the food they eat, thanks to a circular approach and a rich network of local farmers engaging with them;



- Orsolya Diófási-Kovács from the city of Budapest in Hungary told us about the city’s work identifying levers to integrate sustainability in their schools’ food procurement and presented us the key points;
- Finally, Tamara Bruning from the Belgian city Ghent presented its ambitious strategy implementing their innovative buyer platform, allowing small-scale farmers to access the city’s public procurement.

Peter Defranceschi of the Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) linked these real-life experiences to the Buy Better Food coalition’s [Manifesto for establishing minimum standards for school canteens](#).

As European organic movement we are part of the coalition because sourcing organically is a way in which institutions can advance their sustainability and promote the development of environmentally friendly and sustainable agriculture and food practices.

For more information on this issue, have a look at:

- The EU Food Policy Coalition’s [Sustainable Public Procurement of food: A goal within reach](#),
- Our leaflet [Making organic products in sustainable public procurement happen](#),
- Our infographics (available in multiple languages):
 - Overall benefits: [Benefits of Sustainable Public Procurement](#),
 - [Why policymakers should consider investing in sustainable public procurement](#),
- The work of the [Buy Better Food coalition](#), campaigning for sustainable food on the public plate, and
- The [SchoolFood4Change](#) project that will provide innovative solutions and tailored, locally adaptable good practices for schools, school meal providers, public authorities, and policymakers, in line with the EU’s Farm to Fork Strategy.

Could not find what you were looking for? Visit our [food policy webpage](#) and scroll down to “Food policy: Sustainable Public Procurement” or contact silvia.schmidt@organicseurope.bio. Do note that we prioritise our members’ requests.

We invite our members to translate the infographics we have created. The source materials for this are available on our member extranet > [hot topics](#) > Sustainable Food Systems > [Sustainable Public Procurement](#). For information about what you can gain from being a member, read [our membership page](#) and contact membership@organicseurope.bio.



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1.2 Research and innovation

Research and innovation advocacy / TP Organics

Organic movement starts mapping needs & priorities for research and innovation policies

Titled “Next steps to sustainable food systems”, TP Organics started its consultation process to identify what the organic movement and sector need from EU research and innovation policies. At its annual [Science Day](#) at BIOFACH 2024, TP Organics collected the first of a few rounds of inputs to come to a new “Strategic Research & Innovation Agenda (SRIA) for Organics and Agroecology”.

Various consultation rounds will follow, allowing stakeholders to give input that will lead to selected priority research areas and a wide variety of potential topics that should be addressed and supported by [Horizon Europe](#), the EU’s key funding programme for research and innovation.

Read the [full report on TP Organics’ website](#). If you want to get involved, please contact maria.gernert@tporganics.eu.



TP Organics is the European Technology Platform for Research & Innovation into Organics and Agroecology. IFOAM Organics Europe is a founding member and hosts its secretariat. Visit www.tporganics.eu for more information and follow its [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) @TPorganics.



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Research call to tackle sound digitalisation for agriculture & food systems open

The 2024 [ICT-AGRI-FOOD Joint Call](#) is officially open for proposals that will contribute “Towards transformation of agri-food systems for the benefit of planetary health, consumers and other stakeholders along the food value chain using data-based systems and ICT technologies”. The call aims to address urgent global challenges in agricultural and food systems emphasising the role of these systems in mitigating issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss and food security.

The scientific scope of the call addresses collaborative projects in 4 research topics:

- **Topic 1:** Artificial intelligence (AI) Tools for Sustainable Agri-Food Systems;
- **Topic 2:** Post-industrial agriculture: the best knowledge, digital technologies for reviving and strengthening best practices for regenerative agriculture;
- **Topic 3:** Smart decision-making and reflection systems in farming;
- **Topic 4:** Open topic.

Deadlines:

- Pre-registration: 15 May, 13:00h CEST
- Full Proposal Submission: 20 June, 13:00h CEST

Further information like the full call, templates and a link to the submission platform are available on the [ICT Agrifood website](#).

TP Organics is the European Technology Platform for Research & Innovation into Organics and Agroecology. IFOAM Organics Europe is a founding member and hosts its secretariat. Visit www.tporganics.eu for more information and follow its [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) @TPorganics.



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Research call ‘Fostering agroecology at farm & landscape levels’ open

The new [European Research & Innovation Partnership AGROECOLOGY](#) has launched its first call "Fostering agroecology at farm and landscape levels".

What is the Agroecology Partnership?

With 70 partners from 26 countries and regions, the partnership aims to structure and support a network of living labs and research infrastructures that will accelerate the transition towards agroecology throughout Europe. It will provide spaces for long-term, site-specific, multi-stakeholder and real-life experimentation, and direction for research activities on agroecology at the European and national levels.

The partnership wants to unlock and accelerate the transition to sustainable farming. While adopting a holistic view and vision of resilient, diverse, prosperous, climate, environmental and people friendly farming by 2050, the territorial landscape approach ensures the applicability and feasibility of solutions on the ground.

What are living labs and why support them?



Living labs are collaborative initiatives that co-create knowledge and innovations. This partnership focuses on them to speed innovation and the uptake of more sustainable agricultural practices. It will specifically engage farmers and other stakeholders in jointly developing solutions to local or regional problems while taking into account the specificities of farming systems and their environment.

Developing agroecology requires a deeper understanding of agroecosystems and their long-term interactions with nature. Through research infrastructures dedicated to ecosystems, the partnership and this call will support research activities through providing scientific data, computing or communication systems at dedicated research sites.

Are you active or interested in participating in research and innovation for more agroecological farming? Visit the [Agroecology call website](#) for information regarding requirements, procedure and submission process. **The deadline for pre-proposals is 26 April 2024, 14:00h CEST.**

TP Organics is the European Technology Platform for Research & Innovation into Organics and Agroecology. IFOAM Organics Europe is a founding member and hosts its secretariat. Visit www.tporganics.eu for more information and follow its [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) @TPorganics.



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Knowledge for organic

New faces and new projects in the Research & Innovation Unit

A new year means new research and innovation (R&I) projects! Several new Horizon Europe projects in which IFOAM Organics Europe is involved have officially kicked off in the first quarter of 2024. Two new colleagues also joined the R&I Unit in January: Tyler Arbour as a R&I Coordinator, and Rebeca Gonzalez as an ESC Volunteer. Get to know them in the article [Welcoming our new colleagues](#). To hear more about the exciting new projects and IFOAM Organics Europe's role in them, read on!

DARWIN: Transition to safe & sustainable food systems through new & innovative detection methods & digital solutions for plant-based products derived from new genomic techniques, under a co-creation approach

1 January 2024 to 30 June 2027

This project title is quite a mouthful, so let's break it down. The key phrase is 'new genomic techniques', abbreviated as 'NGTs', which you have probably heard about if you've been following our work and EU food and farming media lately (visit [our website for more information and key resources](#)).

A very short recap on NGTs

The term NGTs refers to biotechnologies that enable the modification of an organism's genomic DNA in order to create genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and "have emerged or have been developed since 2001, when the existing GMO legislation was adopted" (as the European Commission put it in their 2021 [study on the status of new genomic techniques](#)). The biggest innovation has been the 'CRISPR/Cas' genome editing method that came onto the scene starting around 2012, generating much excitement in the biotech and agrochemical community, with genetic modification in food crops seen as one of the main areas of application.

At the same time, the development of these new genomic techniques and their possible deregulation has also raised a lot of valid fears and concerns over unintended consequences for biosafety and food safety as well as the misuse or abuse of this powerful technology for greenwashing as well as patenting of seeds and genetic material. Watch our short explainer video [What are new GMOs and why we need to keep them regulated](#) if you would like to hear the story of these.



We don't know where these new genomic techniques are & will be used

This brings us to the 'new detection methods' part of the title. A major current concern is that plants and crops that have been genetically modified using NGTs, i.e. *new* GMOs, will be able to spread throughout the supply chain without detection. This is because current detection methods were designed for old GMOs, which leaves a clear DNA signature in the modified genome. With NGTs, the changes to the DNA can be much more subtle, and therefore more of a challenge to detect.

However, the genomic-sequencing and computational/statistical methods to detect these new GMOs are available, or are in the pipeline, and this is where DARWIN comes in: The project aims to develop, test, and validate no less than 9 new detection methods for new GMO crops obtained through NGTs.

We have the right to know what's in our food, so we need detection methods & clear labels

As you can tell, this is a highly technical project. But adequate detection methods are an important aspect to ensure traceability and labelling throughout the whole supply chain. This is also in line with the widespread [demands of European citizens who have been calling for new GMOs to be labelled for informed consumer choice](#).

This clearly has important implications for testing, certification, and accurate labelling of our food products, including organic and non-GMO labels. Thus, the political implications of this project are substantial, which is why we as IFOAM Organics Europe decided to be part of this ground-breaking and science-based research.

The first project work package where we are involved is titled 'Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) Collaborative Stakeholder Ecosystem' (the 'co-creation approach' part of the title). Together with our partners, we will bring together a diverse stakeholder group in a regulatory and policy roundtable to address the core implications surrounding NGTs later this year. We will lead the analysis of the roundtable results to provide policy recommendations in 2025. The policy work will culminate in a workshop with key stakeholders in 2026.

Finally, '...and digital solutions' refers to new and improved ways to ensure traceability, authenticity, and transparency of GM and non-GM food products throughout the entire supply chain, from seeds to shelves. This will be a learning opportunity for us at IFOAM Organics Europe, as it involves the use of blockchain and artificial-intelligence (AI) technologies. We are also excited that this project provides a chance for the Research & Innovation and Policy Units of IFOAM Organics Europe to team up and work more closely together within our organisation.

About the DARWIN project

The [DARWIN project](#) is a highly technological project aiming to develop, test, and validate 9 new detection methods for new GMO crops obtained through NGTs from 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2027. In full, it wants to "Transition to safe & sustainable food systems through new & innovative detection methods & digital solutions for plant-based products derived from new genomic techniques, under a co-creation approach".

This is a crucial project for food and farming systems that want to remain GMO-free. So, as IFOAM Organics Europe we are part of the work package 'Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) Collaborative Stakeholder Ecosystem'. Together with our partners, we will bring together a diverse stakeholder group in a regulatory and policy roundtable. This will result in policy recommendations in 2025 (based on the roundtable's results) and a workshop with key stakeholders in 2026.

To find out more about the DARWIN research project [visit its website](#), read its [recent press release](#) and follow it on [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#).

SOILL-Startup: Startup of the SOILL support structure for SOIL Living Labs

1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025



Rue Marie-Thérèse 11 – 1000 Brussels – Belgium – Phone: +32 2 280 12 23 – Email: info@organicseurope.bio

A core strategy of the [Soil Deal for Europe Mission](#), which is all about restoring and protecting the health of the soils that literally underly our food system, is the creation of 100 Soil Health Living Labs and Lighthouses across Europe. SOILL-Startup is the first 2-year phase of the larger SOILL Framework Partnership coordinated by the European Network of Living Labs ([ENoLL](#)). During this period, the project will work with the first wave of Soil Health Living Labs and Lighthouses to create a central support structure to aid current living labs and potential applicants. Together with FiBL, the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture's European ([FiBL Europe](#)) and Hungarian ([ÖMKi](#)) offices – the Hungarian Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, IFOAM Organics Europe is a partner in the project, which held its kick-off meeting on 15-16 January 2024 in Brussels, and IFOAM Organics Europe R&I Coordinator Tyler Arbour attended.

What kind of support will be provided?

SOILL-Startup will be a web-based hub that will:

- Facilitate outreach, collaboration, and monitoring within the Living Lab network and beyond;
- Develop trainings and supporting tools on methodologies, technical aspects, and cross-cutting areas;
- Develop a consolidated (self-)assessment framework that will allow current or potential living labs to identify strengths and weaknesses and adjust their approach accordingly.

The remaining support activities can be summarised as facilitating networking, knowledge sharing, and matchmaking to expand and strengthen the entire network of Soil Health and related Living Labs.

About SOILL-Startup

[SOILL-Startup](#) is the first 2-year phase of the larger SOILL Framework Partnership. The project will work with the first wave of Soil Health Living Labs and Lighthouses to create a central support structure to help current living labs and potential applicants. The European Network of Living Labs ([ENoLL](#)) coordinates the partnership

Together with our members [FiBL Europe](#) and the Hungarian Research Institute of Organic Agriculture ([ÖMKi](#)), IFOAM Organics Europe is a project partner. As one of 28 European partners we contribute, among others, to an engagement campaign for applicant living labs, a helpdesk and info points, coaching and training, and developing a methodological framework for monitoring and evaluation.

If you or your organisation want to learn more about becoming (part of) a Soil Health Living Lab, keep following our newsletter and check out the [SOILL-Startup website](#) (coming soon), [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#).

OrganicYieldsUP: Improving yields in organic cropping systems

1 February 2024 to 31 January 2028

Unlike most Horizon projects with their very creative acronyms, the name of this one makes clear what it's all about [addressing the 'yield gap' between crops grown using organic practices versus those grown in more intensive, high-input systems](#).

Yields is one of the 23 'actions' in the European Commission's [Organic Action Plan](#) to reach the European Green Deal's target of 25% of agricultural land under organic farming by 2030.

At the project kick-off meeting held 27-28 February 2024 at FiBL Switzerland, the coordinators from [FiBL Europe](#) and representatives from the 15 other participating organisations came together to meet one another face-to-face, hear about the planned actions from each work-package leader, and to start working together in a series of breakout group workshops. Tyler Arbour, R&I Coordinator at IFOAM Organics Europe, is involved in the project and attended the meeting.

In the opening session, the project's Policy Officer Susana Gaona Sáez (of the EU Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development's Research & Innovation Unit) summarized the project's why nicely: "When putting together the research & innovation work programme specific to organic agriculture, the



main message that kept coming up was that the knowledge to improve crop yields is out there, but needs to be brought together so that it can be taken up and applied by practitioners in the field”.

She also stressed the need to reach out beyond organic farmers if we want to increase the conversion from conventional to organic, as well as the importance of cooperation with other projects, giving as examples [LIVSEEDING](#), [InnOBreed](#), [OrganicAdviceNetwork](#), [OrganicTargets4EU](#), and [the European Partnership Agroecology](#).

About OrganicYieldsUP

[OrganicYieldsUP](#)'s project partners will develop a database capable of storing diverse crop yields data in a coherent way and gather the existing data from scientific studies and existing databases. The analysis of this new 'mega-dataset' will identify the major and minor yield gaps as well as strategies for increasing yields. To apply this knowledge, the project will form multi-stakeholder peer groups in each European macro-region.

Workshops with practitioners, visits to 'lighthouse farms', and cross-visits of the groups across regions will allow for rapid knowledge exchange and co-design of strategies for yield improvements and resilience, including under different modelled climate scenarios.

Both research and innovation and policies impact the options available to farmers and the decisions they make. As IFOAM Organics Europe, our job focuses on the work package 'Recommendations for EU research and policies', led by the colleagues from the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies in Pisa, Italy.

We will continue to keep you informed about project developments and opportunities to get involved.

OrganicClimateNET: A pilot network of organic farming actors contributing to the uptake of climate farming and its co-benefits for a carbon neutral a climate resilient Europe

1 February 2024 – January 2028

In February, [OrganicClimateNET](#) has started. The project will support organic farms' capacity to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change while considering co-benefits to biodiversity, water, soil, and air. OrganicClimateNET will establish a pilot network of 250 organic farms across 12 EU countries to test, improve, and implement climate and carbon farming practices. Peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange between farms and across countries will be core elements of the project.

As a project partner, IFOAM Organics Europe will support the design of organic climate policies. Therefore, we will map and assess relevant policies, produce policy briefs and engage with stakeholders in policy workshops together with project partners. FiBL Europe coordinates the project which runs from February 2024 until January 2028.

You can follow OrganicClimateNET on [LinkedIn](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).



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OrganicAdviceNetwork project, the first Europe-wide network for organic advisors, starting soon!

As the EU Farm-to-Fork Strategy aims to achieve 25% of organic farmland in the EU by 2030, new organic farmers are expected to enter organic, and there is a need for more, better connected and skilled organic advisors.

The OrganicAdviceNetwork project will create and animate a network of advisors and advisory services for the organic sector across Europe. In-person and online training will take place in various agricultural topics covering ruminants, arable, fruits, vegetables, and viticulture. In addition, courses introducing the principles of organic agriculture and addressing the frequently occurring issues in the conversion process will be provided to conventional advisors or young graduates interested in becoming organic advisors.



Key to the establishment of the network will be the cross-visits foreseen in the project, which are unique opportunities for new or experienced organic advisors to connect and exchange with their peers from neighbouring countries.

The project will also analyse and identify financing strategies and promising business models for a long-lasting and well-structured network of advisory services for organic across Europe. **Advisory services from 14 European countries are involved in the project but all types of organic advisors and advisory services willing to join the network and/or attend the training are very welcome!**

The project kick-off meeting will take place in Brussels mid-April. You will hear from us very soon on our website. If you are interested in our project activities and would like to get further engaged, please contact claire.morelle@organicseurope.bio and stefano.orsini@organicseurope.bio.

About the OrganicAdviceNetwork

The [OrganicAdviceNetwork project](#) will create and animate a network of advisors and advisory services for the organic sector across Europe. It will do so via in-person and online trainings and courses on a wide variety of agricultural topics to help conventional advisors or young graduates interested in becoming organic advisors. To-be and seasoned organic advisors will exchange with their peers. The project will also research the finance and business-side of establishing a European network of organic advisory services.

Advisory services from 14 European countries are involved in the project but **all types of organic advisors and advisory services willing to join the network and/or attend the trainings are very welcome!**

As IFOAM Organics Europe we lead on this project. For more information, please contact claire.morelle@organicseurope.bio and stefano.orsini@organicseurope.bio.



OrganicAdviceNetwork is funded by the European Union (Grant no. 101134850) and by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) (Grant no. tbd). Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union, European Research Executive Agency (REA) or Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI). Neither the European Union nor any other the granting authority can be held responsible for them.”

OrganicTargets4EU: Unlocking the potential of AKIS for the organic sector

The EU Green Deal and the Farm to Fork strategy set the ambitious target of reaching 25% of agricultural land under organic and a significant increase of organic aquaculture by 2030. **To reach the 25% target, the organic area and organic aquaculture growth would need to triple.** If the current trend in organic land and aquaculture would continue as “business as usual” (like 2016-2020) the EU would reach only 15% organic agricultural land by 2030.

The project OrganicTargets4EU wants to support achievement of these targets. Amongst other things, it recognises the crucial role of agricultural knowledge and innovation system (AKIS) for the organic sector and the targets.

So, [OrganicTargets4EU](#) calls for concrete actions to encourage a well-functioning [AKIS](#) across EU Member States to unlock the organic sector’s potential. Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) can be the bridge between science, practice, and policy.

What are agricultural knowledge and innovation system (AKIS)?

AKIS link people and organisations to promote mutual learning, to generate, share and utilise agriculture-related technology, knowledge, and information. It brings together diverse actors from the private, public and non-profit sectors connected to agriculture, including farmers, farm workers, agricultural educators, researchers, non-academic experts, public and independent private advisors, supply chain actors, and others.



What did OrganicTargets4EU do?

The OrganicTargets4EU project assessed AKIS in organic agriculture, aquaculture, and across value chain actors in eight focus countries within the EU: Austria, Denmark, Germany, Italy, France, Hungary, Romania and Greece.

Results of expert interviews, online surveys, and stakeholder mapping describe the organisational characteristics of AKIS in each country, policy background and advisory services in place. The project's key findings are as follows:

- **AKIS' development greatly differs across Europe.** Countries with more developed organic sectors have more national policy support and well-established networks of actors. Countries with a less developed AKIS for organic are characterised by private market actors often taking over AKIS functions. In such context, local connections and networks are vital knowledge hubs, while also addressing the shortcomings of organic provisions within AKIS;
- A well-functioning **AKIS for organic depends on conventional AKIS actors** and their willingness to support organic farming. Organic provisions in AKIS are not recognised either politically or institutionally, which lead to a lack of strategic planning and funding. Nevertheless, key actors needed for a well-functioning AKIS for organic are already present in the national AKIS.
- **EU programmes play a crucial role in shaping the development of AKIS for organic.** EU projects and initiatives (e.g., [EIP AGRI](#)) provide opportunities and funding for regular international and in-country exchanges of experiences, best practices

👉 [Read the full OrganicTargets4EU AKIS assessment here](#)

👉 Subscribe to the project newsletter [Contact Us - OrganicTargets4EU](#)

About OrganicTargets4EU

The Horizon Europe project OrganicTargets4EU (2022-2026) aims to help reach 25% of agricultural land under organic farming and a significant increase in organic aquaculture by 2030. IFOAM Organics Europe leads this project which is working on outcomes that will drive the growth and development of the organic sector focussing on policy implementation, evidence-based decision making, increased and coordinated Research & Innovation and increased knowledge sharing. The project results will be discussed in a multi-actor policy dialogue and it will make recommendations for the CAP strategic plans and EU/national organic action plans from 2025-2027 and from 2028 onwards.

Visit [the project website](#) for more information and follow its hashtag #OrganicTargets4EU on [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#) or contact ambra.desimone@organicseurope.bio.



Funded by
the European Union



OrganicTargets4EU is funded by the European Union (Grant no. 101060368) and by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) (Grant no. 22.00155). Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union, European Research Executive Agency (REA) or Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI). Neither the European Union nor any other granting authority can be held responsible for them

The EU-FarmBook platform is ready to store and share your project's practice-oriented materials

Too much of the knowledge coming from research and innovation projects does not reach the practitioners who could ultimately use and apply it. The [EU-FarmBook](#) project and platform aims to help change this by becoming the main knowledge repository and go-to source for practice-oriented information on all topics related to agriculture and forestry. As members of the organic movement, you can help us "make the EU-FarmBook more organic" by submitting your best practice!

Share your best practices

On 8 February 2024 the platform was officially launched and is actively seeking contributions from any ongoing or past EU projects that have valuable materials to share, whether at EU, national, or regional level. [Watch the video recording of the event.](#)



Rue Marie-Thérèse 11 – 1000 Brussels – Belgium – Phone: +32 2 280 12 23 – Email: info@organicseurope.bio

If you are involved (or have been previously) in research and innovation projects that have produced materials that could benefit agricultural practitioners, then you can play a vital role! As members of the organic movement, help us (IFOAM Organics Europe) to “make the EU-FarmBook more organic”.

Why share your best practices?

Aside from being a noble thing to do, by uploading your project’s key outputs to the EU-FarmBook you will ensure that they are kept findable and securely stored for the long term. The project will end in 2029, but ensuring the financial security of the platform beyond the project lifetime is also a core part of the mission. The EU-FarmBook is more than a data repository, of course, because there will be more and more contributors and users across Europe that will be actively engaging with, learning from, and applying the knowledge and best practices made available on the platform. This is how we transform agriculture and forestry in Europe to achieve a truly sustainable system!

How can you share your best practices?

Start on the platform’s [Contributors page](#) (this [how-to video](#) on the Support page is also handy). There is also a team of EU-FarmBook Ambassadors across the EU to help you: to find the ambassador in your area, check out the [Ambassador’s Map](#). Members of TP Organics and IFOAM Organics Europe can contact Tyler Arbour directly at tyler.arbour@organicseurope.bio. Finally, there will be a [short series of back-to-back training session on 23 May 2024](#).

As IFOAM Organics Europe has been a partner from the beginning. As with the previous projects, EU-FarmBook is carried out by a diverse group of [partner organisations](#), including universities and research organizations, farmers’ organisations and cooperatives, national and regional advisory organisations, and others. These partners have been busy engaging members of the EU agriculture and forestry sectors to determine the user needs of the platform, alongside designing and building the database infrastructure required to meet these demands. All these efforts have paid off, and the EU-FarmBook database is finally ready and awaiting your project’s practice-oriented materials to be shared with a wider audience!

About EU-FarmBook

The [EU-FarmBook project](#) is the third and final project in a series that started in January 2019 with the [EURAKNOS](#) project and continued through the pandemic into 2022 with [EUREKA](#). It will run from August 2022 through July 2029. Like the previous projects, EU-FarmBook is carried out by a diverse group of 29 partner organisations, including universities and research organizations, farmers’ organisations and cooperatives, national and regional advisory organisations, and others.

Within EU-FarmBook, IFOAM Organics Europe ensures the information on the platform suits the needs of organic actors. We will also promote the FarmBook platform and link it up to the already existing knowledge platform for the organic sector: [Organic Farm Knowledge](#). Additionally, IFOAM Organics Europe will be involved in the creation of Education and Training material, such as practice abstracts and communication materials such as webcasts, farm cafes and knowledge exchange seminars. Ghent University coordinates the EU-FarmBook project.

Follow the [project’s website](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#) for developments.

About Organic Farm Knowledge

The Organic Farm Knowledge platform has been collecting best-practices, tools, and resources on aspects related to organic farming. They are easily searchable and available in multiple languages at www.organic-farmknowledge.org.

[Subscribe](#) to the newsletter to receive periodic updates via email, and do remember to follow the Organic Farm knowledge platform on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for news and events. For more info please contact organic-farmknowledge@fibl.org.



Organic Farm Knowledge was set up by [ICROFS](#) (International Centre for Research in Organic Food Systems) in the framework of [OK-Net Arable](#) and [OK-Net EcoFeed](#) developed it further. Both projects were coordinated by [IFOAM Organics Europe](#) and are funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. The third core partner of the Organic Farm Knowledge platform is [FiBL](#) (Research Institute of Organic Agriculture).




EU-FarmBook is funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or REA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.


Online knowledge exchange session: Biostimulants in organic farming, May 2024

Have you used biostimulants? Or are you an expert on them? We would like to invite you to Climate Farm Demo's first organic knowledge exchange joining experts and practitioners sharing their knowledge and experience with the use of biostimulants in organic farms.

The second part of the session will be a discussion guided by the hosts where attendees can ask questions and share their own experiences.

Soil Biological Stimulants – Available options to organic farmers

 May 2024 (Date TBD)

 Online (Teams)

Biostimulants are substances or microorganisms used to promote plant health and growth. As their use increases with farmers' interest in producing food sustainably, we want to take the chance to explore the uses and benefits of different types of biostimulants available to organic farmers. This session aims at creating a space for farmers, advisors and other members of the Climate Farm Demo consortium to learn from each other and discover new agricultural practices that benefit crops, soil and biodiversity.

Would you like to be in the panel or do you have questions about this event? Please send an email to alba.saez@organicseurope.bio. The session will be hosted by IFOAM Organics Europe and co-organized with Abacus Agriculture.

About Climate Farm Demo

[Climate Farm Demo](#) is a pan-European network of Pilot Demo Farmers (PDFs) covering 28 countries and all pedo-climatic areas that will increase, speed-up and disseminate climate smart farming practices and tools through a network of 1,500 pilot farms across Europe and all actors of the Climate Smart Agriculture Knowledge & Innovation Systems (AKIS). IFOAM Organics Europe will facilitate knowledge sharing and developing synergies between Climate Farm Demo and other EU projects, policymakers, and flagship initiatives. IFOAM Organics Europe is the organic sector's thematic leader. IDELE coordinates Climate Farm Demo which will run until the end of September 2029.

[Visit the project's website](#) to learn more and follow the latest project's developments on [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#) using [@climatefarmdemo](#).



Climate Farm Demo has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 727388 (PLAID), No 728061 (AgriDemo-F2F) and No 772705 (NEFERTITI). 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's integrated pest management practices – IPMWORKS factsheet

Are you an organic farmer or advisor in any of these countries or production systems? Are you or do you know a conventional farmer interested to reduce pesticide use? Then this [fact sheet of pests and diseases, as well as measures to manage them](#) might be for you.



The fact sheet includes cultural, mechanical/physical and biological control measures to deal with the most common pests in greenhouses, arable crops, outdoor vegetables and orchards. Results are based on organic practices by farms in Belgium, Spain, Italy, Poland and Finland that participate in the H2020-funded project IPMWORKS.

Read the full [fact sheet for the organic sector of IPMWORKS](#). The described measures have been tested and proven successful in the farms involved in the project.

IPMWORKS is an EU-wide farm network demonstrating and promoting cost-effective Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies. Its goal is to promote IPM adoption to reach a 50% pesticide use reduction of European agriculture by 2035.

IFOAM Organics Europe is a partner in the project. You can follow @H2020IPMWorks on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) & [YouTube](#) to stay tuned.



Funded by
the European Union

IPMWORKS has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101000339. 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

Free and online best practices for organic farmers & trainers and multipliers

Organic farmers and those who want to transform their farm and farming system to more sustainable practices have more and more options for knowledge sharing. The organic movement has been a pioneer when it comes to innovation food and farming beyond technology. The following best practices are a testament to this.

Web-based education campaign: Naturland Academy

From climate change to species extinction, agriculture is facing major and diverse global challenges. [Naturland Academy](#) is a web-based education campaign to support farmers worldwide with opportunities for further training and knowledge exchange for ecological conversion.

Various formats for guided or independent learning offer target group-orientated content, from videos and seminars to complex multi-part courses on specific specialist topics. These are often supplemented by practical workshops, especially for more complex courses. Such field trips, for which participants can register via the platform, expand the e-learning into "blended learning".

The platform covers specific questions ranging from pest management in individual crops to cultivation systems such as coffee production in agroforestry. In addition to the farmers themselves, trainers and multipliers will benefit from the platform. With the help of the "Training of Trainers" (ToT) model, new and less experienced trainers are coached by master trainers, thus multiplying the transfer of knowledge.

Best-practices, tools & resources in many languages: Organic Farm Knowledge

The Organic Farm Knowledge platform has been collecting best-practices, tools, and resources on aspects related to organic farming since 2015. They are easily searchable and available in multiple languages at www.organic-farmknowledge.org.

A video introducing the Organic Farm Knowledge platform, its offerings and wide range of tools are available in [English](#), [Italian](#), [German](#), [Estonian](#), [Greek](#) and [Dutch](#). [Subscribe](#) to the newsletter to receive periodic updates via email, and do remember to follow the Organic Farm knowledge platform on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for news and events. For more info please contact organic-farmknowledge@fibl.org.

Organic Farm Knowledge was set up by [ICROFS](#) (International Centre for Research in Organic Food Systems) in the framework of [OK-Net Arable](#) and [OK-Net EcoFeed](#) developed it further. Both projects were coordinated by [IFOAM Organics Europe](#) and are funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation



programme. The third core partner of the Organic Farm Knowledge platform is [FiBL](#) (Research Institute of Organic Agriculture).

Knowledge from research and innovation projects: EU-Farmbook

Too much of the knowledge coming from research and innovation projects does not reach the practitioners who could ultimately use and apply it. The [EU-FarmBook](#) project and platform aims to help change this by becoming the main knowledge repository and go-to source for practice-oriented information on all topics related to agriculture and forestry. As members of the organic movement, you can help us “make the EU-FarmBook more organic” by submitting your best practice! Read more about in [our dedicated article](#).

The [EU-FarmBook project](#) is the third and final project in a series that started in January 2019 with the [EURAKNOS](#) project and continued through the pandemic into 2022 with [EUREKA](#). It will run from August 2022 through July 2029. Follow the [project’s website](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#) for developments.



IFOAM ORGANICS EUROPE DEVELOPMENTS

1.3 Updates for members

Launch of organic farmers subgroup on post-2027 Common Agricultural Policy

Our Interest Group of Organic Farmers (IGOF) launched its subgroup on the post-2027 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). While the current CAP only entered into force in 2023, discussions for the CAP post 2027 are in full swing in the European institutions, fuelled by geopolitical and societal events like the war in Ukraine and farmers' protest all over Europe.

In this context, the European Commission aims to have a "package" ready by June 2024, orienting the future of EU agriculture. This includes the shape of the next CAP as preparation for the next European Commission that will take up its duties in fall of 2024. Preparatory work for this is of utmost importance for Europe's farmers who want to grow food sustainably as it will directly feed into the next CAP proposal – which the next Commission is expected to deliver in July 2025. So, the time to make sure the next CAP encourages sustainable food and farming – including safeguards for organic farming in the proposal – is now.

European organic movement prepares its vision for the new CAP

The plenary of our Interest Group of Organic Farmers (IGOF) has launched a subgroup, gathering around 15 people who will work at technical level on a vision of the CAP post-2027. The subgroup's work will evolve according to political priorities, so can vary depending on the period.

The sub-group will draft IFOAM Organics Europe's position on the CAP post-2027 after which it that will be discussed in-person by the IGOF on 2-3 May in Switzerland. In the medium and long term, the sub-group will be involved in developments on the future CAP and will be consulted when EU institutions need IFOAM Organics Europe's input.

About our IGOF

IFOAM Organics Europe's Interest Group of Organic Farmers (IGOF) is one of IFOAM Organics Europe's four interest groups. [Our interest groups](#) provide direct input from the different sectors in IFOAM Organics Europe's organisation. They formulate policies and positions relevant to their sector.

IFOAM Organics Europe's members can access [a list of its current members](#) and [the terms of reference](#) on the member extranet. Are you an IFOAM Organics Europe member who is:

- An organic farmer interested to become part of the IGOF? Contact laura.sauques@organicseurope.bio;
- Having issues accessing the member extranet? Contact membership@organicseurope.bio.

Are you interested in becoming part of the IGOF? You have to be a member of IFOAM Organics Europe to do so. Contact membership@organicseurope.bio for details.



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New members-only sessions: (mis)use of regenerative & positioning organic to various political audiences

We are thrilled to announce new sessions in our member-exclusive webinar series 'Let's Discuss Organic'. On 26 April we will cover regenerative agriculture and (mis)use of this farming method – [originating from the organic movement](#) – and on 8 May we will cover how to communicate organic across the political spectrum.

Regenerative agriculture and how it is (mis)used

On 26 April, 10:00-11:30 CEST, our members and Policy Manager Silvia Schmidt will explore the relationship between organic and regenerative farming and how the European organic food and farming movement is already embracing regenerative practices.



Amongst others, in this session we will explore:

- Concerns about the misuse and inflationary use of the term "regenerative agriculture";
- Lack of a universally accepted scientific or legal definition;
- Greenwashing and its implications for consumers, investments, and policy;
- Bottlenecks to transformation of the food system towards sustainability and agroecology;
- Importance of discerning truly regenerative efforts from misleading claims.

As our member you can register using the registration link [on our member extranet](#).

How to communicate organic across the political spectrum

With the EU elections in June only weeks away, we are organising a timely session on how to effectively communicate about organic farming to left and right audiences using targeted language on 8 May, 10:00-11:30 CEST.

In this member-only we will:

- Discuss agrochemical corporations' tactics to drown out farmers' voices in favour of industrial farming;
- Introduce a new messaging framework and example narratives positioning organic as systemic solution to political parties across the spectrum.

As our member you can register using the registration link [on our member extranet](#).

These sessions follow our January session [Fighting greenwashing with the Green Claims Directive](#) and March session on access to seeds and food sovereignty in organic farming. Let's Discuss Organic will be running until June and the remaining sessions will be announced shortly. Stay tuned!

Were you unable to attend or missed a previous session? All presentations and recordings are accessible on the members' extranet, via the pathway: extranet > hot topics & resources > other hot topics > Let's Discuss Organic. Contact membership@organicseurope.bio for access rights (issues).

For information about what you can gain from being a member, read [our membership page](#) and contact membership@organicseurope.bio.



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Share your membership experience with us: your feedback matters!

Do you have any feedback about the membership services we provide as IFOAM Organics Europe? Or maybe about our activities, your role in our thematic groups (Interest Groups, Expert Groups, Task Forces) or anything else?

We value your input and are eager to hear your suggestions! If you [fill in our membership questionnaire](#) we will use your input to continue improving our operations so it keeps meeting your needs.

You have time to fill in the questionnaire until 1 September 2024 and will share the results with you in autumn 2024. [We encourage all IFOAM Organics Europe's members to participate](#) so we can make sure as many voices as possible are heard! Your assistance in encouraging fellow members to provide feedback would be highly appreciated.

Access the membership questionnaire [via our member extranet](#). Contact membership@organicseurope.bio for access rights (issues).



For information about what you can gain from being a member, read [our membership page](#) and contact membership@organicseurope.bio.



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Upcoming 2024 Council meetings: Strengthening connections across Europe in September & November

We are pleased to invite [\(y\)our national representatives to the European organic umbrella organisation](#) to meet their European counterparts during one of our upcoming Council meetings.

We kindly request Council members to save the date for:

- 10 September, 9:00-12:00 CEST, Budapest, Hungary: Physical meeting before our annual [European Organic Congress](#) to provide your perspective to the update of our internal strategy;
- 19 November, 10:00-13:00 CET: online session.

We will share more information on the meetings directly with Council members in due time.

IFOAM Organics Europe's second chamber, the Council, is one of the driving forces behind the democratic functioning of our organisation as it creates a vital link between each countries' members and IFOAM Organics Europe. [Learn more about our democratic governance structure.](#)



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Organic movement's voice in the Civil Dialogue Group on Environment, Climate and the CAP

IFOAM Organics Europe, our members and experts regularly advise and discuss policy options with the Commission and other stakeholders at meetings of the Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI)'s Civil Dialogue Groups (CDG).

To make our voice heard we participated to the Joint CDG meeting on environment, climate change and the CAP strategic plans on 14 March 2024. On the agenda:

- Reflections on the positives, bottlenecks, and possible improvements of the CAP's green architecture;
- Discussions on ways to achieve sustainable livestock farming transition in the EU;
- Updates and exchanges on the current crisis and the proposals for simplification;
- Presentation of the EU Climate Target 2040;
- Presentation of the European Climate Risks assessments published by the European Environmental Agency.

Members find the full debrief, presentations and agenda on our member extranet > [Civil Dialogue Group](#) > Meetings documents. Are you an IFOAM Organics Europe member who does not have access to our member extranet yet? Contact membership@organicseurope.bio.

How do Civil Dialogue Groups (CDG)'s works and how can you get involved?

Option 1: Assigned member

Assigned members of a CDG can attend CDG meetings and have the right to take the floor. They are assigned following a short and easy application process. IFOAM Organics Europe members who are interested in a seat in the CDGs can write to civildialoguegroups@organicseurope.bio. Following your application, our Board assigns the selected members for a two-years mandate.

A [list of our members who are part of the CDGs](#) is available on our member extranet.



Option 2: Observer

It is also possible to join CDG meetings as an observer (online). We make the observer link available to all our members on member extranet > [Civil Dialogue Group](#) > Events.

Information for IFOAM Organics Europe's members

IFOAM Organics Europe's members can read about the key points of the recent CDG meetings on the [member extranet](#). If you want to get more details on any topic, please check our [civil dialogue groups extranet space](#) and get access to debriefs, minutes and other documents of the CDG meetings.

Should you have any questions regarding Civil Dialogue Groups and/or would like to share relevant information or topics to cover in upcoming CDGs please write to civildialoguegroups@organicseurope.bio.

Are you an IFOAM Organics Europe member who does not have access to our member extranet yet? Contact membership@organicseurope.bio for access rights (issues).



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Do you want to be the first to receive our member-only communication? As our member you can receive mobile notification as soon as we upload member-only news on the extranet.

How? By following these simple steps:

1. Download the SharePoint app to your mobile device (& allow notifications)
2. Visit our [member extranet](#) on the mobile device
3. Open the menu in the top right corner & click 'Follow'

Are you an IFOAM Organics Europe member and you do not have access to the member extranet yet? Or do the steps above not work? Please [check our FAQ](#) or contact membership@organicseurope.bio.

Like the work we do for you?
Want to translate our visuals and infographics?
Contact communication@organicseurope.bio

1.4 Updates about the organisation

[Explaining IFOAM Organics Europe's work in two pages – Updated prospectus](#)

In the first quarter of 2024, we updated [our prospectus, a short overview of our activities and accomplishments](#) over the past years, to you, our members, but also policymakers, trade organisations, NGOs and others working in food and farming.

Our [2022 annual report](#) provides an insight into our achievements, initiatives, and engagements in 2022. It offers a comprehensive overview of our work toward our vision 2030 and provides insight into our organisation's structure, operations, and financial health.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the publication of our 2022 annual report was delayed beyond its intended timeframe in 2023. As a result, the year 2024 will see the publication of both the 2022 and 2023 annual reports. While the 2022 annual report has recently been published, the 2023 annual report will be published during the second quarter of 2024.





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16.9 million hectares organic farmland & 45.1 bn retail sales – Interactive map with European data updated

Our [interactive infographic](#) presents the EU and Europe's 2022 production and retail data for organic. It visualises the bloc's total and includes breakdowns for each country, including the evolution of organic land area and market developments over 10 years. We use the data that the [Research Institute of Organic Agriculture \(FiBL\)](#) compiles in [the World of Organic](#) every year.

In 2022, the EU's total area of farmland under organic production grew to 16.9 million hectares. Compared to 2021, the number of organic producers in the EU increased by 10,8% to 419,112. However, the EU's organic retail market does not accompany the production growth, decreasing by 3% compared to 2021 – though still above the peak in sales linked to the COVID-pandemic in 2020. Totalling €45.1 billion, the EU remains the world's second largest market, after the USA and followed by China.

Overall, the EU's organic market is very dynamic with growth rates varying between different countries. Its overall positive development is due to a combination of factors. Besides the innovative character of organic food and farming, growing policy support and European citizens increasing demand for high-quality, sustainable food production, despite the geopolitical situation. This is well represented in the **per capita consumption** of organic products, which reached **102 EUR on average**. Generally, consumers spend more on organic food every year with certain product groups achieving above-average market shares.

If you want to know more about organic production and market trends in Europe, browse our [interactive infographic with production and market data on organic](#) and check out how your country performs. The map includes breakdowns for each country, including the evolution of organic land area and market developments over 10 years.

We use the data that the [Research Institute of Organic Agriculture \(FiBL\)](#) compiles in [the World of Organic](#) every year. Do note that we update this data every February, so the map reflects the data available at the time the World of Organic was published. We do not update this interactive infographic throughout the year.

Are you an IFOAM Organics Europe member and interested to **embed our interactive map on your website? Or promote it?** Have a look at ready-made messages in the communication toolkit we drafted for you. It is available on [our member extranet > hot topics & resources > member update](#).

Produced by



Data compiled by



Supported by



Co-financed by



Action co-financed by the European Commission, Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development
EKHAGASTIFTELSEN

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Data compiled by the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) and the Agricultural Marketing Information Company (AMI)

Welcoming our new colleagues

Tyler Arbour

Tyler is a rural Montana (USA) boy at heart, but has fallen in love with Europe. A science- and math-loving nerd from early on, he realised only after entering university that being a scientist was an actual career path for mere mortals, not just the stereotype "genius". So off he went! Tyler completed his BSc in Chemistry & Biochemistry from Montana State University, spent an unforgettable year doing research in Germany (Tübingen & Göttingen), and finally earned his PhD in Earth and Planetary Science from the University of California, Berkeley. Europe was again calling his name in the form of an exciting post-doctoral research project at Ghent University's Center for Microbial Ecology and Technology.

So, what brings him to IFOAM Organics Europe? After many exciting but difficult years in academia, Tyler wanted to bring his scientific perspective into an area that involves more interaction and teamwork with people from



Rue Marie-Thérèse 11 – 1000 Brussels – Belgium – Phone: +32 2 280 12 23 – Email: info@organicseurope.bio

diverse professional backgrounds to tackle urgent societal challenges. He felt drawn to agriculture because of his Montana roots combined with the many important problems that need to be tackled. He started this transition in 2020, joining the project coordination team of the Horizon 2020 project [EUREKA](#) at UGent, which was laying the groundwork for an online knowledge-sharing platform called EU-FarmBook. He is delighted to continue this journey with IFOAM Organics Europe as a Research & Innovation Coordinator in our research and innovation team. We are delighted to welcome Tyler and his passion for engaging with and connecting groups of people who don't usually talk to one another to help them work together to a peaceful and sustainable future that future generations deserve.

They are a volunteering with us to make Europe more organic

Giulia Kessous

Giulia holds a double degree in French and English Law which she studied both in Toulouse, France and Bangor, Wales. After four fantastic years, she knew she wanted to specialise in Environmental Law. Before jumping in, she wanted to experience the 'environment' in a more practical way to better understand it and defend it. This is how she discovered organic farming leading her to work on various organic dairy, beef and sheep farms in England and Scotland. Giulia also joined Organic Farmers Unions in France to work on heritage grains and access-to-land policy. She is now finishing her Environmental Law and Ecology Master's Degree in Rennes, Brittany (France). After her experience on a regional scale, she was curious about the food and farming sector at an EU level. This is why she applied to volunteer at IFOAM Organics Europe's policy team.

Lumi Hultkrantz

Lumi volunteered at a self-sustaining college in rural Zambia, where agriculture was a central part of life and questions about farming and pesticides use arose. The COVID-19 pandemic brought her back to Finland where she volunteered at an organic farm, experiencing a different reality of farming. These complexities lead her to study Peace and Development in Sweden, including an exchange at Sciences Po Rennes (France). Lumi did an internship at the Asian Indigenous Peoples Pact in Thailand, where she got to learn about the Asian Indigenous peoples' points of view on farming methods, land rights, and government. Her continuing interest in land, farming, and Indigenous rights brought her to IFOAM Organics Europe where she contributes to the work of our event and membership team.

Maelis Juvin

Maelis holds a Bachelor's Degree in Political Sciences from ESPOL (Lille, France) and is on the verge of completing her Master's Degree in Environmental and Food Economics at the University of Milan (Italy). In addition to her academic journey, she has gained diverse experiences within food systems through internship at food retailer companies, volunteering at multiple food banks in France, Italy, Poland, and Greece. Maelis has a passion for sustainable food systems, learning languages and multicultural environments. Moreover, she focused on food security and urban food policies in her master's thesis. We are happy to welcome her to our projects and partnerships team.

Rebeca Gonzalez

Rebeca holds a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Pompeu Fabra University (Barcelona, Spain) and a Master of Science in International Development Studies from Utrecht University (Utrecht, The Netherlands). She engaged in various volunteering projects regarding sustainability in countries such as Kenya, Vietnam, and Indonesia, and completed internships in political development in Jordan and at a sustainability investment hedge fund in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. We welcome Rebeca and her experience into our research and innovation team.

Selene Capalbo

Selene holds a Bachelor's Degree in International Studies for Development and Cooperation from Turin University (Italy). During this she was on a one-year academic exchange at the Spanish Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha. Prior to her bachelor's degree, she studied Chinese at ECNU in Shanghai. For this reason, she decided to attend a double Masters's Degree in International Relations (China Studies) at Turin University and Tongji University, from which she graduated in March 2023. Selene gained first experience in the economic side of food and beverages during her traineeships at the Turin Chamber of Commerce and at the Italian Chamber of



Commerce in Sweden. Her motivation and interest in sustainability and communication led her to join IFOAM Organics Europe's communications team.

The European Solidarity Corps (ESC) provides young people residing in Europe with the unique chance to express their personal commitment through a full-time voluntary activity in a foreign country for a period of up to 1 year. Young volunteers can develop new skills and, therefore, improve their personal, educational and professional development. More information about ESC is available in the ESC website: europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en

Are you interested in the organic movement and want to experience its day-to-day work? [Stay tuned](#) and be ready to apply – you could be part of our team!



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EVENTS

1.5 Preview of events

Join us discussing organic market developments at [Natural & Organic Products Expo 2024 in London](#)
14-15 April 2024

On 14-15 April, Joanna Wierzbicka, our Deputy Director will be attending [Natural & Organic Products Expo](#) (NOPEX) at ExCeL, London (UK). Together with the Natural Food Expo and Natural Beauty Expo, this pioneering trade fair has been the industry's go-to event since 1997.

The show will bring together thousands of retailers, category buyers, distributors, and exporters covering over 500 natural and organic brands – including hundreds of European exhibitors. This year, it will host an important Hosted Buyer and VIP Programme, attracting senior professionals from across the UK and Europe.

Visitors can also enjoy vital insights in a free-to-attend [seminar programme](#). During the session [organic market update and growing organic for all](#) you can gain our Deputy Director's valuable market insights as she shares the stages with other knowledgeable speakers: Alex Cullen, Commercial & Marketing Director at Soil Association Certification and Anton Järild, Communication Strategist at Organic Sweden.

If you are active in the organic and food industry you can [register for a free trade ticket](#).




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[Soil health and global food security: Research & innovation for biological inputs](#)
25 April 2024

Policies for and investment in research and innovation (R&I) that contribute to transforming food and farming are key to achieve objectives set out in the EU Green Deal and Farm to Fork Strategy, including soil health and long-term food security.

This is why [TP Organics](#), the European Technology Platform for Research & Innovation into Organics and Agroecology, is organising an event focusing on biological inputs in relation to soil health, fertility and agricultural productivity, looking into alternatives to pesticides and synthetic fertilisers. Speakers from various backgrounds will share their experiences, including cases from Africa and Europe.

 25 April 2024, 9:30-13:30 CEST

 L42 Business Centre, Brussels, Belgium

Policies for and investment in research and innovation (R&I) that contribute to the sustainable transformation of our food and farming in Europe and globally are key to achieve the objectives of the European Green Deal and the EU Farm to Fork strategy, including soil health and long-term food security. This event organised by TP Organics, the European Technology Platform for Research & Innovation into Organics and Agroecology with support from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will focus on biological inputs in relation to soil health and fertility and agricultural productivity, and what are alternatives to pesticides and synthetic fertilisers, with cases from EU and Africa.

Have a look at [TP Organics' website for more information](#), [read the agenda](#) and [register now](#) if you would like to be part. This event receives support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

TP Organics is the European Technology Platform for Research & Innovation into Organics and Agroecology. IFOAM Organics Europe is a founding member and hosts its secretariat. Visit www.tporganics.eu for more information and follow its [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) @TPorganics.



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Online knowledge exchange session: Biostimulants in organic farming


May 2024

Have you used biostimulants? Or are you an expert on them? We would like to invite you to Climate Farm Demo's first organic knowledge exchange joining experts and practitioners sharing their knowledge and experience with the use of biostimulants in organic farms.

The second part of the session will be a discussion guided by the hosts where attendees can ask questions and share their own experiences.

Soil Biological Stimulants – Available options to organic farmers

 May 2024 (Date TBD)

 Online (Teams)

Biostimulants are substances or microorganisms used to promote plant health and growth. As their use increases with farmers' interest in producing food sustainably, we want to take the chance to explore the uses and benefits of different types of biostimulants available to organic farmers. This session aims at creating a space for farmers, advisors and other members of the Climate Farm Demo consortium to learn from each other and discover new agricultural practices that benefit crops, soil and biodiversity.

Would you like to be in the panel or do you have questions about this event? Please send an email to [. The session will be hosted by IFOAM Organics Europe and co-organized with Abacus Agriculture.](#)

About Climate Farm Demo

[Climate Farm Demo](#) is a pan-European network of Pilot Demo Farmers (PDFs) covering 28 countries and all pedo-climatic areas that will increase, speed-up and disseminate climate smart farming practices and tools through a network of 1,500 pilot farms across Europe and all actors of the Climate Smart Agriculture Knowledge & Innovation Systems (AKIS). IFOAM Organics Europe will facilitate knowledge sharing and developing synergies between Climate Farm Demo and other EU projects, policymakers, and flagship initiatives. IFOAM Organics Europe is the organic sector's thematic leader. IDELE coordinates Climate Farm Demo which will run until the end of September 2029.

[Visit the project's website](#) to learn more and follow the latest project's developments on [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#) using [@climatefarmdemo](#).



Climate Farm Demo has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 727388 (PLAID), No 728061 (AgriDemo-F2F) and No 727205 (NEFERTITI). 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.

Fifth edition of Organic Food & Eco Living Iberia will feature 300 high-profile international buyers

4-5 June 2024

4-5 June marks the fifth edition of [Organic Food & Eco Living Iberia](#). This year's fair will bring together top producers, buyers and distributors from around the world with the goal of helping forge business relationships and bolster the Spanish presence in international markets.

Key decision-makers from supermarkets, retailers, distributors, wholesalers, importers and exporters, as well as buyers responsible for the sourcing of natural, organic and sustainable products, will gather once again at Organic



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Food & Eco Living Iberia on June 4 and 5 at the IFEMA MADRID Exhibition Centre, with the most comprehensive Hosted Buyers program to date.

In total, 300 high-level international buyers from across Europe, as well as from regions around the world, especially from the United States, the Middle East and Asia, among other countries, will attend the event, seeking the latest product innovations and to establish contacts with industry professionals. With a minimum of 5 meetings per Hosted Buyer, more than 1,500 business meetings are guaranteed. Organic Food & Eco Living Iberia 2024 will also offer Spanish organic producers the opportunity to explore and penetrate new international markets, with an ambitious and new exporter program backed by Ecovalia, the main sponsor of the fair, and the Spanish Federation of Food and Drink Industries (FIAB).

All this will be backed with the implementation of IFEMA MADRID's innovative Live Connect platform for networking and contact generation with artificial intelligence, which will offer an innovative approach and effectiveness in B2B meetings.

The International Hosted Buyer & Hosted VIP programs will help encourage both current and potential clients to visit the fifth edition of the fair. They also offer exclusive advantages to participants, such as full or partial coverage of travel and/or accommodation expenses, permanent access to the VIP lounge and networking events during the fair, as well as a personalized meeting planning service and strategic advice to face the challenges of exporting organic products.

Co-organized by Diversified Communications and IFEMA MADRID, Organic Food & Eco Living Iberia 2024 will have the support of Ecovalia as the main sponsor, and will also be endorsed by Alimentos de España, INTERECO, Agrobio Portugal, PortugalFoods, ACES, AER, CIAO-IICA, CAAE, ASOBIO, CAERM, CAECV, CAEM, Biocop, Biogran, Proexport, FIAB, Fedacova, and FiBL, and the Spanish autonomous regions of Andalusia, Extremadura, Region of Valencia, La Rioja, Castile-La Mancha, Region of Murcia, Community of Madrid, Navarre, Castile-Leon, Galicia, Catalonia, Balearic Islands and Canary Islands, among others.

- [Register as a visitor](#)
- Book a stand
- For more information check www.organicfoodiberia.com

Calling all IFOAM Organics Europe's members: Your voices shape our future – General Assembly on 20 June 2024

We are pleased to invite IFOAM Organics Europe's members to this year's virtual General Assembly (GA) on 20 June 2024, 10:00-14:00 CEST (online).

Read our President's official invitation on the [member extranet](#), click [General Assembly](#) > [upcoming GA documents](#) > GA2024_06_20.

What will you discuss?

Our online General Assembly allows all participants to join and help shape the future of our organisation. You will:

- Receive relevant organisational updates, including an overview of 2023,
- Get updates on current sector affairs,
- Vote on IFOAM Organics Europe's 2023 financial report and 2024 budget,

The agenda and all related documents will be available closer to the GA on our members extranet.

Make sure to register ahead of time

We kindly invite you to start registering as a Voting or Observing member (observers and members without voting rights) through the links accessible on the [member extranet](#).



Please be aware that only members who have paid their membership fees for 2023 & 2024 will be granted voting rights. More detailed information on the voting process can be found on the extranet > General Assembly > Who can vote and how.

All documents are available on the member extranet

All documents are available to you on our [member extranet](#).

For general information, click [General Assembly](#):

- What is the IFOAM Organics Europe GA?
- Who can vote and how?
- Upcoming meeting information

For 2024-specific information, go to [upcoming GA documents](#) > GA2024_06_20

- Official invitation
- Proxy forms
- [available later] Agenda & presentations

Don't have access to the extranet or encountering login issues? Contact us at membership@organicseurope.bio. Should you have any questions related to our General Assembly, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us via membership@organicseurope.bio.



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Youth unites for a greener, healthier, and fairer agriculture & food system

8-9 July 2024

Following the [successful first edition in 2022](#), we are organising the second edition of [Organics Europe's Youth Event](#) (OEYE). This year's edition will promote cross-disciplinary collaboration and generate innovative ideas for the future of organic, driving change towards sustainable practices in agriculture. CIHEAM Bari will host us 8-9 July 2024 in Bari, Italy.

What is IFOAM Organics Europe's Youth Event?

Our youth event welcomes young individuals passionate about organic and sustainable agriculture, providing a platform to welcome the next generation in organic. It is open to all those who would like to broaden their networks with like-minded individuals across Europe, exchange innovative ideas on transitioning towards a more sustainable food system, and delve into the potential of organic food and farming practices.

Why join the OEYE?

Key words are sharing, learning from each other and meeting new people. Summarised, event participants will:

- Meet a diverse group of professionals, including farmers, students, activists, young industry professionals and politicians;
- Gain meaningful insights into sustainable practices across the food supply chain;
- Engage in panel discussions, group work, educational lectures and workshops about current hot topics in the organic and food and farming in general;
- Have the option to join a one-day post-conference field trip to enhance their understanding by meeting local organic operators.

Registration is open – Secure your seat now!

We have fantastic news for all those interested in joining the event: entry to the 2024 edition is free of charge for all participants.



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To take advantage of all these benefits and have the chance to be among the participants, follow these simple steps:

- Email to event@organicseurope.bio with the subject line "I want to join the OEYE 2024", including your full name, job title, organisation and the country of your residence;
- We will reply asking you three questions about your motivation for attending the event;
- If you are selected, you will receive the registration form. Once you complete this you are all set for an enriching event of educational and social experiences.

Tight on travel budget?

This year's youth event will grant at least 10 participants a travel support scholarship in case your financial situation would prevent to participate. Is this the case? [Check out the scholarship section on the event page](#). If you meet the criteria you can apply for support. In case you are selected, we will cover your transportation and accommodation expenses.

Get ready to join us on an organic journey to the south of Italy (and make sure to enjoy delicious local food in Bari).

To stay up to date with further information regarding the event, keep an eye on [our website](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).



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European Organic Congress 2024, 10-12 September in Budapest, Hungary – Save the date 10-12 September 2024

On 10-12 September, closely after the June elections of the new European Parliament, the 17th edition of our [European Organic Congress](#) promises to be timely, politically relevant and a must to attend for stakeholders along the organic supply chain.

Make sure to join us in Budapest, Hungary for this year's edition of our annual flagship event. We expect over 250 participants, two days of dynamic sessions and an excursion to a local organic farm. Together with our co-organiser, [ÖMKi, the Hungarian branch of the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture](#) we cannot wait to see you there and explore hot topics together with high-level policy makers and experts, such as:

- The post-EU elections political landscape,
- Organic farming economics and profitability,
- A CAP fit for the future (?),
- Market overview and review, for example Eastern Europe's untapped potential and a global outlook,
- Giving organic visibility, and
- Many more hands-on topics and insights!



From early-bird fares to member-ticket discounts and a free excursion challenge, we are working hard to provide inclusive access for everyone from Europe and beyond.

Keep an eye out for updates on [our website](#) and follow @OrganicsEurope #EOC2024 #EUorganic2030 on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Would you like your organisation to be visible at the congress? Consider becoming a sponsor of and/or co-organise European Organic Congress 2025. Contact us at congress@organicseurope.bio for more information.



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1.6 Review of events

Discover the projects organised in BIOFACH as part of the "Being Organic in EU" campaign!

The second year of [BEING ORGANIC in EU](#) marked two well-attended sessions and a networking reception at [BIOFACH 2024](#), the organic sector's most important international fair.

Packaging & its impact on the organic sector

On 13 February, participants discussed packaging legislation and its effects on organic operators and options for organic sales. Sabine Von Wirén-Lehr, Director of Wirén-Lehr Consulting, provided a timeline of and valuable insights on changes within the EU Packaging and Packaging Waste legislation that will impact organic operators. Among the challenges they noted: the prohibition of most single use plastic packaging, targets for reusable containers, and defining the sale of bulk products. Following, Ulrike Schaal from Bundesverband Naturkost Naturwaren (BNN) elaborated on possible approaches for organic operators to cope with these legislative changes, such as offering unpackaged food and reusable packaging.

Building and strengthening our networks

On the same day, the project allowed us to bring together project stakeholders and organic practitioners at a well-attended networking event with delicious food and drinks. Project partners and organic practitioners mingled with European representatives from the European Commission's Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) and national policymakers. Of course there was also a moment to learn more. IFOAM Organics Europe's Director Eduardo Cuoco and Aldo Cervi, Project Coordinator at Federbio, provided food



for thought about “Being Organic in EU”, opportunities to engage with organic stakeholders and [the possibilities for organic in the new promotion policies programme](#).

EU budget available for organic

On 14 February, there was a session dedicated to [the large sum available in the EU budget for promoting organic](#). Speakers learned how and when to apply for the promotion programmes for agricultural products from Diego Canga Fano, Director of the Directorate on Outreach, Research and Geographical indications at the European Commission’s DG AGRI. Mr Canga Fano took a deep dive into the different types of programmes, co-financing, and the eligibility rules.

Two IFOAM Organics Europe members showed how they use the promotion policies to develop organic. Their insights offered practical information on how to increase consumers' trust in the EU organic logo and promote the organic sector’s economic profitability.

Heidi Haavisto Meier, Specialist at Pro Luomu, provided the audience with insights and lessons learnt in [Nudging Organic](#), a promotion policies project exploring practical ways to improve organic sales in supermarkets. Partners are associations in Finland (Pro Luomu), Sweden (Organic Sweden), Belgium (BioForum), and the Netherlands (Bionext). Heidi outlined how the EU promotion program led participants to share good promotional practices among different EU countries.

Marco Schlüter, Head of Strategy and International Affairs at Naturland shared insights into Naturland's experience benefitting from the EU promotion programme, describing the promotional activities they implemented through [BEING ORGANIC in EU](#). Marco stressed how having a dedicated budget for promoting organic products helped reach a wider audience.

The [BEING ORGANIC in EU](#) project is a promotional campaign proposed by FederBio in cooperation with Naturland and co-financed by the European Union under EU Regulation No. 1144/2014. Its goal is to promote the organic sector in the Italian and German markets by raising awareness of organic farming techniques and the European organic logo.

Funded by the project Being Organic in EU of the European Union, coordinated by Federbio and Naturland. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency (REA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

IFOAM Organics Europe at BIOFACH 2024: Shaping the future of organic!

On February 13-16, the organic sector converged at BIOFACH/VIVANESS 2024 in Nürnberg, Germany. IFOAM Organics Europe fuelled discussions at the Congress’ events with many sessions delving into policy, regulation, and research.

Day 1, 13 February 2024

The first IFOAM Organics Europe Business Day marked a milestone, providing a space for organic business leaders to exchange insights. Another standout session from IFOAM Organics Europe, “Packaging legislation is coming: what impact for organic operators?” delved into the impending packaging legislation, where challenges and opportunities that this directive brings to organic operators were explored. Following the latter, the dynamic “Policy Day 2024: State of Play of Current and Future Organic Policies” session took place as a talk-show style exploration of the future of the organic food and agriculture sector in sight of the 2024 European elections, providing a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities awaiting the organic movement. Afterwards, the organic journey continued with a networking event hosted by IFOAM Organics Europe called “Being Organic in EU: Networking Reception,” which was a delightful occasion to taste organic food and drinks while fostering networking opportunities and knowledge exchange.

Day 2, 14 February 2024

The trade fair’s second day marked sessions on “EU budget for organic: how and when to apply for the promotion policy co-funding?” helping the sector to navigate the EU budget available to promote organic. Later, during the session “Reaching the EU 25% F2F organic target - barriers, drivers, policies, trends and scenarios,” the first results



of the Horizon Europe Project [OrganicTargets4EU](#) were presented. Based on an analysis of the drivers and barriers to the development of organic farming, speakers examined whether and how the Farm to Fork goals can be achieved through planned policy interventions, trends, and possible scenarios for the future development of the sector. Subsequently, IFOAM Organics Europe also hosted the session “Concepts for the CAP 2027 - How can the organic systems approach benefit the agricultural funding system in the EU?” where concepts for the agricultural funding and the need to transform CAP into an effective tool to support sustainable agriculture were discussed by different experts from NGO’s and politics.

Day 3, 15 February 2024

Our programme continued with [TP Organics' Science Day: Organic research & innovation for sustainable food systems](#). IFOAM Organics Europe and many others took part to a workshop, helping TP Organics identify and prioritise knowledge gaps to be included in its new Strategic Research & Innovation Agenda, a key tool for advocating for the organic sector’s needs and priorities. In addition, equally insightful were the following sessions on “Protecting Organics in the Context of GMO Deregulation” and “Understanding the Geopolitical Context of the NGT debate in the EU”. The former provided a cutting-edge update on the EU policymaking process on the new legislative proposal on so-called "New Genomic Techniques" (NGTs) regarding the implications for the organic sector. As for the latter, it explained how different global regulatory contexts—in terms of consumer labelling, traceability, and biosafety standards—are posing real technical challenges to trade relations, shining light on these complexities and implications for organic trade markets. Other meaningful sessions were “EU Organic Regulation – challenges and opportunities”, where a presentation from policy-makers and experts on the main challenges and opportunities of the new EU Organic Regulation was made; and the “Management of residues in organic products under the EU organic regulation” session, through which a common understanding of the rules in light of the Position Paper of IFOAM Organics Europe published last summer was reached.

Day 4, 16 February 2024

On the last day of BIOFACH we did not slow down. In three enlightening sessions, such as “Will the EU seed reform contribute to the Green Deal?” which touched on the topic of access to seeds for organic farmers, the role of organic breeders in maintaining and fostering agrobiodiversity, and how the revision of the existing framework on production and marketing of plant reproductive material will impact the organic sector. And, finally, the last session focused on “Climate neutrality – opportunity or threat?” through which it was made clear how the whole supply chain is crucial when it comes to climate action and that systemic solutions are needed to properly tackle environmental and social challenges.

IFOAM Organics Europe would like to extend heartfelt gratitude to the BIOFACH organisers, IFOAM Organics Europe staff, members, sponsors, and the institutions that keep committing to organic. Furthermore, sincere gratitude is also extended to all participants, collaborators, and supporters who, with their presence and active engagement, have made this event a success for the organic community. Together, we continue to pioneer agriculture, making Europe more organic!



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The EU Organic Regulation: Challenges, opportunities and residue management at BIOFACH

At this year edition of the biggest trade fair for organic, BIOFACH, IFOAM Organics Europe organise two sessions updating interested participants on the EU organic regulation. Similar to previous years, there was a general session as well as a highly awaited and well-attended workshop on pesticide residue management in organic products focusing on the perspective of the operators – with participation and contributions by the EU Commission.

EU Organic Regulation update

Vice-President of Ecocert Group and IFOAM Organics Europe Board Member, Michel Reynaud highlighted the work done on IFOAM Organics Europe’s side following the legislative process and advocating for a better understanding of the sector’s needs. Elena Panichi, Head of the Organics Unit at the Commission’s Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) updated the audience about regulation-related achievements and upcoming legislative work. She also reminded participants that there is a new regulation



detailing rules on the labelling of [organic pet food](#), the final [rejection of the proposal](#) on organic salt production rules, and the regular updates of the [lists of authorized products and substances](#) in organics.

The work of the Commission on issuing clarification letters upon stakeholder requests and questions about implementation of certain elements of the regulation is ongoing, as well as the incorporation of these guides into the Frequently Asked Questions on Organic Rules - which document is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Ms. Panichi updated the audience on the status of several legal proposals – the regular updating of the lists of authorized inputs, a legal act on the use of the EU organic logo, production rules for organic insects and processing techniques allowed for the de-alcoholisation of wine. She also emphasised that Commission's priorities in 2024 will be the essential task related to the introduction of new import rules – namely the reassessment of submitted technical dossiers and recognition of control bodies for the purpose of compliance. The operational work needed for the smooth transition of the import system from being based on compliance instead of equivalence is in full swing, and the Commission is fully dedicated to be ready for the start on 1 January 2025.

Pesticide residue management

We organised this year's session on the management of pesticide residues to introduce a new approach and bring a practical aspect to the fair, involving the sector and Commission. Head of Department at BioAustria and IFOAM Organics Europe's Board Member, Thomas Fertl presented nine real cases of residue findings in organic products showing us all circumstances relevant for a well-based decision.

After hearing IFOAM Organics Europe's position on whether the operator is capable of coming to a conclusion of eliminating the suspicion of a non-compliance or not, which is a very specific element of the organic regulation, Henri Delanghe, Deputy Head of the Organics Unit at the Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) presented the Commission's perspective and essential aspects to consider to make a decision in line with provisions of the regulation.

Listing the Commission's major horizontal considerations:

- A product origin (EU or third country);
- The status of the substance or product within the EU (if banned);
- The control body's involvement is important in most cases, especially at the start (identify the source and cause of the residue and check if precautionary measures had been put in place);
- Recurrence;
- The operator's responsibility to have and maintain proper case recordings; and
- The control body's responsibility to check these recordings during the annual (or additional) inspections.

For more information on the EU organic regulation and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please [visit our website](#) or contact lea.bauer@organicseurope.bio. Do note that we prioritise our members' requests.

IFOAM Organics Europe members have early access to information on the EU Organic Regulation [through our Interest and Expert Groups](#) and our member [member extranet](#). They also have one free access to the [EU Organic Regulation guidelines](#).

For access to our member extranet and information about what you can gain from being a member, read [our membership page](#) and contact membership@organicseurope.bio.



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INSPIRING EXAMPLES

In this new section we will highlight an innovative and excellent example along the organic supply chain. To kick this off, we will start by providing you with a short recap of the importance the EU has designated to organic in its long-term goal to transforming Europe into a more sustainable continent. After that we will share an overview of inspiration and best practices. For this, we adapted an article we originally wrote for [Bio Eco Actual's International Yearbook 2023 – Trends 2024](#). Enjoy this long-read. We hope you get inspired and share or use one of the many possibilities to promote examples of organic excellence in Europe and worldwide!

Get inspired by excellent examples carrying out organic's values

In recent years, the European Union has developed a long-term strategy to become climate neutral: the EU Green Deal. Among its goals is a sustainable food system and increased protection of our environment and biodiversity. To realise this, it published two important strategies for food and farming: the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#) and the [EU Biodiversity Strategy](#). The Farm to Fork Strategy set a target of “at least 25% of the EU’s agricultural land under organic farming and a significant increase in organic aquaculture by 2030”. The EU Biodiversity Strategy aims to put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030. Both strategies mention organic as a tool to reach their targets.

As European organic movement, we have been tirelessly advocating to ensure organic has (its rightful) prominent place in these green goals and we are very happy that we succeeded. Our members and many other actors along the food chain contribute to achieving the targets of these strategies in their day-to-day work. Every day we witness organic practitioners and the strong principles they have at heart: health, ecology, fairness, and care.

As a food and farming system that looks at a systemic approach to food and farming, organic practitioners have always been at the forefront of innovation – innovation that looks beyond technologies and focuses on improving social, environmental and governance aspects. A big part of this success comes from being a united movement that shares knowledge, innovations, and best practices.

Showcasing & sharing best practices

Awarding organic excellence: EU Organic Awards

EU Organic Day, or 23 September, marks the annual European Organic Awards ceremony. These awards are dedicated to rewarding European actors who greatly contribute to enhancing, developing, and stimulating the organic value chain.

Aimed to reward European organic excellence along the entire supply chain, the EU organic awards scheme consists of 7 categories and 8 awards:

1. Best organic farmer (female and male);
2. Best organic city;
3. Best organic region;
4. Best organic bio-district;
5. Best organic food processing SME;
6. Best organic food retailer;
7. Best organic restaurant / food service.

Every year, applications open from mid-March until mid-May. **This year's applications are open as you read this, more about that in [our article](#).** From May until July, a jury of representatives from the EU institutions and organic supply chain analyses more than 100 applications from across the EU. Out of these applications, three nominees in each category are presented. The winners are announced during a public awards ceremony and celebration on 23 September.

Apply now for the 3rd edition of the [EU Organic Awards](#). **You can do so until 12 May 2024.**

Giving visibility to initiatives transforming food & farming

Whether you are active in organic or not, if you are transforming food and farming and have an inspiring initiative, you can submit it to www.euorganic2030.bio. We host this platform as a place to give visibility to inspiring



initiatives. We select the best initiatives and help them reach more visibility on our social media and in our newsletter.

Whether you want to get inspired or have an inspirational initiative, visit euorganic2030.bio. Of course, you are welcome to share this with any good examples you know!

For practitioners who want to farm more sustainably: Organic Farm Knowledge

[Organic Farm Knowledge](http://www.organic-farmknowledge.org) is a platform for all types of practitioners in organic. Whether you produce crops, have farm animals, are interested to improve your farm management, soil quality or the overall environment and society, www.organic-farmknowledge.org will provide you with useful resources.

The toolbox offers over 1,000 tools in 16 European languages for farmers and farm advisors. Short, easy to read articles, fact sheets and videos are available. The mobile-friendly toolbox allows for text search and targeted searches by theme, language, organisation, project, keyword, type, country of origin and year.

If want to share your tools or help promote the platform, please contact ambra.desimone@organicseurope.bio, Research & Innovation Associate Manager.

Increasing the movement & sector's visibility

Spotlighting European organic: EU Organic Day

On 23 September 2021, the EU institutions officially declared 23 September the official EU Organic Day. This is the perfect opportunity to widely celebrate organic and, at EU level, evaluate Europe's progress towards achieving its goal of 25% organic land by 2030.

This is a day for your organisation to highlight your own work, your staff, clients, partners and/or products. In the past years, I have seen the great examples along the movement and sector who use EU Organic Day to launch new campaigns, partnerships, EU organic action plans, organise major events and/or farmers' markets and much more! Do you want to know more? Have a look at the 2023 initiatives at www.organicseurope.bio/get-involved/european-organic-day.

As the European umbrella organisation, we provide our members with visibility, access to information, idea sharing and a communications package ahead of EU Organic Day. Not a member yet? Or interested to become a member? Get in contact at membership@organicseurope.bio.

Promoting European products: EU promotion policies

Created in 2014, EU promotion policies help open new market opportunities for EU farmers and the wider food industry. The European Commission has pledged a total of €185.9 million to promote European agri-food products in 2024. Thanks to our advocacy work, there was a large share available for organic products' promotion: €40+ million.

If you want to promote your organisation's activities on the EU and international market or raise awareness on the EU organic logo, consider applying for the [EU promotion policies](#) – **application for 2024 are open until 14 May 2024**. Find more information and useful links in [our article](#).

Global social visibility: #IGrowYourFood Day

Since 2019, the online action #IGrowYourFood gives those growing our globe's food a platform to address citizens, consumers, and policymakers – and connect with other farmers around the world. Organic and agroecological farmers are invited to share videos, articles, or photo stories explaining why they #IGrowYourFood and #LuvOrganic on social media. Policymakers, organisations, advocates and citizens then amplify their messages, re-post their videos, and join the conversation on how organic can be a pathway to true sustainability.

Would you like to raise your voice together with the global organic movement, every year in September? Have a look at www.igrowyourfood.bio or search for #IGrowYourFood on your social media of choice.



This is an adaptation of an article we originally wrote for [Bio Eco Actual International Yearbook 2023 – Trends 2024](#).



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

14-15 April 2024

[Natural & Organic Products Expo 2024](#)

ExCel London, England

26 April 2024

['Let's Discuss Organic' Regenerative agriculture: how is the term \(mis\)used and what to do about it?](#)

[Members only] Online (Teams)

25 April 2024

[TP Organics event "Soil health and global food security: Research & innovation for productive and sustainable agriculture"](#)

L42 Business Centre, Brussels, Belgium

May 2024 (date TBD)

Knowledge exchange session: Biostimulants in organic farming

Online (Teams)

8 May 2024

['Let's Discuss Organic' Language matters: How to communicate about organics to audience on the left and right using targeted language](#)

[Members only] Online (Teams)

12 May 2024

[Deadline EU Organic Awards 2024 application](#)

European Union

4-5 June 2024

[Organic Food & Eco Living Iberia 2024](#)

IFEMA Madrid, Spain

6-9 June 2024

[EU elections 2024](#)

European Union

20 June 2024

[IFOAM Organics Europe General Assembly 2024](#)

[Members only] Brussels, Belgium / Online (Teams)

8-9 July 2024

[Organics Europe Youth Event 2024](#)

Bari, Italy

10-12 September 2024

[European Organic Congress 2024](#)

Budapest, Hungary

23 September 2024

[EU Organic Day](#)

Europe

23 September 2024

EU Organic Awards ceremony

Brussels, Belgium

22-23 October 2024

[Organic Innovation Days](#)

Brussels, Belgium

IFOAM Organics Europe's members will find early and more information about member-only events in our [member extranet calendar](#). If the direct link does not work, scroll down on the landing page until you see 'Network: Events and meetings'



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