

The future of food production - urgent challenges need sustainable solutions

Green New Deal is urgently needed to shape Food Chains to meet future challenges – organic offers best practice examples

Brussels, 07/06/2010 – The 3rd European Organic Congress⁽¹⁾ in Madrid today discusses the future of agricultural policies regarding their potential to contribute to the tackle on urgent challenges such as climate change, loss of biodiversity and the economic crisis. On this occasion, the IFOAM EU Group⁽²⁾ pre-launched the summary of its comprehensive paper *Shaping Agriculture and Food Systems to Future Challenges – The Strategic Role of Organic Food and Farming* (to be found at www.ifoam-eu.org).

“Delivering a Green New Deal through sustainable food chains will **depend on changing policies to face the future challenges through system-based solutions**”, outlines *Christopher Stopes*, President of the *IFOAM EU Group*. “Critical to this is a greener CAP that creates a coherent system of rewarding farmers for serving public interest; farmers must be incentivised to maximise the delivery of eco-system services and to contribute to the mitigation of climate change. Sound policies for rural development are also vitally important to the livelihoods of millions of people living in rural areas. Organic food systems are based on sound environmental resource management and have been proved to contribute to rural employment. They must be included as a relevant system-based component of a new CAP; and be promoted as a model for a new green deal for food and farming in many other policy strategies.”

“A large amount of scientific data has demonstrated the high negative impact of industrial agriculture”, adds *Juana Labrador*, President of *SEAE*⁽³⁾. “However, scientific effort has yet to result in a logical sequence of responses. Policy must work to replace agricultural activities causing direct and indirect negative impacts on the climate, biodiversity and soil with sustainable systems. **Agro-ecological management and conservation policies at EU level should reinforce each other mutually.** Effective policies to prevent further damage of natural resources must be implemented, as costs of rehabilitation of the damage already caused and compensation for the loss of ecosystem-services are enormous. Consequently organic farming as a sustainable approach should be further developed in this context and used as a tool to achieve sustainability objectives.”

The IFOAM EU paper outlines the potential of organic farming to contribute to meet urgent challenges related to food and farming that policy must address. Amongst these challenges are future supply of food and water, rural development and rural employment; the major environmental challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss and soil degradation as well as animal welfare. The full paper will soon be available online at www.ifoam-eu.org

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3rd EUROPEAN ORGANIC CONGRESS



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NOTES:

(1) The European Organic Congress III "**Green New Deal for Sustainable Food Chains - The strategic role of the organic food sector to promote efficient use of natural resources and sustainable jobs in rural areas**" is organised by the IFOAM EU Group (2) and SEAE (3), with EFFAT (4), Countdown 2010 (5), CAAE (6) and TP organics (7) as partners.



The European Organic Congress of the IFOAM EU Group is the third after the European Organic Congress in 2007 and 2009, providing a platform to discuss present developments that are of high concern for the organic sector. More information to be found at: www.organic-congress-ifoameu.org.

(2) The **IFOAM EU Group** represents more than 300 member organisations of IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) in the EU-27, the EU accession countries and EFTA. Member organisations include: consumer, farmer and processor associations; research, education and advisory organisations; certification bodies and commercial organic companies.

(3) **SEAE** – Sociedad Española de Agricultura Ecológica (Spanish Society of Organic Farming) is a non-profit association with more than 800 members, amongst them researchers, teachers, advisors, certifiers, and also traders, farmers and processors from all over Spain, working to encourage, coordinate and facilitate research, education, advice and dissemination of all aspects related to organic farming, agro-ecology and sustainable rural development. (www.agroecologia.net)

(4) **EFFAT** is the European Federation of Trade Unions in the Food, Agriculture and Tourism sectors, representing 120 national trade unions from 35 European countries. EFFAT is an autonomous European trade union federation. As a member of the ETUC, EFFAT promotes the members' interests jointly and with strength regarding all the European interprofessional issues. (www.effat.eu)

(5) **Countdown 2010** is a network of active partners working together towards the 2010 Biodiversity Target. Each partner commits to specific efforts to tackle the causes of biodiversity loss. The Countdown 2010 Secretariat – hosted by the IUCN Regional Office for Pan-Europe – facilitates and encourages action, promotes the importance of the 2010 Biodiversity Target and assesses progress towards 2010.

(6) **CAAE** is a private entity located mainly in Andalucía and Castilla-La Mancha regions, where it's certification body operating with more than 7000 organic operators. The association promotes organic farming with promotion, education, advice and publications actions in other regions of Spain. (www.caae.es)

(7) **TP organics** is a platform for organic food and farming research which joins the efforts of industry and civil society in defining organic research priorities and defending them vis-à-vis the policy-makers. Its Vision reveals the huge potential of the organic food production to mitigate some of the major global problems of the century from climate change, to food security, to the whole range of socio-economic challenges in the rural areas. (www.tporganics.eu)

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