

EUROPEAN ORGANIC CONGRESS

ROME, 21-22 June, 2010

----- PRESS INVITATION -----

Project:



Funder:



Organisers:



IFOAM EU

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4th European Organic Congress gains international interest for organic regulatory issues

Brussels 18/06/2010 – It is said that all roads lead to Rome, and on Monday 21st and Tuesday 22nd it will be true for the European organic sector which will meet in the Italian capital for the 4th European Organic Congress (1). The event is organised by the IFOAM EU Group (2) and IAMB (3) to evaluate the first year and a half of implementation of the new Organic Regulation which entered into force on January 1st, 2009.

The congress, organised as part of the INTERBIO (4) project, will gather around 250 participants from most EU- and EFTA countries, from several Mediterranean countries, as well as from the US, Latin America and the Middle East, and is the first of its kind, to evaluate the regulatory situation for the organic sector and to point out the sector's recommendations for future directions for regulatory development at EU level.

The congress will deal with issues crucial for organic operators as well as for consumers. One aspect is how to improve market access and thereby secure income for small and medium sized enterprises/farms by assigning the high value of organic farming for society such as regional environmental protection and rural development.

Since EU internal production is not sufficient to meet the increasing European demands for organic products, the levels of imports from non-EU countries have increased and this underlines the need for a well functioning and fair import regime which ensures the quality of imported products.

Finally, the issues of aquaculture will be assigned attention. In the light of the recent EU ban on fishing certain species in the Mediterranean Sea due to overfishing, sustainable alternatives such as organic aquaculture offers interesting solutions. The introduction of a new Regulation for Organic Aquaculture Production will be marked by the launch of a dossier on the new regulation during the congress.

High-level EU and Italian politicians will participate in the congress and give their view on the future possibilities for organic farming in Europe: Paolo De Castro, Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development in the European Parliament (and former Italian Minister of Agriculture), representatives of the Italian Ministry for Agriculture Food and Forestry Policies, Jean-François Hulot, European Commission, Christopher Stopes, President of the IFOAM EU Group and Cosimo Lacirignola, Director of the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari.

The involved politicians and the President of the IFOAM EU Group will be available to answer further questions from the international and Italian press at a **press conference** on **Monday June 21st, 13.00** at Hotel Quirinale, Via Nazionale, 7, 00184 Roma, Italy.

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For more information about the press conference please contact:

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For general information on the 4th European Organic Congress go to:

http://www.organic-congress-ifoameu.org/4th_Congress_Rome.aspx

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Notes:

(1) The European Organic Congress of the IFOAM EU Group is the fourth after the European Organic Congress in 2007 and 2009 in Brussels and in 2010 in Madrid, 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. See more at www.ifoam-eu.org

(3) Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (IAMB) is one of the four institutes of the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Studies (CIHEAM). See more at: www.iamb.it/en

(4) The INTERBIO Project promotes domestic and international demand for organic products and is financed by the Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies and coordinated by MAIB. See more at www.interbio.it

Support and Sponsorship note:

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- the European Community, Directorate-General for the Environment
- the Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies
- Ariza as main sponsor of the IFOAM EU Group in 2010 - www.ariza.nl

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