



## PRESS INVITATION

The IFOAM EU Group has the pleasure to invite you to the press conference and evening reception of the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Organic Congress

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## PRESS CONFERENCE

**“Global Challenges – Organic Approaches: the contributions of organic agriculture to mitigation of climate change, halt of biodiversity loss and solving global food crisis”**

**Time:** Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2009, from 10.30 to 11.00

**Place:** Representation of Baden-Württemberg, Rue Belliard 60-62, Brussels 1040

### **Key speakers at the press conference:**

- **Christopher Stopes** – President of IFOAM EU Group and Director of EcoS Consultancy
- **Mariann Fischer Boel** – EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development
- **Thomas Dosch** – Vice President of IFOAM EU Group and President of Bioland
- **Urs Niggli** – Director of the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture - FiBL, Switzerland

Delivered within the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Organic Congress, the press conference will stay open for questions from CAP to GMO while focusing on the congress' main topics among which:

- Meeting EU and global challenges – the comprehensive approach of organic agriculture
- The challenges of agriculture policy, the CAP and the Copenhagen climate change negotiations
- What organic farming can deliver for sustainability – the scientific perspective

## EVENING RECEPTION

**Time:** Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2009, from 18.30

**Place:** European Parliament, Salon, Entrance Rue Wiertz, Altiero Spinelli Building (ASP), Brussels

### **Key speakers at the evening reception:**

- **Christopher Stopes**, IFOAM EU Group President
  - **Paolo de Castro**, Chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development
  - **Percy Schmeiser**, Canadian farmer and canola breeder (now internationally known for his lawsuit against Monsanto), winner of the Right Livelihood Award 2007, member of the International Commission on the Future of Food. Mr Schmeiser will deliver keynote speech on: "The right of farmers to be free from GMO contamination".
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**To attend and for more details please fill in the [registration form](#) or contact the Brussels office of IFOAM EU Group: Tel: + 32-2-280 12 23, Fax: +32-2-735 73 81, email: [sevelina.todorova@ifoam-eu.org](mailto:sevelina.todorova@ifoam-eu.org), web: [www.organic-congress-ifoameu.org](http://www.organic-congress-ifoameu.org), [www.ifoam-eu.org](http://www.ifoam-eu.org)**

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## **BRIEFING NOTE:**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> European Organic Congress of IFOAM EU Group (1) focuses on three major aspects of organic production as part of badly-needed long-term solutions to aggravating global problems – and the policies needed to foster these solutions.

### ***Organic agriculture and climate change***

Conventional agriculture is a big factor in climate change, producing 10-12 percent of global Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions.

Organic agriculture represents numerous ways to mitigate climate change, including:

- Higher carbon sequestration in soil: organic farming builds soil fertility through increasing the content of organic matter in soil, fixing CO<sub>2</sub> in the soil as part of the process.
- Banning chemical fertilisers, which has a massive impact in reducing emissions of both CO<sub>2</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O.

### ***Organic agriculture and biodiversity***

Industrial agricultural practices have major environmental impacts, among which is the erosion of biodiversity in ecosystems.

Organic agriculture has proven biodiversity conservation effects, including:

- Increased number and variety of wild species in cultivated land due to the improved conditions resulting from, among other factors, the absence of agrichemicals.
- Maintaining agro-biodiversity through practices like crop rotation and its preference for locally adapted and traditional varieties.

### ***Organic agriculture and food security***

Organic agriculture secures the long-term productivity of soils and natural resources and contributes to food security through practices, such as:

- Care for soil and water, responsible resource management which keeps the farms ecosystems replenished and active.
- Organic farming is accessible to vulnerable groups: it is less capital-intensive, utilising on-farm inputs and local knowledge instead of costly agrochemicals. It can therefore provide livelihoods in less economically developed regions.

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***(1) 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.***

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