

Press Release

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – EU Regional Group

New Commission to enforce new Green deal!

The new EU Commission must push for comprehensive solutions and sustainable farming

Brussels, 09/02/2010 - The new European Commission has been appointed today by the European Parliament and will take office on Wednesday. The IFOAM EU Group congratulates the new Commissioners on their appointment but highlights the tremendous challenges they have to face.

„The expectations of the new Commission are high: important challenges such as climate change, the loss of biodiversity and the economic crisis have to be tackled in the coming years and require ambitious action”, says Christopher Stopes, President of the IFOAM EU Group (1). “In fact, Commission President Barroso must use the current crisis to push for a new green deal. In appointing a Commissioner for Climate Action he showed his will to put some effort into climate change mitigation – but this is not enough: now concrete action has to follow. This means for agriculture to create a legislative situation that enables and motivates farmers to invest in sustainable farming practices and to contribute to prosperity in rural regions.”

„The Commissioners must not be tempted by single-issue approaches or one key-fits-all solutions”, warns Bavo van den Idsert, Vice-President of the IFOAM EU Group. „Complex problems require complex strategies to solve them. Organic farming with its multitasking approach offers a model for food systems that deliver effective approaches to reduce the carbon footprint of food production while leading to enhanced biodiversity on farm land; organic farmers are pioneers in improving long term soil fertility, while degradation of soils worldwide is a threat to future food security. Enhanced animal welfare is part of the organic concept, and organic farming and processing creates many jobs.”

„EU policies must strongly promote sustainable farming practices. The Common Agricultural Policy must be made an instrument to tailor farming to meet the environmental and socio-economic challenges”, adds Marco Schlüter, Director of the IFOAM EU Group. “Moreover, research policies must be re-shaped to support research on comprehensive sustainable farming approaches. The seed and GMO legislation, currently under revision, must enable farmers to deliver to GMO free markets and market the seed of traditional varieties. If these steps are taken seriously, organic farming can be an important part of the solution to the biodiversity, climate and economic crises”.

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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.