

## ***IFOAM EU Group elects new President and Executive Board***

**Brussels, 26/05/2009** - The IFOAM EU Group (1) has elected a new President and Deputy President, formed an Executive Board, and decided on a new governing structure and procedures. The structural changes ensure more efficient internal decision making needed for the timely adoption of positions on increasing number of policy issues - in which the Group provides sectoral knowledge based advocacy, of relevance to the organic operators in Europe.

Having been the main non-governmental actor throughout the long process of the revision of the Organic Regulation, which led to the adoption of Council Regulation 834/2007, IFOAM EU Group continues on its mission by providing a coordinated voice for the organic movement in Europe and supporting the development and implementation of a viable organic policy in the EU and the wider world.

Upon taking up his position, the newly-elected President of the Group Christopher Stopes (UK) acknowledged the great leadership provided by former President Francis Blake and commented "Francis has taken the IFOAM EU Group from its inception in 1990 to the vibrant, professional and effective organisation it is today - we all owe Francis Blake a great debt of gratitude for his service. The Group now represents a unique and increasingly important force that continues to successfully promote the cause of organic food and farming."

Christopher Stopes has contributed to the development of the organic sector for more than 25 years, providing strategic policy and technical advice to governments, organic businesses and NGOs. Currently he works as a consultant in organic food and farming and is Director of EcoS Consultancy Ltd.

As a new Deputy President of IFOAM EU was elected Thomas Dosch, a farmer and agricultural economist as well as the President of Bioland Germany. Dosch pledges to work for a more coherent policy framework in the EU as one of the most important current tasks is to guarantee the ability of the organic sector to contribute to solving major challenges like climate change, loss of biodiversity, provision of healthy food and sustainable rural development. "Upcoming reforms of the CAP and suitable regulations to secure non-contaminated GMO-free food and feed will be vital for the organic business", said Thomas Dosch.

The recent decisions of IFOAM EU Group include the constitution of a new Executive Board as a more operative decision-making body, whose eight members represent the full scale of regional and sectoral knowledge needed for an European umbrella organisation representing a large array of interests – from the organic farmers to businesses, certifiers, traders, consumers and more.



## Press Release

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – EU Regional Group

Three of the elected Vice Presidents of the Executive Board will be responsible for the main activity areas of the Group – Thomas Fertl (BioAustria) for Policy, Sabine Eigenschink (Austria Bio Garantie) – Regulation, Otto Schmid (FiBL, Switzerland) – Research. Two other Vice Presidents bring further sectoral expertise - Karolina Dyrtrova (Bioinstitut, Czech Republic) and Bavo van Idsert (Stichting Promotiebureau Biologische Speciaalzaak, the Netherlands). Treasurer of the Group and a member of the Executive Board is Gerald Altena (Debio, Norway).

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### NOTES:

(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.