



International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements
EU Regional Group

Press Release

ORGANIC WEEK in EU canteens opened by public private partnership

Brussels, 17/05/2006 - Today the Austrian Presidency and the IFOAM EU Group inaugurate the "Organic Week" in the Commission and Council canteens, which will take place from May 17-24. During this period EU officials and their guests have the possibility to enjoy a range of organic meals. This public-private initiative aims to support the use of organic food in public canteens and underlines the role of catering for a dynamic development of the organic sector.

"Our experience in Austria has shown that public procurement is an important tool in our national strategy to promote organic food and farming and that a reasonable share of organic products can be realised", declared Minister Pröll on occasion of this event.

"We applaud the Austrian Presidency to place organic farming on the top of their agenda and to make this event possible. It is now up to the European Institutions to take up the initiative and to ensure that organic food becomes an essential part in the daily menu of the canteens of the European Commission and the Council", said Francis Blake, president of the IFOAM EU Group.

The Commission and the Council canteens, offering thousands of meals every day, could set a good example for public and private canteens in the European Member States. Successful implementation of organic catering has taken place in the private sector, such as IKEA (one million meals 2006), Scandic Hotels or the bank WestLB with 22% organic meals. In Netherlands ten large NGOs, with four million members, signed a commitment in 2005 to change completely to organic catering.

These examples show that organic catering can contribute significantly to increase the market of organic products (in Europe about 12.5 billion EURO). National and European institutions should take this into account. In initiating the "Organic Week" the Austrian Presidency and the IFOAM EU Group underline the importance of the proper implementation of the European Action plan on Organic Food and Farming.

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Contact:

Marco Schlüter, IFOAM EU Group, info@ifoam-eu.org, phone: +32 2 735 2797, fax: +32 2 735 7381

Daniel Kapp, Spokesperson, Austrian Agriculture Ministry, daniel.kapp@lebensministerium.at, phone: +43 664 102 85 83

More information:

(1) www.ifoam.org

(2) http://www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/around_world/eu_group/OrganicWeek.html

(3) <http://www.eu2006.at/en/>