

Unhappy hour in the EU-labeling & logo lounche-bar

During the happy hour you normally pay half-money for your drink, or you get two for the price of one. Our EU government offers us these days many extras in labeling and logos, but unlucky organic stakeholders, it will not be for half money. On contrary, it will double or triple the costs and – even more depressing – it will weaken the communicative power of organic food and farming.

The most worrying case is the development of several new single-issue-labels, like the Ecolabel for sustainability, the Animal Welfare Label (for a minimum of animal welfare in conventional farming systems) and Carbon Neutral Labeling. Organic farming and food-system is a holistic and multi-purpose approach which tries to cover all different parts of sustainability at once. The single-issue approach will lead to an overload of logo's and labeling requirements that as a whole will not be very clear for average consumer. And furthermore it might weaken the clear position of organic, because consumers might think that a product with the Ecolabel for sustainability is sort of or equivalent to organic, and for sure will when powerful conventional trademarks put the Ecolabel on their package and communicate how eco-sustainable and green they are...

Therefore the IFOAM EU board is quite opposing to this hype of new single-issue-labeling developments in Brussels. On the other hand the organic sector will have to develop a clear concept and communication strategy that strengthens organic as the one and only multitasking food and farming system that deals best with all civil needs, from sustainability to animal welfare, from carbon footprint to biodiversity, from health to fair trade, from transparency to regional orientation and developments. For several subjects we know organic is quite on top, but some original people and planet benefits have to be strengthened. The coming five years the main stakeholders of the organic sector should develop organic into this strong proposition, on top of the whole food and farming pyramid.

In the meantime we also have to deal with all extras of the new labeling requirements in the renewed EU Regulation. Let not say too much about the logo competition: probably this idea was really a result of a happy hour. The IFOAM EU Group decided for a constructive approach to negotiate within the given procedure with the EU Commission and to recommend to vote for option number 1 (the finally winning leaf of stars). We requested at least several technical adjustments, e.g. a check by a professional designer bureau, the possibility to add the words 'organic' or 'biologisch' above the logo, and to use for simple designs in one or two colors - a black logo.

Many other changes in labeling are less discussed until now. But the requirement for the labeling of origin of all organic products, so also all multi-ingredient products, seems really a disaster for even many regional products. For regional labeling about 80% of the ingredients must come from the region (or country). For organic processed food 98% of all ingredients must come from the region or country. If more than 2% comes from other EU countries it has to be labeled as 'EU'. If more than 2% comes from countries outside the EU, then the labeling must be 'EU/Non-EU'. We expect that more than 90% of all processed organic products will have to be labeled as EU/non-EU.

Happy enough the old labels can be used until probably 1 July 2012. Who knows what can be changed within two years...



*Bavo van den Idsert,
IFOAM EU Vice-President*



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1. Activities of the IFOAM EU Group

1.1. IFOAM EU in public

► IFOAM EU at BioFach 2010

The IFOAM EU Group is prominently present at BioFach in Nuremberg also this year. Visit us at IFOAM's booth 1-330 and/or attend our various events on the new Organic Regulation, organic aquaculture and wine, EU labeling, CAP, research.

Click [here](#) for the overview of all ten IFOAM EU events during BioFach.

► IFOAM EU Group - third time patron of Ecofruit

The IFOAM EU Group is for the third time the patron of the Ecofruit, the 14th International Conference on Organic Fruit Growing, at the University of Hohenheim (Germany), from February 22 to 24th, 2010. Ecofruit is the continuation of thirteen previous meetings. It aims to bring together European researchers and consultants working on topics related to organic fruit growing.



More at: www.ecofruit.net

1.2 Organic Regulation

► Organic logo announced

The new EU organic logo was announced by the [European Commission](#) on 8th of February following the result of public vote on three presented last options which ended on January 31st. The logo, which will be obligatory as of 1st July 2010 on all pre-packaged organic products produced in any member state and meeting labelling requirements, represents the starts from the flag of the European Union in the shape of a green leaf.



The IFOAM EU Group welcomed the transparency of the process but voiced regret and criticised that the three options presented were not all suitable.

However, in meetings with the Commission the IFOAM EU Group highlighted that at least technical adjustments are necessary to make the logo work: the logo should have a 'seal' character and the Commission has to take a critical look at the logo from a graphical design perspective and adjusts the logo so that it meets standard communicative criteria regarding graphical quality, size, and where and in which form the logo should be placed on packaging.

More at: [PR - IFOAM EU – New Organic Logo, 8/02/2010](#)

► IFOAM EU Group published Organic Aquaculture Dossier



The IFOAM EU Group, in co-operation with Istituto Agronomico Mediterraneo di Bari (IAMB), has prepared an extensive expert publication to introduce and evaluate the first European regulation on organic aquaculture.

The Aquaculture Dossier - in its full name: "*Organic Aquaculture. EU regulations (EC) 834/2007, (EC) 889/2008, (EC) 710/2009. Background, Assessment, Interpretation*" – will be launched during BioFach: Thursday, February 18th, 12:00 am, at the stand of the Italian ministry, Hall 4-228

The publication was co-financed by:



and



► Implementing Rules for Organic Wine

The European Commission now plans to prepare its proposal for the Organic Wine Implementing Rules for vote at the SCOF meeting in March 2010 – the vote has been delayed (original plans for presenting it were January/February) due to the change of the EU Commissioners. The IFOAM EU Group will communicate its position to the SCOF members and the Commission as soon as the draft is available. The Group has already expressed positions to the rules on wine-making, which are the last open

issue of the new Organic Regulation 834/2007, in a number of communications throughout 2009.

More at: [IFOAM EU –webpage on organic wine](#)

► IFOAM EU Rome conference on the Organic Regulation – June'10

Mark your calendar for June 21 and 22 this year - the IFOAM EU Group in cooperation with the Italian Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (IAMB) is arranging a conference in Rome to assess and evaluate the new Organic Regulation. The chair of the Agricultural Committee in the European Parliament, Mr. Paolo de Castro, will open the conference. Details for the programme and organisation of the event will be provided in due time.

► Expert Group for Technical Advice on Organic Production

The Commission published a call for applications with a view to appointing members of the Expert Group for Technical Advice on Organic Production and establishing the relevant pool list. The application period was running until 12th of February 2010 and thus closed last Friday. The expert group aims to deliver "independent, excellent and transparent technical advice to the Commission" regarding the further development of the Organic Regulation.

More at: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/news_en

1.3 Policy

► Beyond 2010 target – halt the loss of biodiversity

Conference
Post-2010
Biodiversity
Vision and Target
The role of Protected
Areas and Ecological
Networks in Europe

On 26 – 27th of January the Spanish Presidency organised the [Conference "Post-2010 Biodiversity Vision and Target - The role of Protected Areas and Ecological Networks in Europe"](#). The conference launched formally the International Year on Biological Diversity 2010 in Europe. IFOAM EU Director Marco Schlüter and Spanish board member Victor Gonzalvez participated in this important event to [underline that organic productions is indispensable to halt the loss of biodiversity on farm land.](#)

The conference also aimed to discuss the [Commission Communication](#) "Options for an EU vision and target for biodiversity beyond 2010". It states that there should be greater financial opportunities in favour of biodiversity under the Common Agricultural Policy, while biodiversity concerns should be embraced into all policy areas. The text recognises that the EU failed to meet its 2010 target and stresses the need to look beyond 2010.

International negotiations on a new global post-2010 vision for halting the loss of biodiversity will be held in Nagoya, Japan in the autumn, while the Commission pledges to bring forward a new EU biodiversity strategy by the end of the year.

► **The III European Organic Congress of IFOAM EU will deal with the 'new green deal' - Madrid, May 27**

The urgent environmental challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss need to be tackled and therefore require urgent attention in different policy fields. Agriculture needs to play its part in the mitigation of climate change and halt of biodiversity, and at the same time the food sector has to guarantee future food security and providing jobs in rural regions. Organic agriculture provides a model for a comprehensive approach to meet all these challenges.

The III European Organic Congress of IFOAM EU, which will take place in Madrid on 27th May, will demonstrate the potential of the organic sector to contribute to both the EU strategy for sustainable development and to making the European food sector more dynamic and competitive while creating jobs. Moreover, the congress will discuss necessary moves in EU policies to come to a more sustainable development in the food sector, taking the Common Agricultural Policy as example. Key policy makers and stakeholders from government, businesses and organisations involved in the organic sector are expected to attend the congress.

► **EU Commission 2010-2014 appointed**

The new EU Commission came to office on 10th of February 2010. In January the Commissioners designate had to undergo an examination in the European Parliament (the Parliament hearings can be found [here](#)).

The Commission includes a number of new portfolios, including a Commissioner for Climate Change - the post was taken by the former Danish Minister of Climate and Energy Connie Hedegaard among whose latest duties was also the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. The new Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development is Dacian Ciolos, former Head of the Presidential Commission on Agricultural Policy in Romania. The Slovenian Janez Potocnik takes up a second mandate in the Commission, now as Environment Commissioner – Mr Potocnik was up till now Commissioner for Science and Research. The former Minister of Social Policy of Malta John Dalli is the Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy.

IFOAM EU expressed its expectations for the approaches of the renewed Commission in a communication after the approval of the members of the executive body of the EU on 9th of February.

More at: [PR - IFOAM EU – New Commission to enforce 'new green deal', 9/02/2010](#)

► **Study on labelling threshold for non GM seed to be published soon**

The IFOAM EU Group commissioned a study on “Economic impacts of labelling thresholds for the adventitious presence of genetically engineered organisms in conventional and organic seeds”. The study was finalised in December 2009 and will be published within the next week after it is handed to the new EU Commission in place.

► **Political recommendations for the new EU Commission**

The IFOAM EU Group discussed and worked out recommendations for a consistent policy mix for organic production – a document that is to be handed over to the new EU Commission. The recommendations were put down on paper at the end of 2009 and will be presented to the new Agriculture Commissioner Dacian Ciolos during the forthcoming first meeting of representatives of IFOAM EU with Mr Ciolos.

► **GMO-free EU regions**

IFOAM EU participated at the GMO-free EU Regions Conference “Non-GM labels, quality production and European regional agricultures’ strategy” in Brussels on 3-4th of February. The presentations covered possibilities to keep regions free of cultivation of GMOs, examples for the labelling of GMO-free products such as milk and meat, business models to secure imports of guaranteed GMO-free soya and clear statements that freedom from GMOs is crucial for quality products. Regional approaches for feed supply and marketing were discussed as well as models how regional policies may support local protein independence. The final declaration underlines the importance of agriculture practices that care about the environment and calls on European policy makers to use the revision of the CAP to make European agriculture a model for sustainability.

More at: www.gmofree-euregions.net

► **New Commission, new battle to stay free of GMO**

Commission President Barroso has moved the Unit “Biotechnology, Pesticides and Health” from DG Environment to DG Sanco, where there is already a Unit “Biotechnology and Plant Health”. It may be assumed from this step and other initiatives that he wants to speed up GMO approvals in the European Union. For cultivation, the authorisation of about 20 GMOs is currently pending (even more for the placing on the market as feed and food) in the EU, with a GMO starch potato from BASF (that contains the antibiotic marker gene nptII and is resistant against the antibiotics kanamycin and neomycin) and the re-approval of the maize MON 810 on the top of the list.

Find out more:

- <http://www.euractiv.com/en/cap/eu-weighs-proposals-break-gmo-deadlock>
- <http://www.saveourseeds.org/en/dossiers/basfs-starch-potato.html>
- http://ec.europa.eu/food/committees/regulatory/scfcah/modif_genet/index_en.htm

► **The Lisbon Treaty – what changes in policies related to agriculture?**

The Treaty of Lisbon is the new legal framework of the European Union as of 1st of December 2009. What does this mean for agriculture policies?

Find out at: IFOAM EU – [summary of changes to decision-making](#)

► **Green catering – organic food in the EU canteens**

In the autumn of 2009 IFOAM EU started work on a number of initiatives related to green public procurement and organic catering. The main purpose of this is to increase organic food availability in the public sector on a permanent basis, with the EU institutions in Brussels as a starting point. Currently the Commission recommends that Member States should achieve up to 50% of sustainable procurement in public canteens such as schools, hospitals and kinder gardens.

Activities so far include a meeting with the Belgian organic sector to discuss the state of play on the organic catering scene in the EU institutions and how to increase the levels of green catering within these institutions. Further meetings are arranged with the Commission to discuss possible increased implementation of organic food in the institution's canteens.

A [letter](#) was sent to Mr. Misiga DG Environment on December 22, 2009.

1.4 Research

► **TP Organics – launch of Strategic Research Agenda at BioFach**



TP Organics completed in the end of 2009 the Strategic Research Agenda - after having a last hearing with stakeholders and the Commission on

December 2nd in DG Environment. The official [launch of the publication](#) is at BioFach: Saturday, February 20th, 14.30-16.30, room Budapest E.

Also within BioFach the TP Organics organises a workshop "Assessing Technologies and Methodology": Wednesday, February 17th, 14.30-16.30, room Madrid CCN West. The workshop and follow up process will tackle the

issue of knowledge transfer as this has been identified as a major obstacle towards a 'user friendly' organic research.

More at: www.tporganics.eu

1.5 IFOAM EU Group/office in Brussels & internal structure

▶ IFOAM EU board meeting in Malta

The IFOAM EU Group board will join together in Malta on March 18-20 to discuss the work in 2010, the new EU Commission and diverse organisational and content topics. Among the most prominent topics are the future of the CAP after 2013, loss of biodiversity and the new Regulation on Organic Food and Farming.

2. Decisions, reports, announcements concerning organic farming

2.1 Standing Committee on Organic Farming - short reports from the meetings of SCOF:

- [88th meeting on 14-15/12/2009](#)
- [87th meeting on 19-20/11/2009](#)
- [86th meeting on 19-20/10/2009](#)

2.2 Links and reports

▶ **Links:** [Presentations of the last XV SEAE Conference](#) on Organic Farming in the Mediterranean countries, September 16-19

▶ Reports

[Institute for European Environmental Policy report: Provision of Public Goods Through Agriculture in the European Union](#): Well-targeted CAP can deliver future environmental public goods, says the report. The cost of measures to improve environmental public goods and services may be considerably less than the costs to tackle environmental degradation and welfare losses. Commissioned by DG AGRI, the 396-page report concludes that the Common Agricultural Policy is particularly important for enabling farmers to deliver environmental benefits, such as agricultural landscapes, farmland biodiversity, water quality and availability, soil functionality, air quality, resilience against flooding and fires, and climate stability, but claims that these goods are currently undersupplied.

3. Calendar of events and other news

3.1 Calendar of events

Time (2010)	Event
February 17-20	Biofach 2010 , Nuremberg/Germany
February 22-24	Ecofruit , Hohenheim/Germany IFOAM EU is patron of the event
April 11-12	Natural & Organic Products Europe , London/UK
May 6-7	Organic Marketing Forum , Warsaw/Poland IFOAM EU Group is patron of the event
May 27	IFOAM EU conference in Madrid: "New Green Deal for Sustainable Food Chains - Save Climate and Biodiversity – careful use of resources and creation of green organic jobs in the food sector"
June 21-22	IFOAM EU conference in Rome - in conjunction with IAMB: Evaluation of the first year's performance of the EU Regulation for Organic Food and Farming (EC 834/2007)
June 25-27	Sustainable Foods Summit , Amsterdam/the Netherlands
September 3-6	International Conference in Landscape Ecology , Brno/Czech Republic

3.2 Other news

► Fifty-five countries joined the Copenhagen climate accord

Fifty-five countries accounting for almost 80% of world greenhouse gas emissions have pledged varying goals for fighting climate change under a deadline in the "Copenhagen Accord", the United Nations announced on 1st of February. The countries, including top emitters led by China and the United States, mostly reiterated commitments unveiled before December's UN summit in Denmark, which disappointed many by failing to agree a tough, legally binding UN treaty.

More: [Euractiv](#)

► **Rural Development plans approved:** Following the green light for 17 national and 62 regional Rural Development plans over the past 3 months, the Commission has recently approved the remaining RD schemes, namely 3 national (Ireland, Czech Republic, Hungary) and 4 regional. These latest plans related to the new allocation of 346.5 million of EU funds, on top of the 4.599bn previously approved. These final figures confirm that in overall spending terms, Member States have allocated 31.2% of the total 4.946bn for biodiversity, 26.9% to water management, 14.5% for dairy restructuring, 14.2% for Climate Change, 13.7% for dairy restructuring, 7.3% for broadband in rural areas, 5.6% for renewable energy and just 0.3% for innovation linked to the new challenges.

More on the national Rural Development plans:

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/countries/index_en.htm

► **Parliament Hearing on Agriculture and Climate Change:** The 2nd Pillar of the CAP is well-placed to assist the agricultural sector to mitigate against the effects of Climate Change, whilst public payments to farmers and land-managers should be tied to the delivery of these public goods, was one of the opinions voiced at the recent Public Hearing on EU Agriculture and Climate Change in the European Parliament. Addressing the Hearing, Rob Cooke of the UK advisory body Natural England also noted the importance of ensuring continuity in delivering measures that seek to restore degraded land, re-energise habitats, increase forestry cover, preserve peat-lands and maintain hedgerows etc., whilst reiterating the business opportunities that farmers and land managers can tap into in the numerous agri-environment measures within the CAP. Elsewhere at the Hearing, speakers outlined, among other things, the need to develop a robust carbon market, to improve the carbon sequestration potential of the soil, and to work for better transfer of knowledge from the scientists to the grass-roots.

The Hearing also deliberated on the topic of Animal Welfare standards. Speaking on this occasion, the DG SANCO Deputy Director General Paola Testori-Coggi called for a 'balanced approach' between consumers and producers in implementing these standards, in order to maintain viable production levels in Europe.

► **The Spanish Presidency hopes to resurrect the Soils Dossier:** Member States will have to take into account the current and approved future use of the land, when carrying out the identification and remediation of contaminated soil sites within their national territories, according to the latest draft proposals on the EU Soils Directive tabled by the Spanish Presidency. A working group on a revised proposal heard on February 4th the French delegation confirm that its position remains unchanged – France is



part of the blocking minority together with Germany, UK, the Netherlands and Austria. Meanwhile, Germany is “fiercely against” any moves to shift the responsibility for soil protection from national to European level. Despite these signals of opposition, the Spanish Presidency intends to make technical changes to the text and submit it to COREPER towards the beginning of March.

This newsletter exists to inform IFOAM members about the work of the IFOAM EU Group and its liaison and coordination office in Brussels. The IFOAM EU Group is the European Regional Group of the worldwide umbrella organisation IFOAM and is responsible for all matters related to organic farming with a Europe-wide scope. Information IFOAM EU Group:

<http://www.ifoam-eu.org>

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Please send any comments on the newsletter to info@ifoam-eu.org. For further information contact your national board member or the office in Brussels.

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