

Communities and Food Sovereignty

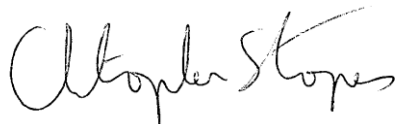
Islands provide a perfect opportunity to see our world close up; globally they are at greatest threat from climate change induced sea level rise. They are a microcosm, the world in miniature. Where better than an island to devise and implement a plan for sustainable eco-living? The Minister for Gozo, The Hon. Giovanna Debono, has just such a plan for the 9 by 14km island of Gozo, Malta, a jewel in the Mediterranean.

The Malta Organic Agriculture Movement (MOAM) conference *Organic agriculture and Eco-Gozo* held in collaboration with the ministry of Gozo discussed how organic farming can play an important role in sustainable development, a key priority for the achieving sustainability whether as part of *Eco-Gozo* island, for Europe or for the whole world.

By coincidence, Malta is the home country of the European Commissioner for Health and Consumer affairs, John Dalli, in charge of ruling on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) in Europe. The [IFOAM EU Group calls on Commissioner Dalli](#) to commit himself to a GMO moratorium. This will protect the natural and cultural heritage of Malta and thus his ecological island of Gozo, it will also serve the best interests of all EU member states.

The recent IFOAM EU Group Board meeting was held in Gozo, to coincide with the MOAM conference – and it was a great opportunity to discuss and plan the exciting work of the IFOAM Group. We will continue to do all we can to ensure that organic food and farming is further developed and promoted as a working model of sustainability. To help achieve this, proposing viable models for a reformed CAP post 2013 and preventing GMO contamination are at the top of our agenda. The upcoming conferences on Regulation in Rome and the New Green Deal in Madrid, outlined in this Newsletter, will provide a further chance to push for the changes we so urgently need.

I hope that this Newsletter will inspire you to participate actively in our work, remembering the organic-vision for sustainable food and farming that we share. It is relevant to all the islands and communities that make up our world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Stopes". The signature is fluid and cursive.

/Christopher Stopes, President/



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1. Activities of the IFOAM EU Group

1.1 New Organic Regulation and Implementing Rules

▶ New Organic Logo and terms of use published

The European Commission has published on 31 March detailed rules for the use of the organic production logo; this publication is accompanied by a user manual, terms of use and a list of frequently asked questions in order to better explain the possibilities of use and the meaning. IFOAM EU Group states: "The new logo will require a wide promotional campaign. The sector will have to invest to integrate the logo on packaging and in communication over the coming years."



More at [IFOAM EU - New Logo](#)

▶ Organic Wine Rules likely to be put to vote in April

The European Commission is working on new version (revision 4), which will be presented for voting at one of the forthcoming SCOF meetings. This new draft already contains some amendments that Member States discussed and agreed on during the SCOF meeting in December. However, this new version has not been finalised and circulated yet, as there remains a lack of consensus among Member States, especially on the question of reduced maximum levels for sulphites. South-European countries want stricter limitation of SO₂, whereas some countries (like Germany and Austria) would like to see no (or very small) limitation of sulphites in organic wine. It seems that there is a blocking minority (including Germany, Austria, Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic) for the existing proposal and South-European countries (especially Italy) do not accept weakening of the proposal. The Commission is looking for a compromise.

Despite the lack of political consensus among Member States, the Commission intends to proceed to vote at the next SCOF meeting, which will probably be held on April 26. It is expected that a new draft of the Implementing Rules will be available around 12-13 of April and this draft will be put to vote in the meeting.

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

► **Congress on the new Organic Regulation, Rome, June 21 -22**

IFOAM EU Group is preparing a congress that gathers organic stakeholders to assess and evaluate the new Organic Regulation. The congress will be organised in cooperation with the Italian Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (IAMB).

Details will be published at www.organic-congress-ifoameu.org

1.2 Policy

► **Malta declaration: IFOAM EU Group calls for a moratorium on the cultivation of GMO**

The board of IFOAM EU Group, representing the organic food sector from 27 Member States, called on the European Commission to ensure the maintenance of GMO free farming in a declaration agreed at its board meeting in Malta in end of March.



The declaration insists on a European wide moratorium on GMO approvals and cultivation of GMOs in the EU. Moreover it calls on the European Commission to recognize the socio-economic impacts of placing on the market and the cultivation of GMOs and to assess long-term effects of GM plants on the environment. *Read the full text of: [Malta declaration](#)*

The **board meeting of the IFOAM EU Group** took place on 18-19 of March on the island of Gozo, Malta - to coincide with the Maltese Organic Agriculture Movement's conference [Organic agriculture and Eco-Gozo](#). The two day meeting offered possibility to discuss policy, regulation and research issues related to organic farming, and was followed by visits to local farmers.

► **Next steps towards the CAP post 2013**

The Common vision on a sustainable Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) prepared Birdlife, EEB, WWF, EFNCP and the IFOAM EU Group has been presented in Brussels on 9 March (see <http://cap2020.ieep.eu/> under "Visions and design"). Birdlife has also launched a Common paper with the [European landowners](#) ELO. The Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Dacian Ciolos has announced that he will listen to stakeholders

when working on the new CAP. A stakeholder meeting will be held on 3 June, whereas a first Commission Communication on the new CAP is foreseen for late autumn 2010 before legislative proposals for the CAP 2014-2020 will be the starting point for a more detailed discussion in next year. The [farm Council of 29 March](#) discussed the role of market management in the future CAP.

▶ **Common food declaration**

The IFOAM EU Group is part of the broad alliance of European, national and local civil society organisations concerned with the future of food and agriculture in Europe that supports the 'European food declaration' to mobilise European citizens and authorities to reshape the Common Agriculture Policy. www.europeanfooddeclaration.org

▶ **Local food systems as a way out of the crisis?**

The FAAN project 'Co-operative research' on Alternative Agro-Food Networks held its final conference on 22 February; in this context also the potential to promote local food systems within the CAP framework were discussed. Find more information on the website www.faanweb.eu

▶ **Europe 2020 strategy**

The EU Commission has published a Communication on a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth for [Europe 2020](#), outlining 7 flagship initiatives spanning education, innovation, poverty reduction etc.

▶ **Liberate (agro-bio-)diversity**

The European initiatives for seed diversity have met in Graz, Austria, on 25-27 March. The challenge to maintain and further develop diversity of plant varieties under current and future legislation was discussed; ideas for action were exchanged and a declaration that calls on politicians to defend farmers' rights to sow seeds from their own harvest, to breed them, to pass them on and to maintain diversity was adopted. www.liberate-diversity-graz2010.org

▶ **GMOs**

The GMO potato Amflora has been approved by the European Commission on 2 March. The IFOAM EU Group criticised this undemocratic step, emphasizing that farmers and food processors will have to face even higher costs keeping food production chains free from GMOs.

While the revision of the EU legislation is ongoing, the EU Commission is planning to adopt large parts of the European Food Authority's (EFSA) guidelines on the risk assessment of genetically engineered plants as an

official part of EU regulations (www.testbiotech.org/en/node/334). Moreover, applications for cultivation for at least two GMO maize varieties are in the pipeline (Bt11 and 1507).

High time to come together for action: The [6th European Conference of GMO Free Regions](#) will take place in Brussels and Gent on 16 -18 September 2010. All kind of organisations and initiatives that are committed to GMO free food and farming are invited to support this conference with ideas, organisational help, donations, etc. Please contact the IFOAM EU office for further information.

Two **on line actions** were launched to collect supporters for the maintenance of GMO free food and farming. The first by [AVAAZ](#), calling on the Commission to ban GMOs until the research is done. With [Stop the Crop](#), you can send a letter to your minister in charge to call on your national government to take a responsible role in protecting GMO free food.

► **Directive for the protection of soils**

No agreement has been reached again on the directive for the protection of soils did again not advance at the Council of Environmental Ministers on 15 March due to opposition from Germany, France, the UK, Austria, the Netherlands and Malta. The Commissioner for the Environment, Janez Potocnik, promised to *"talk to ministers from the so-called blocking minority about what are behind their real concerns"* to find a way out under Belgian presidency.

► **Food labelling – MEP Sommer's report voted in EP**

On March 15 the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety voted on the [draft report](#) of Renate Sommer, dealing with the provision of food information to consumers. On this occasion, the IFOAM EU Group sent voting [recommendations](#) to the Committee Members. Voting through the report, the EP Environment Committee approved the country of origin labelling, but rejected the "traffic light" system which would be a one-dimensional approach to label the nutritious value of a product. Moreover, the Committee demanded labelling of "nano"-technology products, trans fatty acids labelling and labelling of farming methods of eggs in processed products. The draft report will be voted in the European Parliament's Plenary session on 14 of June. The final regulation has to be agreed with the Council in the co-decision procedure, possibly only after a second reading.

► **Ecolabelling**

The Commission (DG Environment) will decide in the end of April which organisation or consortium will be contracted to carry out the study in

accordance with article 6 (5) of the Ecolabelling Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 of 25 November 2009. The study should provide a basis for a decision whether the Ecolabel can be used, and if so, in what way, on food products.

► **Animal welfare**

The IFOAM EU Group sent on March 15 a [letter](#) on the Marit Paulsen's [draft report](#) (see also [amendments](#)) on evaluation and assessment of the Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2006-2010. The report was voted by the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development on 17 March. It asks the Commission to propose "without delay" an Action Plan on Animal Welfare for 2011-2015, provision of sufficient resources from the EU budget for inspections by the Commission and ensuring the implementation of the current legislation. The report also asks support for the establishment of a European Reference Network for animal welfare, insisting on the use of existing structures. The final version will be voted in plenary on 19 of April.

► **Health and Nutrition Claims**

Seminar "Health and Nutrition Claims: National Implementation of the Regulation" was held by DG Sanco of the European Commission on 9 of March. The IFOAM EU Group took part in the seminar; the Group wants to ensure that the integrity of the organic product is not threatened by inappropriate nutritional and health claims. There are different approaches in the Member States towards national implementation of the Nutrition and Health Claims Regulation. The need for further harmonisation was pointed out during the seminar. See [agenda and linked presentations](#).

► **Smoke Flavourings**

A meeting of the Working Group on Smoke Flavourings (part of the Advisory Group on the Food Chain, Animal and Plant Health in DG Sanco of the Commission) was held on 3 of March. The draft regulation, which is to revise Council Regulation 2065/2003 on smoke flavourings, includes a list of approved smoke flavourings with detailed use criteria. It was presented by the Commission and discussed by experts and representatives of the smoke flavourings producers. The IFOAM EU Group presented its position (defined already in its [letter from 14/09/2009](#)) that only natural smoke applications and smoke condensate as defined in Council Regulation 2065/2003, article 3.1 and 3.4 (water soluble extracts and products on their base), without any further additives, are acceptable.

► **Date of IFOAM EU „New Green Deal“ congress in Madrid changes to 7 of June**

The date of the 3rd European Organic Congress of IFOAM EU, which will take place in Madrid (another part of it, focusing on the Organic Regulation, takes place in Rome – see above) was moved from 27 of May to 7 of June due to organisational considerations. The Madrid congress 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.

Details have been published at www.organic-congress-ifoameu.org

1.3 IFOAM EU in Public

► **IFOAM EU at BioFach 2010**

IFOAM EU Group held a series of events during this year's BioFach in Nuremberg.

The IFOAM EU Policy Coordinator Antje Kölling chaired a workshop entitled 'Challenges of a New CAP' on 19 of February. A panel composed of Thomas Fertl (Bio Austria), Alessandro Triantafyllidis (AIAB) and Jochen Dettmer (BUND) addressed one of the thorniest and most scrutinised topics in EU agri-politics: CAP reform. The panel argued that organic agriculture should be promoted as an integral component of a new CAP on the basis of two major strengths: its systemic approach (which makes it superior to single-solution measures) and its regulatory structure (organic agriculture is not the only system of sustainable agriculture but the best-regulated one in existence). Panellists and the audience also spoke firmly of the need to address the market situation in the agricultural sector, rectifying farmer incomes and eliminating export subsidies. For this, however, there is not yet any clear proposal.

A TP Organics workshop "Assessing Technologies and Methodology" was held on February 17 (IFOAM EU is one of the founders of the Technology Platform Organics and is involved in all its activities since its inception). The workshop focused on the methodologies used in organic research and discussed the specific issue of stakeholder participation and knowledge transfer. It was in fact the kick off meeting for the TP Organics Implementation Action Plan development which will continue until the autumn of 2010. The Action Plan will explain how the research priorities, already identified in the Strategic Research Agenda, can be implemented in practice and what concepts and methodologies it should be based on. *More at www.tporganics.eu.*

IFOAM EU Group also launched on February 18 one of its recent publications – the Aquaculture Dossier. The Dossier explains the new legislative framework for organic aquaculture. See [Dossier page and press release](#).



From left to right: Louisa Winkler, trainee at the Brussels office of IFOAM EU, Andrzej Szeremeta, Food Legislation Coordinator at IFOAM EU, and Sabine Eigenschink, member of the board of IFOAM EU Group, during the presentation of the Aquaculture Dossier at this year's BioFach.

The Group organised and held a Sponsor Event, demonstrating the benefits of current and potential partnerships as well as well-attended sessions on: Exporting to the EU, on the New EU Regulation for Organic Wine, on the One-year Assessment of the Organic Regulation, on the Labeling Schemes on EU Level, on the Impact of EU Policies for Organic Processing and Trade, and on Certifying Restaurants and Caterers in Europe.

Click [here](#) for the presentations from the IFOAM EU events during BioFach.

BioFach 2011 will take place from 16 to 19 of February next year.

► **Ecofruit 2010**

The IFOAM EU Group was for the 3rd time patron of Ecofruit, the International Conference on Organic Fruit Growing, at the University of Hohenheim (Germany), from February 22 to 24,



2010. The Director of IFOAM EU Marco Schlüter was one of the opening keynote speakers. This year's Ecofruit was the continuation of thirteen previous meetings. It brought together European researchers and consultants working on topics related to organic fruit growing.

IFOAM EU Group is also the patron of the annual Organic Marketing Forum in Poland and Bioacademy in the Czech Republic. The registration for these forthcoming events still open (see Calendar of Events).

1.4 IFOAM EU Group/office in Brussels & internal structure

IFOAM EU Group is looking for a Regulation Advisor and Project Coordinator – see www.ifoam-eu.org – Announcements.

In March the Brussels office of the Group welcomed Yvonne Henkel (Germany) who will work as a Regulation Trainee. Yvonne has studied environmental sciences and is a graduate of the University of Kassel – Witzenhausen. She has done traineeships with two member organisations of IFOAM EU - FNAB in France and EkoConnect in Germany. The Brussels office thanks to Louisa Winkler and Vivianne Aggestam who have recently finished their traineeships with IFOAM EU.

2. Decisions, links, 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:**

►► **3rd IFOAM Trade Symposium**, presentations available at: http://www.ifoam.org/events/fairs/BioFach/Trade_Symposium_2010.html

►► Presentations from the 3rd **European and Global Conference on non-GM Agriculture and Labels** available at: www.gmofree-euregions.net.

► **Reports**

▶▶ **Friends of the Earth report: "Who Benefits from GM Crops"?** This new report of Friends of the Earth International reveals that claims made by the biotech industry that Genetically Modified crops can combat climate change are both exaggerated and premature and exposes that GM crops could actually increase carbon emissions while failing to feed the world. See also [press release](#).

▶▶ **FAO report: "The State of Food and Agriculture 2009".** The last State of Food and Agriculture report of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations emphasises that a key policy focus "should be on correcting market distortions and policy failures that encourage environmental degradation". It underscores that subsidies that "directly or indirectly promote overgrazing, land degradation, deforestation, overuse of water or Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions should be eliminated".

▶ **Announcements**

▶▶ **EFSA public consultation on risk assessment of GM plants open until April 30:** The European Food Safety Authority is currently carrying out two public consultations related to GMO - one on its draft scientific opinion on the assessment of the potential impacts of GM plants on non-target organisms, and second on a guidance document for the environmental risk assessment of GM plants. The aim of this is to draw up a comprehensive scientific review of the current guidance document of the GMO panel for Environment Risk Assessment (ERA), in response to demands from stakeholders including the European Commission and Member States.

See <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en> under *Scientific Panels and Units* •

▶▶ **Learning AgriCultures: new educational series on small-scale farming sustainability.** ILEIA, based in the Netherlands Center for Learning on Sustainable Agriculture, made available interim versions of the first two modules of its Learning AgriCultures educational series, dedicated to understanding small-scale (family) farming and how it can become more sustainable. Each module has three learning blocks, looking at its theme from the perspective of the farm, issues in the wider context affecting farming, and lastly sustainability approach and governance issues. These learning blocks are followed by a section of educational support material, including practical cases, exercises, games, photos, videos, farmer visit checklist as well as further references (free books and websites). Drawings and diagrams as well as a glossary of difficult terms explain concepts. These tools can be used by educators to can make their own lesson plans and illustrate concepts by providing concrete examples.

ILEIA will complement these learning series with five more modules. As the series is work in development, interim versions of each module will be presented first. ILEIA invites feedback and suggestions for improvement on

the package in its current form. This will help to produce the final publications in the course of 2010.

See: www.ileia.org (go to the "Learning" page) and send feedback to educators@ileia.org

3. Calendar of events and other news

3.1 Calendar of events

Date (2010)	Event
March 31	EuroCoop conference: Building a Fair Food Retail Market in Europe , Brussels/Belgium
April 11-12	Natural & Organic Products Europe , London/UK
April 5-17	Spanish action weeks against GMOs throughout Europe
April 21-23	Seminar: Semi – subsistence farming , current situation and future prospects" will take place in Sibiu, Romania
May 6-7	Organic Marketing Forum , Warsaw/Poland IFOAM EU Group is patron of the event
New date June 7	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" www.organic-congress-ifoameu.org
June 15-16	SusCon 2010 - International Conference on Sustainable Business and Consumption: Biodiversity - A Strategic Value in a Greening Economy , Nuremberg/Germany
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) www.organic-congress-ifoameu.org
June 25-27	Sustainable Foods Summit , Amsterdam/the Netherlands
June 30 – July 2	Bioacademy 2010 , Lednice/Czech Republic IFOAM EU Group is patron of the event
July 4-7	9th European IFSA Symposium - Building Sustainable Rural Future: The Added Value of Systems Approaches in Times of Change and Uncertainty , Vienna/Austria

Date (2010)	Event
August 22-27	<u>Symposium of the 28th International Horticulture Congress on Organic Horticulture: Productivity and Sustainability</u> , Lisbon/Portugal
September 3-6	<u>International Conference in Landscape Ecology</u> , Brno/Czech Republic
September 9-12	<u>SANA 2010 - 22nd International Exhibition of Natural Products</u> , Bologna/Italy
September 16-17	<u>OrganicEdunet conference</u> , Budapest/Hungary

3.2 Other news

► **FAO, IFOAM International and UNCTAD** announced the Global Organic Market Access Project's new website and the first issue of its newsletter, which is called *Harmonization and Equivalence*. The newsletter will be published 3 times annually and made available through the GOMA website, which is also equipped with a blog-type *News and Views section*, information on regional projects, and useful tools. The Global Organic Market Access (GOMA) is a project of FAO, IFOAM and UNCTAD which seeks to simplify the process for trade flow of organic products among various regulatory and/or private organic guarantee systems. GOMA focuses on harmonisation and equivalence of organic standards and certification performance requirements as mechanisms for clearing trade pathways.

More at: www.goma-organic.org

► **In the absence of a Common Agricultural Policy, agricultural production would concentrate in certain EU regions**, which would lead to increased environmental pressure in these areas and land abandonment elsewhere, DG AGRI Director Tassos Haniotis stated addressing the *3rd Forum on the Future of Agriculture* in Brussels on March 16. Mr Haniotis discussed over the future of CAP and in particular the provision of basic public goods via good land management, with additional targeted measures related to climate change adaptation and mitigation actions. Another speaker pointed out that in Europe we are systematically underestimating the value of the public environmental services that farmers are delivering - or could deliver, such as better water quality, water storage and filtration, carbon sequestration in soil and forests. Elsewhere in the forum, the Chair of the Rise Foundation and former EU Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler stated that the CAP will have to recognise and promote the missing link between agriculture and climate change, which is the production of public goods and services by land managers. The EU Environment Commissioner

Janez Potoènik called during the forum for a “profound greening” of the CAP and strengthening the 2nd pillar.

► **EESC calls for stronger market-support measures for farmers and more transparent pricing.** Future policy reform should not be driven by a lowest-price, specialised production concentrated on specific regions and geared exclusively towards optimum economic outputs, but a European agricultural model, which must be based on the principles of food sovereignty, sustainability and the real needs of farmers and consumers, according to an opinion on the CAP post-2013 adopted by the European Economic and Social Committee. Voting through an opinion drafted by German *Rapporteur* Lutz Ribbe - Director of the Environmental Policy Section of the European Nature Heritage Fund (Euronatur), the Committee called for stronger market-support measures for farmers and more transparent pricing, in view of food wholesalers and retailers superior bargaining position in the food chain.

► **The Bulgarian Parliament adopted a law to ban the cultivation of Genetically Modified crops** for scientific and commercial reasons on its territory. Commenting after the vote in the second half of March, Kostadin Yazov, an MP from the ruling centre-right Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB) party, stated “there will be no field on the country's territory where GMOs can be cultivated”. Commenting on the move, Commission (DG SANCO) officials stated that Member States are free to activate the safeguard clause, but must make it known to the Commission, including the appropriate scientific risk assessment and justification.

► **Council Conclusions on biodiversity:** Detrimental land-use change, over-exploitation and unsustainable use of natural resources, as well as climate change are among the main reasons for biodiversity loss, which continues at “an unacceptable rate”, according to Council Conclusions agreed by EU Environment Ministers at the Environment Council on March 15. The text underlines the EU ministers’ concern that EU and global 2010 biodiversity targets have not been met. Recognising the importance of completing the *Natura 2000* mosaic and the promotion of “Green Infrastructure” (including agricultural land, greenways, wetlands, parks, etc. that naturally regulate ecosystems), the Council called upon the Commission to submit an EU post-2010 Biodiversity Strategy during this year, with a mid-term headline target that all species loss within the EU will be ended by 2020.

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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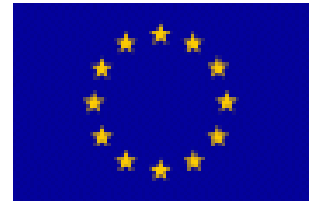
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