

Dear members,

We are sending you our final newsletter before a successful and exciting year closes. The IFOAM EU Group could successfully strengthen its capacities and is thus well prepared to play an important role in the political discussion about the EU political framework of the new financial period (2014-2020). The political direction of the EU is at stake. Under the key strategy of the EU 2020 strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth a lot of important legislation and political initiatives are discussed that will have a huge impact on organic production.

Most prominent – and with huge financial impact - is of course the discussion of the future of the Common Agriculture Policy where IFOAM EU is in a strong alliance with other environmental organisations and member of the civil society platform of the Agriculture and Rural Convention (ARC 2020), and has positioned itself in several direct meetings with the Agricultural Commissioner and Commission officials.

Further to that, the EU will decide soon on its biodiversity strategy 2020 and on its commitment with regards to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The IFOAM EU Group is highly involved in both discussions and has recently organised together with IFOAM World an internal climate camp to work out and discuss future climate strategies.

In the area of research, the discussion about future concepts for EU research is running. The IFOAM EU puts all its efforts in the research platform TP Organics which was originally initiated by IFOAM EU. TP Organics will present in January its Research Action Plan that demonstrates how concrete research priorities for organic food and farming should be put into practice.

Last but not least, the IFOAM EU Group has started a discussion on the long-term strategy how to regulate organic food and farming at EU level which includes questions like: how detailed an EU regulation should be, how different developments in member states and regions can be taken into account and how the private sector can go ahead and drive the development of organic, even if it is outside of the organic regulation.

Consequently, the IFOAM EU Group will go with a good feeling into the Christmas break. However, a full agenda is waiting at our return. The IFOAM EU Group achieved to organise a common high-level conference with the Hungarian EU Presidency next year in late spring. One further big challenge will be to achieve long term stability in resources and finance.

Nevertheless, let's have first an enjoyable Christmas break and come back to set an organic agenda in 2011.

I wish you a Merry Christmas and happy New Year!

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "Marco Schlüter" in a cursive script.

/Marco Schlüter, Director/



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1. Activities of the IFOAM EU Group

1.1 EU regulation of organic production and marketing

▶ Discussion on poultry production underway

The IFOAM EU Group has recently published its second [position paper](#) on organic poultry production and rearing. At an IFOAM EU Group's board meeting it was decided to develop a third paper that deals with the questions still open.

The work is delegated to a poultry expert group. A range of topics were decided at the November board meeting in Brussels and they will form the basis of the work over the coming months. The aim is to arrange a meeting in France in the first quarter of 2011 to discuss a first proposal for positions on these topics.

The group is currently open for new poultry experts who would like to join and contribute to the work. Interested persons should contact their national board member.

▶ Commission Expert Group for technical advice

The expert group for technical advice on organic production, established by the European Commission, convened for the first time on December 15 in Brussels. The main topic on the agenda was for the group to constitute itself, and to agree on terms of reference and work plans.

Related documents can be found [here](#).

▶ Commission report on the scope of the Organic Regulation expected

The Council Regulation 834/2007 (the Organic Regulation) obliges the Commission to report to the Council by the end of 2011 on the scope of the regulation. It is not yet known in detail how the Commission will go about the reporting. The IFOAM EU Group is ready to work out concrete suggestions and comment on the process.

▶ Consultation on organic seaweed rules

The IFOAM EU Group runs [consultations](#) between December 13, 2010, and January 17, 2011, on the EU organic seaweed production and collection rules included in the Organic Regulation and its Implementing Rules (Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 and Regulation (EC) No 889/2008). The consultation aims to collect opinions of producers, experts and wider organic movement on the relevance of the current EU rules on organic seaweed production and collection. The received contributions will feed into the process of preparation of an IFOAM EU recommendation on revision of the EU organic seaweed

rules. Work will be conducted by the IFOAM EU aquaculture expert group in the year 2011 and beyond.

1.2 Policy

► Legal basis for EU states to ban GMO cultivation further discussed

On 13 July 2010 the Commission proposed a new GMO package aiming to confer to the member states the freedom to restrict or ban the cultivation of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) on part or all of their territory, while keeping unchanged the existing EU science-based authorisation system. After first exchanges of opinions in the ENVI and AGRI Council, a dedicated ad-hoc working party started further discussion on the issue in September 2010. An opinion of the Council Legal Service claimed that the Commission proposal was legally flawed, whereas the Commission defends its proposal. To reach more clarification, the Commission was asked to provide a list of grounds on which member states could base their decision to restrict or ban GMO cultivation as a prerequisite for further work on the proposal. The issue is discussed at the Council meeting of environmental ministers on 20 December. IFOAM EU Group monitors the process closely.

► IFOAM EU took part in two biodiversity events

The Policy Coordinator of the IFOAM EU Group, Antje Kölling, was among a three-person panel of the conference [“Biodiversity conservation, population growth and food production”](#), organised by UNRIC and the pan-European office IUCN on 9 of December in Brussels.

After a look-back at the agreements on biodiversity reached in Nagoya (expose of Andras Krolopp from IUCN) and a presentation calling for sustainable yield increases on existing land to meet the growing demand for food by a



From left to right: IFOAM EU’s Policy Coordinator Antje Kölling, Janos Tisovszky, Deputy Director, UNRIC, and Patrick van Damme, University of Ghent

growing population (Patrick van Damme from the University of Gent), Antje closed the round by stating food production can and must feed the world without destroying the planet. Organic farming needs to be recognised for the ecosystem services it provides and its role strengthened accordingly to reflect the holistic benefits that organic farming brings; and the untapped potential of organic farming systems needs to be further developed by adapted research and ecological innovation strategies.

Closing event on biodiversity organised by the Belgian presidency

On 14 December, the Belgian presidency, together with the pan-European office of IUCN, organised in Charleroi, Belgium, a conference closing the international year of biodiversity. The conference went under the title "How to better communicate the socio-economic value of biodiversity". IFOAM EU was present to witness a day of lectures and round table discussions summarising previous events related to biodiversity, and again emphasising the various values biodiversity has for humans. The [EU biodiversity](#) strategy, based on stakeholder consultations, conferences and the Nagoya outcomes, is to be published early next year.

► Resource efficiency – key theme for 2011

One of the seven flagship initiatives in the [EU 2020 strategy](#) is resource efficiency - using our materials and natural resources more sparingly and intelligently while increasing competitiveness (decouple economic growth from resource use) and strive towards the over-arching goal of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. IFOAM EU took part in a conference on this flagship initiative, organised by Friends of the Earth Europe, highlighting the benefits resource efficiency has on companies, competitiveness, climate, and the environment. Most notably for the food sector, the need was raised to protect land and value the availability of land, to use inputs such as water and energy more efficiently and to communicate to the consumer the value of improved environmental standards, for example by enhancing the scope of the organic logo.

A high-level conference in preparation of the 7th Environment Action Programme (7th EAP), held in Brussels in end-November, reiterated again this key theme. The focus was on building on the target fields identified under the 6th EAP. The conference also aimed to contribute to the discussion of the December 20 Environmental Council.

For more information on resource efficiency and the EU 2020 strategy, click [here](#). For further information regarding the 7th EAP, go [here](#).

► Urban sustainable food supply

Examples of local food markets, “organic cities” and policies favouring organic food came to the fore in a conference organised by [ICLEI](#) on 9 December at the premises of the Permanent Delegation of Turkey to the EU. Presentations by the city of Rome shed light on the progressive organic policy and impressive agricultural area of the Italian capital, making it the biggest agricultural capital in Europe. The Turkish organic farming organisation Bugday highlighted the benefits that the opening of a local market had for farmers and other inhabitants in the region of Kartal, Istanbul. Another interesting presentation was of the concept “Biostadt München” which maps out increasing incorporation of organic food in canteens and restaurants.

► “Pig Business – Time for Change” – Brussels, February 9

IFOAM EU Group invites you to join it and other NGOs in a massive alert to members and networks to see the film [“Pig Business - Time for Change”](#) and write to the members of the European Parliament insisting that they attend the related event which is planned for February 9 in Brussels. The IFOAM EU Group supports this event which is hosted by José Bové MEP (Greens), Dan Jorgensen MEP (Socialists & Democrats) and Janusz Wojciechowski MEP (European Conservative & Reformists) and co-hosted by Robert F Kennedy Jnr.

Find out the details [here](#).

► The European Commission published “Quality Package”

The European Commission published on December 10 its “Quality Package, comprising of:

- A proposal for a new 'Agricultural Product Quality Schemes Regulation', bringing coherence and clarity to the EU schemes;
- A proposal to streamline adoption of marketing standards by the Commission, including the power to extend place of farming labelling in accordance with the specificity of each agricultural sector;
- New Guidelines on best practices for voluntary certification schemes and on the labelling of products using geographical indications as ingredients.

The IFOAM EU Group is currently analysing the Commission proposal and will react to it in the beginning of next year.

More at: [Commission website – quality package](#)

► “IFOAM EU meets business”

“IFOAM EU meets business” was an open dialogue between representatives of the organic business and the IFOAM EU Group. It took place in Brussels on December 7. Representatives of 15 companies from Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, the Netherlands and Poland took part in this event, which was co-organised by the Aoel, Synabio and VBP (members of IFOAM EU). The meeting was meant as a first step towards closer co-operation between organic business and the IFOAM EU Group, aimed to develop mutual understanding, to increase future cooperation and help the IFOAM EU in shaping future work priorities.



December 7, “IFOAM EU meets business”: Ronald van Marlen (left), Director of Ariza B.V - producer of organic fruit products and main sponsor of IFOAM EU Group in 2010, and Christopher Stopes, President of the IFOAM EU Group.

► Good work requires good resources – IFOAM EU invites sponsoring

Next to membership fees, sponsoring is the only other financial input that can guarantee the carrying out of independent advocacy work and a proper presentation of the organic movement in Brussels. To gain a wide number of sponsors, the IFOAM EU Group has a variety of different sponsoring options to offer – there is at least one that fits to your needs.

All sponsor possibilities are summarised in a sponsor flyer, available in [English](#), [German](#), [Italian](#) and [Spanish](#) language.

The IFOAM EU Group sincerely thanks to all its sponsors in 2010. The generous contributions of [ARIZA](#) - main sponsor of IFOAM EU in 2010 - as well as of [SIPAL](#), [CAAE](#) and [EOASTA](#) was a significant and valued support to our work in 2010.

We also want to thank to the contributors within the IFOAM EU scheme for “companies and associations of the month”.

IFOAM EU Companies and Associations in 2010 were:

May: Lebensbaum
June: Pajottenlander
July: Meinklang
August: Vivani
September: Yogi Tea
October: BELVAS
November: Bio Austria
December: CAAE

You can find the presentations of all these Companies and Associations of the Month at the archive of the [IFOAM EU sponsorship page](#).

► IFOAM EU's Association of the Month - CAAE

José Luis García Melgarejo, Managing Director of the CAAE Association, explains the partnership of IFOAM EU and CAAE with the following words: *"The work and efforts made by all the persons involved in the organic sector at European level offer important benefits to the society at large. Especially if we do it with the unity and mutual support provided by the IFOAM EU Group. Now, more than ever!"*

You can read more about the Spanish association that gathers more than 9000 members at: [IFOAM EU – Association of the Month CAAE](#).

In January 2011 the Dutch company ARIZA will be presented as a Company of the Month. Should you wish to present your company or association via the IFOAM EU website, get in contact with Lena.Wietheger@ifoam-eu.org.

1.3 TP Organics

On December 7 TP Organics presented its Action Plan at the European Parliament. This meeting was also an opportunity to discuss the obstacles of SMEs' participation in research. The conference turned out to be a great success, judging by the number of participants, their diverse profiles as well as the high quality of the different presentations and debates.

Members of the European Parliament and Commission officials met at this event with farmers' representatives, researchers and SMEs' to have constructive discussion on how to better involve the latter in research and improve knowledge transfer and benefit to them as users of research. The roundtable following the presentations was opened by MEP Paolo De Castro, Chair of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development. In his

speech, De Castro acknowledged the innovative nature of the organic sector and stressed the important role that has to be given to organic farmers and processors and their input in research. Furthermore, he asked the Commission to support organic research projects. Later that day TP Organics representatives took part in the "IFOAM EU meets business" discussion.

1.4 IFOAM EU Group/office in Brussels & internal structure

The IFOAM EU Group's office team wishes you Merry Christmas and a successful new year!



IFOAM EU Group would like to thank sincerely for the much-appreciated, generous support of its sponsors.



Main sponsor of IFOAM EU in 2010



IFOAM EU sponsor 2010



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2. Decisions, links and reports concerning organic farming

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

- [94th meeting on 22-23/11/2010](#)
- [93rd meeting on 14-15/10/2010](#)
- [92nd meeting on 16-17/06/2010](#)

▶ Links

▶▶ **CERTCOST newsletter** - get the first newsletter through the project website www.certcost.org or subscribe by writing to Simon.Rebsdorf@icrofs.org.

The first issue of the newsletter contains among other things:

- New database on European actors in organic standards setting and certification
- Three public CERTCOST reports: „The opening Stakeholder workshop in Izmir“, „Economic theory applied on organic food products“ and „European legislation: The background of organic certification“
- Short introduction to European Food Law
- Upcoming events

▶▶ **Resource Efficiency conference presentations** – on December 2 Friends of the Earth Europe held a conference in the European Parliament titled “The EU 2020 Resource Efficiency Flagship Initiative: How can we ensure that it makes a real difference?” The presentations and agenda of the event are now available [here](#).

3. Calendar of events and other news

3.1 Calendar of events

Date (2010-2011)	Event
January 17-18	<i>5th Organic Producers' Conference</i> (Celebrating 30 years of the Organic Research Centre, Elm Farm), Gloucestershire/UK
February 16-19	<i>BioFach 2011</i> , Nuremberg/Germany
May 18-20	<i>First International Conference on Organic Food Quality and Health Research</i> , Prague/ Czech Republic
May 22-28	<i>The 2011 Summer School for Quality-Certified Training of Advisors/Trainers on Organic Agriculture</i> , Chania/Greece
May 26-27	<i>Organic Marketing Forum 2011</i> – 6th International Meeting on Processing and Marketing for Organic Products and Raw Materials, Warsaw/Poland IFOAM EU Group of patron of this event.
Sept 26 – Oct 5	<i>The 17th IFOAM Organic World Congress 2011</i> , Gyeonggi Paldang/ Korea

3.2 Other news

▶ Ecolabeling

The EU Ecolabel Regulation was recently revised and the scope extended to over food, drink and feed products. However, there are concerns that setting Ecolabel criteria for such products may not be feasible, and furthermore, the use of the Ecolabel on such products may be misunderstood especially, although not exclusively, in relation to existing organic labels. A competitively tendered study on eco-labelling has been awarded to FiBL, the Swiss Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, in cooperation with Oakdene Hollins, an English research and consultancy company, and the University of Göttingen's Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development.

▶ CAP discussions going on

The AGRI Council discussed the CAP Communication from 18 November during its meeting of December 13 (see [Council's press release](#)). The debate, structured around a Presidency questionnaire, focused on the topic of viable food production, which is the first of the three main objectives for the future CAP identified in the Commission Communication. Meanwhile, a stakeholder [consultation](#) to feed in the impact assessment is ongoing. The European Parliament will hold a hearing on the new CAP on 26 of January, inviting a limited number of external experts to present their views on direct payments, greening, market measures and rural development. The draftsman for the Parliament's report on the new CAP, Albert Dess, will then present his draft report in the end of February/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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