

Dear members, dear friends in the European organic movement,

The new regulation has been in force for over a month, and we have entered this new era for organic food and farming in Europe. In one sense, little has changed – there are broadly the same production standards and the same control arrangements. In another sense, much has changed – the new framework transfers more responsibility both to the Commission and member states, and to producers, and sets new requirements for labelling and other aspects.

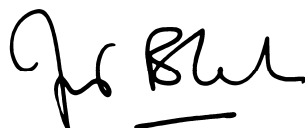
It will take some time for all of us to fully understand the interpretation and implementation of these new requirements. To advance this process, the IFOAM EU Group has produced a dossier on the new regulation which we are launching on the opening day of BioFach at the Czech stand, with the help of European Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel and Czech Minister of Agriculture Petr Gandalovic. If you are visiting BioFach, do come and join us.

Further work on developing the regulation has not stopped. The Commission is wishing to complete the implementing rules for aquaculture and seaweed by June and for wine by the end of the year. The IFOAM EU Group has been, and will continue to be, active on both.

The day before BioFach, on Wednesday 18th February is the IFOAM EU Group's three-yearly General Assembly. This vital part of our democratic process is the opportunity for you as members to hear what your board and our Brussels office have been doing over the last three years, and to question and decide on the strategy for the next three years. I very much hope that you will attend and I look forward to seeing you there.

I am writing this letter for the last time as your president, as I am not standing again. May I take this opportunity to thank you all for your support of the IFOAM EU Group during this time. I feel honoured to have served you as president and proud that together we have established this vibrant, professional and effective organisation that is 'working for organic farming in Europe'.

Francis Blake  
President



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## 1. Activities of the IFOAM EU Group

### 1.1 IFOAM EU Group at BioFach – overview of activities



IFOAM EU Group is pleased to present its agenda for Biofach'09 (Nuremberg, 19-22 February 2009). The Group is organising or co-organising all of the below enlisted events during the fair.

Starting with the General Assembly on 18<sup>th</sup> of February in CCN Mitte - Nuremberg Messe, inviting all current members of the organisation, IFOAM EU Group will be busy from then onwards with a number of workshops on key issues and other important events, among which the launch of a Regulation Dossier. Your attendance at these and any other of the IFOAM EU events (not marked as 'upon invitation') is warmly welcomed.

*Back in 2007 IFOAM EU Group hosted the EU Agriculture Commissioner Fischer Boel during her visit to BioFach (on the picture from right to left: Francis Blake and Marco Schlüter, IFOAM EU Group's president and director, and Commissioner Fischer Boel during BioFach'07). This year the Commissioner will be among the speakers at the launch of the Regulation Dossier published by the Group.*



One and usually more representatives of the Group will be present at all IFOAM EU events. Additional and perhaps better opportunity for coming into contact with us is provided through the presence of at least one member of the Brussels office of IFOAM EU at the IFOAM stand in Hall One (stand 330).

### IFOAM EU Group Events at BioFach 2009

When	What	Where
<b>Wednesday February 18, 2009</b>		
14:00-18:00	<b>General Assembly of the IFOAM EU-Group</b>	<b>München, CCN Mitte</b>
<b>Thursday February 19, 2009</b>		
12:00-14:00	<b>EU Aquaculture Group meeting</b> On invitation only	<b>IFOAM Meeting Room, S1.111</b>
14:00-15:00	<b>The new organic import regime in the EU</b> What will the new import regime for organic produces mean for trade and harmonisation?	<b>Shanghai CCN Ost</b>
16.00-17.00	<b>IFOAM EU Group – Launch of the Dossier 'The New EU Regulation for Organic Food and Farming'</b> Speakers: Francis Blake, President IFOAM EU Group, Mariann Fischer Boel, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Petr Gandalovič, Minister of Agriculture of the Czech Republic	<b>Stand of the Czech Republic, Hall 5/5-Booth 308</b>
<b>Friday February 20, 2009</b>		
14:00-15:00	<b>IFOAM EU group – Working for organic farming in Europe</b> What are the hot organic topics in Brussels? How does lobby work function? The IFOAM EU Group presents its work on the regulation, research and diverse policy issues from CAP to GMOs. Speakers: Marco Schlüter, Lena Wietheger (IFOAM EU Group)	<b>Riga CCN Ost</b>
15:00-16:30	<b>The new organic EU Regulation in practice: Due date 1.01.2009: What has changed for stakeholders?</b> The IFOAM EU Group will inform with this panel discussion about changes and will launch its info-dossier on the regulation. Speakers: Francis Blake (IFOAM EU Group), Jean-François Hulot (European Commission), Urszula Soltysiak (Agro Bio Test)	<b>Shanghai CCN Ost</b>
<b>Saturday February 21, 2008</b>		
09:00-11:00	<b>IFOAM EU Group - TP Organics - Towards a Strategic Research Agenda</b> Workshops: (1) Eco functional intensification (Chair: Niels Halberg, ICROFS); (2) Food for health and well-being (Chair: Machteld Huber, Louis Bolk Institute); (3) Empowerment of rural areas (Chair: Susan Padel, Aberystwyth University) <b>On invitation only</b> (send email to <a href="mailto:sra@tporganics.eu">sra@tporganics.eu</a> to apply)	<b>Lissabon CCN Mitte</b>
13:00-14:00	<b>A vision on organic research to develop the organic sector and identify major key challenges:</b> presentation and discussion of the Organic Research Vision 2025. Speakers: Urs Niggli (FiBL Switzerland), Marco Schlüter (IFOAM EU Group), Jiri Urban, Agricultural Vice Minister of the Czech Republic	<b>Oslo CCN Ost</b>

## 1.2 IFOAM EU Group launches a Dossier on the new Organic Regulation



A Dossier on the regulation 834/2007, which has just entered into force from 1<sup>st</sup> of January and establishes the new framework for the organic sector in the EU, has been prepared by IFOAM EU and will be presented on 19<sup>th</sup> of February, from 4 to 4.30 pm at the Czech stand in Hall 5 at BioFach. In obvious recognition of the importance of this publication, which gives guidance on how to read the new EU law for organic production and labelling, speakers at the launch will be:

- Francis Blake, President IFOAM EU Group
- Mariann Fischer Boel, EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development
- Mgr. Petr Gandalovič, Minister of Agriculture of the Czech Republic

The Dossier, printed in at least 50 000 copies, will be available in English and German already at BioFach. **It is still possible to order free copies and pick them up at the IFOAM stand in Hall 1 (stand 330) at any time during BioFach.** Please send an email to [angela.morell@ifoam-eu.org](mailto:angela.morell@ifoam-eu.org) indicating the number of copies you would like to have. The English and German versions of the publication can also be downloaded from the IFOAM EU's website after 19<sup>th</sup> January: [www.ifoam-eu.org](http://www.ifoam-eu.org).

Versions in French, Polish, Greek and Czech (electronic version only) are under preparation and will be distributed starting from beginning of April.

As main representative of the organic sector on the EU scene, the IFOAM EU Group took up the task to make the first EU wide assessment of the regulation and its implications – the result is in the Regulation Dossier. An array of experts in different fields has contributed to this work with their interpretation over the changes that the new Organic Regulation will bring to their fields of work.

We would like to thank for the support of the main sponsors of the Dossier – **ARIZA** and **HiPP**. Thanks to them – and all the other valued financial contributors to this publication, IFOAM EU Group will be able to distribute it for free.

### **1.3 General Assembly of IFOAM EU – February 18**

The 4th General Assembly of the IFOAM EU Group will take place on 18<sup>th</sup> of February 2009 in Nuremberg (Nuremberg Messe - München CCN Mitte) from 14.00 to 18.00 h.

All IFOAM EU Group members have already been invited to register – those who haven't done so can still do it on February 18<sup>th</sup>.

As you have been notified earlier, all *IFOAM* members in the EU and EFTA countries have voting rights in the General Assembly of the *IFOAM EU Group* – the Regional Group of IFOAM in Europe. Other members of IFOAM in Europe can attend the assembly in the capacity of observers.

### **1.4 The new Organic Regulation - in force, but rules on wine and aquaculture still underway**

The new Organic Regulation 834/2007 came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2009 after a process of revision of the EU legislation in the area, which IFOAM EU Group has been following since its first steps - the European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming in 2004 and the publication in December 2005 of the Commission proposal for a revision of the old regulation 2092/91.

It is far too early to have a picture of the implementation of 834/2007 in the member states as this is taking place at very different paces. However, the IFOAM EU Group's Regulation Dossier, currently under print (see point 1.2), does give a comprehensive overview of how the new regulation will impact different areas of the organic sector.

The Implementing Rules for wine and aquaculture are, on the other hand, still underway. The last in a row Commission [working document on aquaculture](#) rules was presented at the SCOF meeting on January 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> and IFOAM EU Group is currently in consultation with its network of experts in preparation of comments to this document. The Commission draft will be further discussed at the next SCOF on March 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. Once the aquaculture rules are decided on, they will be added to the Implementing Rules, laid down in Regulation (EC) 889/2008, as an amendment. As for the Implementing Rules for wine, the work on it is still in its inception (see point 1.6.2 for info on the ORWINE project, which is to give recommendations to the Commission for the future wine rules).

#### **Links:**

- [Implementing Rules 889/2008 to Council Regulation \(EC\) No 834/2007](#)
- [Organic Regulation 834/2007](#)
- IFOAM EU Group's [Revision Info page](#)
- Working document – [aquaculture](#)

## **1.5 Policy**

### **1.5.1 Letter to ministers on GMO varieties and removal of national bans**

IFOAM EU Group joined in the beginning of February six other organisations in sending a [letter to oppose two new GM varieties](#) and the lift of national bans to the EU ministers in charge of the GM dossiers and the national standing committee experts.

The letter concerns the forthcoming votes following the Commission proposals to allow two new GM maize varieties (Bt11 and 1507) for cultivation and remove the French, Greek and Hungarian national bans on Monsanto's MON810 maize.

The letter stresses that the proposal to unblock the cultivation of Bt 11 (produced by Syngenta) and 1507 (Pioneer) can be called, at the very best, inconsistent. It is only two months since the December EU Environment Council concluded unanimously that the EU's GMO laws are not implemented properly and the current GMO risk assessment must be improved. It points that the Commission's proposals to authorise the cultivation of Bt11 and 1507 disregards these recommendations as well as the recently adopted pesticides Regulation.

With regards to France, Hungary and Greece's bans, it states that provided that the re-assessment process in the EU for MON810 is currently ongoing, it is inappropriate to even consider lifting of national bans.

## **1.6 Research**

### **1.6.1 TP Organics – Strategic Research Agenda**

Following the publication of a [Vision for an Organic Food and Farming Research](#) and the official launch of the Technology Research Platform 'Organics', the TP team is now busy with working on the so called Strategic Research Agenda (SRA).

SRA will contain detailed proposals for organic research. The TP Secretariat, which is based in the office of the IFOAM EU Group in Brussels, has planned to work on this (by collecting and summarising the best proposals) throughout the first half of 2009. Several workshops, hearings and public consultations are planned from February 2009 on to give the possibility to comment on the SRA. First is the workshop "TP Organics - Towards a Strategic Research Agenda" during BioFach (Saturday, February 21, from 9.00 to 11.00 am, Lisbon Room). This expert workshop aims to collect ideas from SMEs and organic enterprises and integrate them into the Strategic Research Agenda.

- About us
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- EU Members
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- How to join
- Vision
- Strategic Research Agenda

**SEARCH**

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**Workshop : TP Organics towards a Strategic Research Agenda**

Written by Eduardo Cuoco



21 February 2009 (9.00 h - 11.00 h)  
at BIOFACH, Nuremberg Fair, Germany  
Room Lisbon - CNN Mitte

**WORKSHOP:**  
"TP ORGANICS towards a STRATEGIC RESEARCH AGENDA"

www.tporganics.eu - sra@tporganics.eu

Time: Saturday, 21th February 2009, 9.00 to 11.00 am  
Place: BIOFACH - Nuremberg Fair, Germany - Room Lisbon CNN Mitte  
Workshop: "TP Organics towards a STRATEGIC RESEARCH AGENDA"

Links:

- [TP Organics website](#)
- [Vision for an Organic Food and Farming Research Agenda to 2025](#)

### 1.6.2 ORWINE: 'European rules for organic wine' workshop at BioFach

**ORWINE** The three years European research project ORWINE is coming to its end. In BioFach 2009 a panel of project partners and Maria Fladl from the Organic Unit of DG Agriculture of the European Commission will draw conclusions from the project in the workshop session 'European rules for organic wine'.

The meeting will take place on Thursday, February 19th, from 3 to 4.30 pm in the Wine Forum in Hall 4A and will be chaired by Otto Schmid, FIBL.

Points to cover will be:

- 'Main recommendations for European rules for organic wine-making', Monique Jonis, ITAB, France
- 'A code of good practice for organic viticulture and wine-making', Uwe Hofmann, Ecovin, Germany
- 'Stakeholders' opinions and scientific evidences: how to combine them?', Cristina Micheloni, AIAB, Italy
- 'EU Commission work-plan for the regulation on organic wine-making', Maria Fladl, Organic Unit, DG Agriculture

Opportunity for discussion will be provided and stakeholder input is very welcome. (For any additional information on the project: [www.orwine.org](http://www.orwine.org))

### 1.7 IFOAM EU Group/office in Brussels & internal structure



The Brussels office of the Group was joined in the beginning of February by a new trainee supported by the European Volunteer Service programme – Audrey Vincent (France).

Having grown up in an organic farm, Audrey has also studied agronomy in France and organic agriculture in the Netherlands.

Her work for IFOAM EU Group will include following up on particular policy issues.

## 2. Decisions/Reports concerning organic farming

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

- [81<sup>st</sup> meeting on 28-29/01/2009](#)
- [80<sup>th</sup> meeting on 9-10/12/2008](#)
- [79<sup>th</sup> meeting on 11-12/11/2008](#)

## 3. Calendar of events, conference reports & other news

### 3.1 Calendar of events

Time (2009)	Event
<b>February 11-13</b>	10th Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture, Zurich / Switzerland <a href="http://www.wissenschaftstagung.de/index_en.html">http://www.wissenschaftstagung.de/index_en.html</a>
<b>February 18</b>	IFOAM EU Group – General Assembly, Nuremberg / Germany ( <a href="#">for</a> members only) Contact <a href="mailto:info@ifoam-eu.org">info@ifoam-eu.org</a>
<b>February 19-22</b>	BioFach 2009 Nuremberg / Germany <a href="http://www.biofach.de">http://www.biofach.de</a>
<b>February 17-18</b>	International Sustainability Conference, Nuremberg / Germany <a href="http://www.sustainability-conference.de/en/default.ashx">http://www.sustainability-conference.de/en/default.ashx</a>
<b>March 11-12</b>	<a href="#">Outlook 2009: Assessing the Future for European Agriculture in a Global Market Place</a> , London/UK
<b>March 12-13</b>	Quality Policy Conference (QPC) Prague/Czech Republic <a href="http://www.qpc.cz">www.qpc.cz</a>
<b>March 25-27</b>	EcoProcura 2009 (Climate Neutral through Procurement),

	Reykjavik / Iceland <a href="http://www.iclei-europe.org/index.php?id=6337">http://www.iclei-europe.org/index.php?id=6337</a>
<b>April 2-4</b>	ECO WORLD FEST Istria/Croatia <a href="http://www.ecoworld-fest.com">www.ecoworld-fest.com</a>
<b>May 18-20</b>	Nordic Organic Conference, Göteborg / Sweden <a href="http://nordicorganic.org/">http://nordicorganic.org/</a>
<b>May 25-26</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> Organic Marketing Forum ( <b>1</b> ), Warsaw / Poland <a href="http://www.organic-marketing-forum.org/index.php?lang=english">http://www.organic-marketing-forum.org/index.php?lang=english</a> (IFOAM EU Group is patron of this event)
<b>May 26-28</b>	Conference "Sustainable Development: a challenge for European research", Brussels / Belgium <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/research/sd/conference/2009/index_en.cfm?pg=exhibition">http://ec.europa.eu/research/sd/conference/2009/index_en.cfm?pg=exhibition</a>
<b>June 24 to 26</b>	Bioacademy 2009, Lednice, Czech Republic <a href="http://bio.bespin.cz/:en:start">http://bio.bespin.cz/:en:start</a> (IFOAM EU Group is patron of the event)
<b>July 25 – August 31</b>	SIDA International Training Program: Organic Agriculture Development, Sweden (part II to follow in Thailand 2010) <a href="http://www.grolink.se/Projects/OAD/OAD-Training.htm">http://www.grolink.se/Projects/OAD/OAD-Training.htm</a>
<b>August 25-28</b>	1st International IFOAM Conference on Animal and Plant Breeding, Santa Fe, New Mexico/USA <a href="http://www.ifoam.org/breeding-diversity-conference.html">http://www.ifoam.org/breeding-diversity-conference.html</a>
<b>November 10-12</b>	GMCC-09: 4 <sup>th</sup> International Conference on Coexistence between Genetically Modified (GM) and non-GM based Agricultural Supply Chains, Melbourne/Australia <a href="http://www.gmcc-09.com/">http://www.gmcc-09.com/</a> (Call for abstracts open until 1 March)

**(1) The Organic Marketing forum in Warsaw** is organised now for the 4<sup>th</sup> time by EkoConnect under the patronage of the IFOAM EU Group.

The forum has been designed primarily as an international business meeting for processing and trade of organic food, non food and organic raw materials and is oriented to the organic businesses from Central and Eastern Europe.

The forum offers: excellent opportunity to meet old or new business partners; a conference program with updated market information from national and international experts; round table workshops about different product groups and topics; an accompanying exhibition, in which companies show organic products and services; an excursion to organic companies in the region of Warsaw. More information and online registration:

<http://www.organic-marketing-forum.org/index.php?lang=english>

### 3.2 Conference and other reports

- ▶ Recording of the Conference "School Fruit: a healthy start for our children" (speeches from the two plenary sessions):  
<http://webcast.ec.europa.eu/eutv/portal/archive.html?viewConference=5757>
- ▶ Joint statement of the UN Secretary General and the Prime Minister of Spain concluding the Madrid conference "Food security for all":  
<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2009/sg2148.doc.htm>
- ▶ McKinsey & Company report (Potential to cut greenhouse gases emissions in agriculture by >50% by 2030):  
<http://globalghgcostcurve.bymckinsey.com>

### 3.2 Other news

- ▶ **The consultation on agricultural product quality** of the European Commission has been closed with more than 500 submissions, the Commission reported. The consultation had been launched with the publication of the DG AGRI Green Paper on Agricultural Product Quality in October 2008 with the idea to feed into the overall review of quality policy. See: [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/policy/opinions\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/policy/opinions_en.htm)
- ▶ **No specific EU policy measures related to the cloning of farm animals for food production** are likely to be taken in the immediate future - came out of the debate during one of the recent weekly meetings of the EU Commissioners. Among the Commissioners who seem to be against its eventual use are Fischer Boel (Agriculture and Rural Development) and Tajani (Transport).
- ▶ **The future of the CAP after 2013 and quality policy** are among the priorities of the current Czech Presidency of the EU, as announced in its work programme. Other issues likely to be on the agenda are simplification and animal welfare.  
Site of the Presidency: <http://www.eu2009.cz/eu>
- ▶ **Animal welfare labelling is likely to be proposed** by the European Commission before this summer – the outcome of a feasibility study, which is to back the proposal, is expected any moment soon. The idea is 'in turnover' since at least 2007 when the former Health Commissioner Kyprianou put on the table the idea of a "two-tier" system of animal welfare labelling, i.e. a mandatory labelling scheme identifying products adhering to the EU's minimum animal welfare principles, plus another, voluntary EU-wide scheme for those produced to higher standards. No link?
- ▶ **A compromise agreement on the new draft regulation authorising future plant protection products** have been reached in Parliament-Council negotiations in December last year and passed in Parliament during

its first plenary session in Strasbourg this year. The MEPs backed the agreement and with this finalised the EP's 2nd Reading on the new draft regulation, which according to assessments will exclude from the market some 14-22 substances. The vote paves the way for formal adoption of the heatedly disputed pesticides package at the March Agriculture Council. If adopted, the new legislation will gradually supersede the existing provisions with the substances, currently on the market, remaining until their existing authorisation expires. The new rules have been heavily criticized by the pesticide industry, especially about the hazard-based approach and the claimed lack of clarity on the potential impact on farming, but welcomed by farm associations.

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**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](mailto:info@ifoam-eu.org). For further information contact your national board member or the office in Brussels.

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