

ORGAP NEWSLETTER

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Introduction

The European-funded research project ORGAP is giving scientific support for the implementation of the European Action Plan for organic food and farming. Furthermore it will assess its long and short-term effects. The project aims and structure can be found on the webpage www.orgap.org.

The ORGAP Newsletter is one of the instruments of this research project to disseminate project results. In addition, it is also a tool to inform all interested stakeholders about the latest developments and research results related to organic action plans and others policy measures.

Organic Actions Plans in Europe – a comparative study

One of the first tasks in the ORGAP project was to compare different action plans for organic agriculture in the European Union. Such action plans are a mean allowing the integration of different and sometimes conflicting policy measures in the simultaneous pursuit of multiple policy goals. A summary of a report of the ORGAP Project was presented at the European Joint Organic Congress: Organic Farming and European Rural Development (by Stolz H., Stolze M., Schmid O., 2006). The report makes a comparison of the development processes, the targets and measures of action plans for organic food and farming in the Czech Republic, Andalusia (Spain), England, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, Slovenia and Italy. *More info in: Stolz H., Stolze M. & Schmid, O. (2006), Comparison of action plans for organic agriculture in the European Union Action Plans, at <http://orgprints.org>*

The full version of this report can be downloaded from the ORGAP Website: http://www.orgap.org/documents/orgap_wp31_documentation_250107.pdf

Some results from this comparative analysis are summarised below:

Analysis of national action plans

Development process of the action plans

The development process of action plans for organic food and farming in different countries and regions varies significantly. Denmark for example as a pioneer country in developing action plans for organic food and farming, already introduced the second action plan in 1998 on the basis of an evaluated first action plan. Countries like the Czech Republic (2004) and Slovenia (2004) on the other hand have started only recently with the development of an organic action plan.

The process of the national/regional action plan development is varying in time. In Germany, for example, the action plan was developed and implemented

within one year, while in Italy, in which the development approximately started in the same year (in 2001), the action plan was approved end of 2005.

The level of stakeholder participation in the action plan development was relatively high in almost all countries/regions due to the fact that the action plan was developed by expert groups consisting of different stakeholders. Another difference between the action plans studied is the procedure of evaluation and monitoring. While this procedure is included in the action plans of Andalusia, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Slovenia; it is missing in the action plans of the Czech Republic, England and Italy.

Targets and objectives of national or regional organic action plans

Most of the case study action plans analysed include quantitative strategic targets, except for the action plans of Andalusia and Italy. The most common quantitative target is the increment of organic land area. Besides quantitative targets, all action plans include qualitative targets, such as capacity building, consumer information and awareness and trust building as well as the expansion of supply and market development.

Action plans measures

The documentation includes an overview of measures related to the following areas: Information, training and education, research, production, processing, market development, inspection and certification, administration and institutional development. The most relevant findings can be summarised as follows:

Generally, the most common measures related to information are: promotional and information campaigns about organic farming and dissemination of sector-specific information mainly aimed at improving the transparency of and within the organic food and farming sector.

The most important measures for training and education are measures aimed at strengthening advisory services.

All of the action plans include measures related to research, whereby the focus is laid particularly on production oriented research. Further research areas are the development and provision of basic organic sector information (statistics, prices etc.) and market research. Measures related to the support of organic supply are included in almost all action plans studied, except in the Dutch Action Plan. The largest set of measures (or recommendations) targeted to increase organic supply is provided in the Danish and the Slovenian Action Plans. The most relevant measure here is financial support of organic farms (investment aids, grants). Other measures are related to the improvement of co-operation, farm management, farm economics, initial support of special branches, and support related to specific production methods.

Compared to other measure areas, the action plans put low emphasis on processing, considering that three action plans (the English, the Dutch and the Italian Action Plan) do not include any specific measure related to the processing of organic products.

In contrast to this, organic market development is of high relevance in the action plans studied. The most relevant measures here are targeted to improve and expand the national market information systems in order to improve transparency of supply chains and the organic market. These measures however are not included in the Andalusian and German Action Plan. Further measures are related to the promotion and support of specific market channels and the institutional improvement and/or efficiency improvement of the supply chain and/or the market. Particularly the Czech, Danish, Dutch and Slovenian action plans put a high emphasis on measures related to market development.

Almost all action plans include certification and inspection measures. The Andalusian, Dutch and Slovenian Action Plans, particularly consider a large range of measures comprising the expansion of standards, institutional development, and improvement of the efficiency of the inspection process. Measures related to the institutional development of the organic sector are included in all action plans studied; they target most commonly at institutional support, fund raising and strategy development support.

Measures dealing with the administration and implementation refer to the evaluation and/or monitoring of the action plan (CZ, ENG, DE) on the one hand and to the establishment of accompanying advisory and expert groups on the other (CZ, DK, NL).

Public expenditure for national or regional action plans

Information about the scheduled public expenditure for the support of organic farming was only available for Andalusia and Germany. In Andalusia, the budget focuses mainly on measures supporting the organic production and supply. In Germany, however, the focus is laid on information support.

Analysing the action plans, it becomes evident that the weaknesses identified in the status quo analysis of the action plan development have only been partly implemented in the action plans. In fact, targets such as capacity building, consumer information and awareness building, trust, expansion of supply and promotion of research and development are meeting the status quo analysis results in a very general way, whereas not in all cases the specific weaknesses mentioned in the action plan documents are reflected in the target setting. Furthermore, the action plan targets are only partly reflected through measures.

The action plans vary considerably in their scope of measures. The Action Plan of AN, CZ, SE and DK address a very broad portfolio of areas and measures. In contrast to this, the Dutch, Italian and English Action Plan give high priority to measures targeted at market development and consumer information with the Dutch Action Plan representing a strong market-driven approach. The German Federal Organic Farming Scheme has a clear focus on measures related to public information.

Results of the ORGAP National Workshops on synergies and conflicts between European Action Plan and national/regional action plans

From March to April 2006 a first series of national workshops were organised in 8 countries of the EU to discuss synergies and conflicts, which might arise from the implementation of the European Action Plan on national level. There were different opinions about the new draft for the new Council regulation for organic food and farming. Participants in the English, the Dutch, the Slovenian and the Italian workshops agreed the most with each other regarding the new proposed regulation. As opposed to this the participants in the Czech Republic, the Andalusian, the German and the Danish workshops had the most disagreements with each other.

The discussions on EU's Action Plan on information and promotion and EU's Action Plan on joint research program did not spark big disagreements in any of the countries. Participants did disagree in most of the workshops when EU's Action Plan on a common label and EU's Action Plan on the common market were discussed. The discussions on EU's Action Plan recommendations on common standards, on international trade and on rural development policy revealed a lot of disagreement in the workshops. Finally the debate concerning EU's Action point on environmental and other policy concerns only revealed disagreement between participants in the Danish workshop.

In the meantime a second series of workshops have been organised from November 2006 until February 2007. The outcome of these workshops will be reported in the next edition of the newsletter.

Research News on policies to support organic farming

(from the European Congress on Organic Farming and Rural Development in Odense, Denmark, May 2006)

European organic farming policies: an overview

A recent study of the European organic farming policies, shows that one of the key factors for the rapid expansion of Organic Farming (OF) has been the widespread use of policy support in recognition of environmental and other benefits, through the Agri-environmental payments. In 2003, almost 54% of the certified organic land area in the EU27 & CH was supported at a cost of €635 million. The increase in supply thus stimulated led to a broader mix of measures, including research, training, advice, consumer promotion and market development. *More info in: Stolze M & Lampkin N. (2006). European organic farming policies: an overview, at <http://orgprints.org>*

Organic farming's role in European agricultural and environmental strategies

European agricultural and rural development policy goals are increasingly compatible with those of organic farming (OF), and OF has a significant potential contribution to make in many areas of policy. In particular, organic farming can contribute to, and is supported by, all four axes of the rural

development programme 2007-2013, but a cross-axis approach is needed – this represents an opportunity for formally integrating national/regional action plans in member state rural development programmes. But consideration needs to be given to some key questions about the role of markets and stakeholders, and care should be taken that institutions do not 'take over' the organic movement and lose the diversity and inspiration that comes from the grassroots. *More info in: Lampkin, N. (2006) Organic farming's role in European agricultural and environmental strategies, at <http://orgprints.org>*

Organic Farming and food quality chains in Europe

Several modes of production were developed in parallel to the mainstream system. This gave rise, during the last decades, to different research agendas and networks, which in general – and unfortunately - ignore each other. This paper intends to give some outlines to account for the diversity of those approaches and give some path of convergence for the future. In the frame of the new European agricultural policy, those research networks could gain credibility and power through improving connections with each others and make their relations more intense. *More info in: Sylvander, B. (2006) Organic Farming and food quality chains in Europe, at <http://orgprints.org>.*

Network analyses of organic farming policy

The results of a recently conducted network analyses of organic farming policy both at the national and the European Union (EU) level, and integrating macro and micro level features of policy analysis, will help for the further development of organic farming policy in the EU. *More info in: Moschitz, H. & Stolze, M. (2006) Organic farming policy in Europe. A network analysis, at <http://orgprints.org>*

Policy evaluation tools and stakeholder involvement

A new tool (the Nominal Group Technique, NGT), for assessing organic farming support schemes has been applied in Wales with success. The NGT structured as a process for gathering knowledge from groups, has proven particularly effective and efficient for assessments of organic farming and other agrienvironmental policies. These assessments typically consider impacts on a wide range of often conflicting objectives including economic, social and environmental objectives; in many situations the incomplete knowledge base prevents an evidence-based assessment. The NGT process acquires knowledge in a manner that enhances group dynamics and limits the effect of dominant individuals. *More info in: Jeffreys, I. (2006) The use of the Nominal Group Technique for eliciting opinion for policy evaluation, at <http://orgprints.org>.*

Orgap News from Spain (January 2007)

The Baskland Parliament has approved a new organic Action Plan.

The Baskland Parliament in Spain has approved last December 2006 a new law to support organic farming which “will allow improving the strategic Action Plan with the view to consolidate an emergent production sector in our land”, said the Baskland Ministry for Agriculture, Fishery and Good, Mr. Gonzalo Sáenz de Samaniego. The aim of this law is to achieve a 20 % of food consumption in the main Baskland cities will be organic in 2020, at least in basic food products like bread, eggs, meat, milk and vegetables. More info: <http://www.ekonekazaritza.net>

Andalusia Organic Action Plan support local organic associations and public entities.

The General Directorate for Organic Farming of Andalusia has distributed around 900.000 € among 29 different public and private entities as aids with the aim to stimulate and promote organic agriculture practices and organic food consumption, as part of the Andalusia Organic Action Plan (2002-2006), establishing short marketing chains in Andalusia regions, financing small studies to develop the organic sector, creating local markets, to start information campaigns to stimulate the organic food consumption, creating specialised web pages, support of pilot experiences in social certifications systems or support the offer of organic menus in Hotels. The Regional Agriculture Authorities and the sector are discussing the contents of the second Andalusia Organic Action Plan for the period 2007-2013. More info:

http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/agriculturaypesca/portal/opencms/portal/DGAE_cologica

Organic food and farming Promotion campaign starts in Spain.

The Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA) in Spain has started the 13 of November a very ambitious promotion and information campaign on organic food and farming to enhance a more citizens knowledge of organic foods and farming, as one of the actions of the new National Organic Action Plan (2006-2010), until now still not officially presented

This organic promotion and information campaign, will spend 2,3 million of € in 2 years, to increase the internal market. The main target Group is the Spanish families. Currently in Spain the consumers cannot well recognize make an association among organic logos and organic foods and the organic consumption is very low and all the production is being exported to other EU Countries

The new Spanish Organic Action Plan (2006-2010), allowing this promotion campaign, will have 3 main axes: a) promotion and development of the organic agriculture; b) improving the common knowledge of this products and stimulate it's offer and consumption specially in the internal market; c) improving the coordination, resources management and organic sector structures. More info:

www.vivelaagriculturaecologica.com

Public presentation in Asturias of a book on organic agriculture as an education tool for children's in sustainability issues.

The General Director in for Agrofood in Asturias Region, Ms. Tomasa Arce, presented this book and highlighted that "this book should be use to increase the education level of youngest people, because they will be in the future the responsible to increase the organic farming sector in Asturias'. The regional administration is also working on a new book for secondary school students, and some producers guides divided in organic branches like livestock production, beekeeping, etc. The Agriculture Authorities of this Spanish region are preparing an Organic Action Plan to be started this year. More info: www.copaeastur.org

New Regional Organic Actions Plans in Spain:

In Spain, two regional Governements (Madrid and Baskeland) have approved Organic Actions Plans to develop organic food and farming. Two other regions (Castilla La Mancha, Cataluña and Extremadura) have announced the approval of Regional Organic Actions Plans. Furthermore, the Spain Central Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA) and the Andalusian Regional Governement announced new Organic Actions Plans for 2007-2013. *More info:* vgonzalvez@agroecologia.net

Internet addresses of national / regional action plans for organic food and farming:

On the webpage of the ORGAP project there is a library for public national or regional Action plans.

Czech Action Plan: URL:

http://www.sinab.it/sezioni/pol/allegati_pol/21/CZactionplan.pdf 2004

Danish Action Plan: URL:

http://www.sinab.it/sezioni/pol/allegati_pol/21/CZactionplan.pdf 1998

English Action Plan: URL:

http://www.sinab.it/sezioni/pol/allegati_pol/9/actionplan.pdf 2002

German AP: URL:

http://www.sinab.it/sezioni/pol/allegati_pol/13/broschuere_bundesprogramm_d.pdf 2001

Dutch Action Plan: URL:

http://www.sinab.it/sezioni/pol/allegati_pol/15/dutchactplan.pdf 2005

Action Plan of Andalusia:

URL:

http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/agriculturaypesca/prospectiva/Ecologico1_doc.pdf 2002

Italian Action Plan: URL:

<http://www.greenplanet.net/upload/dl/Agroalimentare/pae.pdf> 2005

Slovenian Action Plan: URL: <http://www.mkgp.gov.si/index.php?id=576>

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