

# ORGAP NEWSLETTER

Fourth Issue - 7th of January 2008

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## 1. Introduction

This is the 4<sup>th</sup> issue of the Newsletter of the ORGAP project (European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming - Development of criteria and procedures for the evaluation of the EU Action Plan for Organic Agriculture). ORGAP is an EU funded policy support research project under the 6<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme of the European Union to give scientific support for the implementation of the European Organic Action Plan, launched by the European Commission in June 2004.

This newsletter presents the latest project results and other information from European organic action plans as well as news of activities and initiatives of the project partners, related to the EU Organic Action Plan topics.

## 2. ORGAP project results

### 2.1 General overview

#### ***Comparison of national organic action plans***

This report presents a desk-top study of eight national and regional action plans for organic food and farming. The case study action plans differ in their development process, targets and objectives, with measures focused on different areas. Differences arise from different national and regional political frameworks and socio-economic conditions affecting organic farming. (Stolz, Stolze, Schmid, 2006).

#### ***Meta-evaluation of evaluations of national organic action plans***

This report presents important insight into previous evaluation studies of organic action plans in Europe. Results contributed to a methodological learning process, informed the development of the ORGAP Evaluation Toolbox (ORGAPET) and provided information on the content level about the success and failure of organic action plans (Dabbert & Eichert, 2007).

#### ***ORGAPET development***

The development of the Organic Action Plan Evaluation Toolbox (ORGAPET) is the central part of the ORGAP project. During the project, ORGAPET has been developed in an iterative process with several versions regularly updated and further enhanced. ORGAPET has been developed as an electronic toolbox for use on-line ([www.orgap.org](http://www.orgap.org)), with a CD-ROM version to be produced later.

The ORGAPET is a collection of different evaluation tools, including participative techniques, quantitative assessments and methods to identify relevant indicators, which could be used selectively to meet the needs of a particular assessment of national or EU action plans. The toolbox is structured around 'compartments' or sections containing 'tools' fulfilling different functions. Each section contains an overview paper and a series of Annexes detailing a range of methodological approaches (including written materials, relevant software and other items) and examples of how these have been applied in specific cases.

The structure of ORGAPET is presented in the following table.

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A1 Introduction to ORGAP and action plans

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***ORGAPET testing and assessment by stakeholders and evaluation experts***

Comments on the ORGAPET were collected in all ORGAP participant countries, thus testing ORGAPET against the different needs and circumstances in the countries involved. Suggestions for structural and general changes from the experts were taken into account for the revision of ORGAPET (Dabbert and Eichert, 2007).

***Focus group discussions on the national implementation of the EUOAP***

Focus group discussions with stakeholders were held in eight EU member states, focussing on the national implementation of the EU Organic Action Plan. The results are analysed in this report (Michelsen and Tyrol Beck, 2007). Details of the outcome are summarized under point 2.2 of this newsletter.

**Reports:** All reports can be downloaded from the project website: [www.orgap.org/](http://www.orgap.org/)

**2.2 Specific project results**

***National implementation of the European Organic Action Plan (EUOAP). Results of an ORGAP Project stakeholder's consultation. J. Michelsen***

As part of the development of a toolbox for evaluating the European Organic Action Plan, the ORGAP research group organized focus group discussions with stakeholders in eight EU member states (between November 2006 and February 2007): the Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, England, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Spain.

The general objective of the *focus group series* was to make judgments on the implementation of the recent **European Union Organic Action Plan (EUOAP)** in the member states. Specific attention was placed on national stakeholders' perception of

the EUOAP and its interaction with national policies. Strategies to address possible implementation problems were also discussed.

One topic common to all discussions was the proposed revised regulations on organic production, which will be implemented by all member states by 2009. The revised organic regulations represents an attempt to implement actions from the EUOAP. The second discussion topic in six ( of eight) focus groups was the need for a more transparent market development structure to be included in the EUOAP. In Italy and England the second discussion topic was the issue of funding organic food and farming policy through rural development plans i.e. as part of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

The main conclusion from the analysis is that the successful implementation of the EUOAP in any member state relies on a balance between positive and negative aspects of the three main properties of stakeholder involvement in implementation: stakeholder willingness, capability and comprehension (Vedung, 1997).

Regarding capability, participation in the focus groups indicates that capabilities are available on both the politico-administrative level and on the level of organic food and farming groups. The EUOAP aims to expand organic food and farming into a predominantly non-organic food market, and hence implementation requires increasing the capacity of actors with few organic activities. This type of stakeholder did not participate in the focus groups. This indicates that some of the necessary capacity for realising the market orientated aspects of the EUOAP is not in place. Regarding willingness, the focus groups' views on the EUOAP varied from positive to negative. Only in the focus groups of Czech Republic and Slovenia participants did find the EUOAP important and had positive expectations to it. In the Danish group, expectations of the EUOAP were positive but the EUOAP was considered insignificant. In the discussions held in Germany, England and Italy the expectations were neutral and the EUOAP was considered inadequate. In the Spanish focus group the EUOAP was considered inadequate and expectations were negative.

Regarding comprehension, each focus group mentioned many types of implementation problems and coping strategies. Only two problems appeared in the majority of focus groups both relating to the EU regulation. Seven focus groups discussed the scope of the new EU regulation, some preferring a narrow and others a broad scope. Six groups discussed a suggested threshold of GMO content in organic produce and all agreed that a threshold should be very low, if it was to be allowed at all. All other issues were specific to the national context, suggesting that implementation problems are specific to each EU member state. On a more general level, the analysis revealed, in all focus groups, a deep scepticism about the market orientated basis of the EUOAP. This may cause implementation problems since market orientated is one of the main ideas of the EUOAP. (Michelsen & Tyrol Beck, 2007)

Sources:

Michelsen, J.; Tyrol Beck, A. M. (2007): Implementing the European Organic Action Plan in EU member states. Stakeholders' perceptions of implementation problems and coping strategies. Project Deliverable (D7). University of Southern Denmark. Project website: [www.orgap.org](http://www.orgap.org)

Vedung, Evert (1997): Public Policy and Program Evaluation, London: Transaction Publishers.

***Public synthesis report on the scope of national action plans, their evaluation procedures and the operability and appropriateness of the developed evaluation concept at national level, as well as the impact of conflict/synergies and policy proposals for implementing the EU Action Plan in member states (Deliverable D8). Stephan Dabbert and Christian Eichert***

This final report comprises all official documents prepared within work package 3 ("National Action Plan analysis") of the ORGAP project. It presents different views on the topic *evaluation of organic action plans*.

The first chapter summarizes the "Documentation about national Action Plans for Organic Food and Farming" identified in a desk-top study the current status quo of national action plans in Europe. The main aim of this report is to provide a structured documentation of the objectives, development processes and measures of eight national and regional Action Plans for Organic Food and Farming (Czech Republic, Andalusia (Spain), England (UK), Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, Slovenia and Italy). Furthermore this report presents detailed action plan information and provides a comparison of the action plans. The report is ORGAP's *state-of-the-art* survey or *analysis of organic action plans*.

The second chapter reports from ORGAP WP3, task 3.2, this gives an insight into already previous evaluation studies of organic action plans in Europe using three meta-evaluations. The *task 3.2 report* contributes to a methodological learning process, helps to develop ORGAPET and provides information about the success and failure of organic action plans in general. This task is ORGAP's *keen insight* into action plan evaluations or as its *meta step*.

The third chapter summarizes the report "Comparative Documentation and Synthesis of ORGAPET testing", which presents all comments on ORGAPET, collected in all member states participating in ORGAP. Most remarks and recommendations from the stakeholders and evaluation experts fed directly into ORGAPET. The key purpose of this task was to get feedback on ORGAPET and understand the different needs and circumstances in the different countries involved. The results aided the development of ORGAPET and were an opportunity to involve stakeholders in the further development of the projects evaluation methodology. This task constitutes ORGAP's *expert view or professional approach step* on organic action plans.

The last chapter is focussing on the task 3.4 report "Implementing the European Organic Action Plan in EU member states - stakeholders' perceptions of implementation problems and coping strategies", which summarizes the results of the national workshops undertaken in winter/spring 2007. The report brings together different views and perceptions on organic action plans and possible evaluation methodologies. This task constitutes ORGAP's *stakeholder oriented or public oriented step*.

The main intention and objective of all listed and summarized reports is to serve to the ongoing development of the ORGAPET evaluation toolbox. When comparing of ORGAPET in autumn 2005 (start of WP3, first version of the ORGAPET) and in July 2007 (newest version of ORGAPET), it becomes obvious the impact WP3 has had on the look, structure and functionality of ORGAPET. As a result of the OGRAPET testing process further recommendations could be integrated into its current version.

### **3. Organic Action Plans News from around Europe**

#### **3.1 Spain: State support for production, promotion and Organic Action Plans**

##### ***Organic Promotion Campaign***

In Autumn 2006 the Spanish Agriculture Ministry (MAPA) launched a Plurianual Campaign of Organic Farming in Spain (2006-2008) with the slogan "Cultura-Lógica, Agricultura Ecológica, es cultura, es de lógica" and a budget of 2.32 millions of € co-financed by the MAPA and the European Union. Main target groups are Spanish farmer families, other target groups include other market actors, teachers, education and consumer associations. Campaign topics are: Environmental and sustainability, new entrants as well as the nutritional, health and quality aspects of organic products. Press release and articles are produced for specialist publications and webpages. Actions with retailers and large wholesalers are also planned.

The main aims of this campaign are:

- a) To increase consumption of organic products;
- b) To enhance the consumer knowledge about organic farming and products;
- c) To increase interest in and use of the EU logo by Spanish producers.
- d) To increase understanding of the EU Standards regulating the organic production system and control systems, through dissemination measures and the use of the National Spanish and EU logos.

The campaign uses various of media: TV, general press, information material in selling points, materials for journalists, internet website, educational materials for children, specialised material for hotels and restaurants. Two guides, one for consumers and one for processors will be produced. The 2-year campaign intends to organize an "Organic Weeks". Non-financial support from the producer sector is expected. The campaign will be presented to all the Regional Authorities for dissemination. The campaign will also try to make links and partnerships with regional and local promotion campaigns. For more information see: [www.vivelagriculturaecologica.com](http://www.vivelagriculturaecologica.com)

##### ***National Organic Action Plan in Spain***

The MAPA initiated a dialogue with the organic food and farming sector in the 2004 and beginning of 2005. In May 2005 the MAPA organised a stakeholder seminar on organic agriculture in Spain, with the aim to establish guidelines for specific actions to further the development of organic farming in Spain. The seminar was focussed on three main topics: a) analysis of the production and processing of organic products and its role in rural development; b) improving the internal organic market and the marketing of organic products and organic farming sector structure, c) institutional framework for organic farming.

The National Organic Action Plan (Plan Integral de Actuaciones para el Fomento de la Agricultura Ecológica) has the overall aim to establish the baseline for the policy action of the MAPA in organic farming in 2007 to 2010. This will be done in collaboration with other departments of the state administration. The plan aims to build a consensus with the regional authorities and relevant representatives of sector organizations. The final purpose of the National Organic Action Plan is to develop the organic sector in Spain by applying a set of specific actions to the whole organic food chain (production, processing, marketing, distribution and consumption) as well as in education and research areas.

More specifically the National Organic Plan has 3 strategic objectives:

O1. To promote the development of organic farming, in particular the primary sector, with education, research, input regulation, the use of rural development tools and recognition of organic farming societal benefits.

O2. To improve the knowledge and to promote the consumption and marketing of organic products, as it's the most relevant challenge in Spain, mainly stimulating the internal demand through adequate information for consumers, accompanied with the improvement of marketing structures.

O3. To improve the institutional collaboration, the management of resources for the organic sector, contributing to a better coordination, improving communication and the collaboration between all private and public sector agents involved in the organic sector

More information: [http://www.mapa.es/es/alimentacion/pags/ecologica/plan\\_integral.htm](http://www.mapa.es/es/alimentacion/pags/ecologica/plan_integral.htm)

SEAE, the organic farmers organisation, has supported the Awards of organic foods and biodiversity, given by the Fundación Biodiversidad and the Environmental Ministry, in several categories in the last 3 years. More information: see [www.fundacion-biodiversidad.es](http://www.fundacion-biodiversidad.es)

### ***State support for organic production in Spain***

There was support for organic farming before the EU agri-environmental support scheme was in force. State financial support for organic farmers started in 1995 later than in most of the other European countries. This has influenced the development of the organic sector in Spain. In 1995 the EU Regulation 2078/92 was integrated into Spanish legislation, opening up the possibility of promoting environmentally friendly production methods.

In the period 2001-2005, the number of farmers with animals, receiving support were 3 times more and the number of organic farmers dealing with crop production has increased 39%. The total number of supported farmers increased from 7 696 in 2001, to 11 293 in 2005 (47% more). In the period 2000-2006 organic production was a priority aim of the Rural Development Programme in Spain. But in the new programme 2007-2013 organic farming was not included as a horizontal measure at national level.

In Spain there were specific restrictions for the farmers to receive the. The organic farming payments were different for each crop and region. Some regions, such as Catalonia, Galicia and Madrid, granted no financial support to organic farmers before the year 2000.

Originally it had been planned to grant the full support for conversion to organic farming in the first year. In the second year, farmers would receive 80 % of the total payments per ha (differentiated by crops) and, in the next 3 years, 60 %. More information: <http://www.mapa.es/es/desarrollo/pags/magam/Intromedidas.htm>

Currently the farmers are receiving a fixed payment per crop and year, fixed by each region. In most cases, this payment is lower than in other European member states. An organic olive tree farmer in Andalusia receives only half of the payment of the farmers in Tuscany (Italy). The farmers receive around 350 Euros per ha. In 2001 organic farmers in Spain received 31.7 millions Euros in all Spanish regions (22.9 millions Euros from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF)).

### **Regional Organic Action Plans**

Several regions are now developing support actions to promote organic farming in Spain.

Andalusia has finished the first Regional Organic Action Plan developed during the last 4 years (2002-2006), with a budget of 33.6 millions of €. About 65% was devoted to support the conversion of farmers, 9% was for research, 8.6% for improving processing of organic produce and 6% to support organic consumption. The rest (7.4%) was for different measures (supporting in training education system, organic certification and better coordination of the organic sector). The plan has supported 45 projects with 2.8 millions €. In this region the first General Directorate for organic food and farming was established. The Andalusian regional government is now finalising the second Organic Action Plan (2007-2013). More information:

<http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/agriculturaypesca/portal/opencms/portal/navegacion.jsp?entrada=tematica&tematica=650>

The Madrid Community has launched a regional Organic Action Plan (2005-2007), investing 3 millions of €.

The region Castilla-La Mancha has also launched an Organic Action Plan (2007-2011) investing 44 millions of €. More information:

[www.castillalamancha.es/clmagro/pb/eventos2/eventos.asp?REG=687&AREA=servicios&pagina=detalle](http://www.castillalamancha.es/clmagro/pb/eventos2/eventos.asp?REG=687&AREA=servicios&pagina=detalle)

The regional government of Extremadura has announced an Organic Action Plan for this year.

In the Mediterranean area the region of Catalunya has published the "White book of organic farming", in close cooperation with organic sector experts with the aim to develop an Organic Action Plan for their region. More information:

<http://www.gencat.net/darp/e/agroalim/lilibrebl/cllibr70.htm>

In the North of Spain in 2007, the parliament of the Basque region approved a regional law with several measures to promote organic farming and to achieve 20 % of organic farming surface in 2020. The region of Asturias has presented a Regional Organic Action Plan (2007-2009) investing 14,7 millions of €.

### ***Second (II) Andalusia Organic Action Plan will devote more financial support than the last one***

The new Andalusia Organic Action Plan has been launched with aim to consolidate a growth achieved in the last five years, and to establish Andalusia as the leading region for organic production.

SEAE PR, Catarroja, Spain, **25/10/07**: The (II) Andalusian Organic Action Plan 2007-2013 will have a 3 times more financial support than the first one, achieving a budget of 326 millions of €. Together with the private investments, this will generate a total of 384 millions of € to implement the different measures planned in the 7-year period of the Action Plan.

The new Organic Action Plan document presents 7 action axes. Some of the measures included in the Action Plan are very innovative and oriented to increase transparency of organic production, to stimulate the participation of the women in the sector and to promote the development of sector in territorial action plans. Other measures, which were already planned in the first Organic Action Plan, are still taken into account such as the support to organic production and the processing industry, the promotion of the internal consumption or the support for information, training and education.

The 326 millions of € will be devoted to support organic production, to improve processing and marketing of organic products and to promote the organic consumption. This is seen as an opportunity for a sector which has demonstrated record in, creating employment, maintaining of natural resources and conserving biodiversity.

This Action Plan, as the previous one, has been developed after a collective analysis and reflection of with stakeholders involved in organic food and farming. Approximately 1.000 persons were participating in the previous discussions of the proposals. All stakeholders have developed their tasks with the purpose to support the integrated development of the rural areas and to improve the quality of life of the rural habitants, promoting the sustainable use of the natural resources. These measure are supported by a political wish to convert Andalusia into a international example of sustainable agriculture and organic agriculture technologies.

Full document of the Action Plan can be downloaded from:

[www.juntadeandalucia.es/agriculturaypesca/portal/portal/PDF\\_Directos/libro\\_plan\\_ae.pdf](http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/agriculturaypesca/portal/portal/PDF_Directos/libro_plan_ae.pdf)

### ***Growth of organic farming in Andalusia***

Andalusia has a 58% of the 926 390 certified organic hectares of Spain, which ranks Spain as the second largest European country in organic area. This leading role of Andalusia in the EU organic sector has been achieved under the First Andalusian Organic Action Plan, the first action plan implimented in Spain. The organic area has increased from the 225 598 registered hectares in 2002, when this Action Plan started, to June 2006 when the organic area has more than doubled with 584 549 hectares, with more than 6 855 organic operators.

The olive trees cultivation is nearly 45% of the entire organic surface and the 30% of the agriculture final organic production. The vegetables crops are less than 3% of the organic surface but are representing nearly 35% of the final organic production. The surface of pastures, prairies and forages have been grown in the last years, with an increasing number of organic farms (with animals), currently around 300'000 hectares, of which 50% devoted to organic cattle.

Organic industries have increased from 217 operators in the period of the previous first Organic Action Plan to 377 operators in 2006. In order of importance, the most relevant organic industries more are: olive oil factories, vegetables and fruits industry, bread industry, dry fruits and slaughterhouses. More information email: [seae@agroecologia.net](mailto:seae@agroecologia.net) or see: [www.agroecologia.net](http://www.agroecologia.net)

### ***New national platform for organic farming in Spain***

SEAE PR, 19/11/07 – The whole Spanish organic sector in has joined to defend it's interest in a sustainable production system and to promote a common policy from the

governments and the private sector. This is stated in 10-point declaration to support organic food and farming in Spain signed by organic researchers, producers, processors and consumers organisations at National level. These being: The Spanish Society for Organic Farming (SEAE), Intereco (Association of Public Control Regional Authorities), the Association Andalusian Committee for Organic Farming (CAAE), the Spanish Federation of Processors and marketers of organic Farmers (Fepeco), the Seeds Network, the Association Vida Sana and the Andalusian Federation of Organic Consumer Organisations (FACPE). The first of these 10-points requests organic action plans at regional level, coordinated at national level to develop the organic sector in Spain with sufficient public funds. These organizations stated in their declaration that organic action plans and other related policies for the organic sector, should be a governmental harmonized policy, considering agro-environmental compensations as a strategic tool for developing the organic sector. Organic farming should be the main priority in the rural development plans and they request to put organic farming as a basic element in the future Rural Development National Law in Spain.

Organic farming should receive a favourable treatment in the tax systems in Spain, as a compensatory measure due to their beneficial activity for the environment, as is currently applied to other production sectors. Support and promotion for organic agri-food companies, is fundamental to the development of the organic sector.

The 10 points document to promote organic food and organic farming and the new National Platform for Defending Organic Farming (Mesa Estatal de Defensa de la Agricultura Ecológica, MEDAE) were presented, on 24th of November 2007, at the BioCultura Fair in Madrid. More information email: [seae@agroecologia.net](mailto:seae@agroecologia.net)

## **4. ORGAP internet Forum**

### **4.1 Forum topic: “GMOs in organic produce as result of the EU Organic Action Plan?”**

The public ORGAP Forum on the project website has started a new topic **“GMOs in organic produce as result of the EU Organic Action Plan?”**.

External comments are welcome. This topic was chosen to stimulate a debate on how stakeholders perceive this question that came up in some of the ORGAP focus group discussions around the implications of the new EU Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 on organic production, which will come into force in 2009.

All interested persons can access and participate to the discussions. Instructions see below.

### **4.2 Instructions for ORGAP Forum participants**

If you want to make a contribution to the ORGAP Forum you are requested to register to the Forum. Once registered, you are automatically added to the member list of the external Forum. You will receive an e-mail with your user name and your password, but your account is still inactive. Your account is activated once you receive an e-mail confirming your active membership of the Forum. Then you can log in and participate actively in the Forum.

***To access the external public Forum:***

Go to [www.orgap.org](http://www.orgap.org) and click on "Forum" on the left side of the start page. The "index page" of the forum will appear.

***To view contributions (= topics), post new topics and reply to topics:***

- 1) Go to the section "Log in" of the index page of the forum and enter your user name and password. As a registered and active member of the forum, you are able to post your contribution/topic only once you have logged in;
- 2) In the section "public forum", click on the heading "Have stakeholders nothing to do with the action plans for organic food and farming?" By doing so, you open the list of topics posted to the forum;
- 3) To post your topic, please click on "new topic". There you can enter the subject and the message body;
- 4) Click on "submit" at the bottom of the page. Now your contribution will appear on the list of topics;
- 5) To view a topic, go back to the index page of the forum and click on the title of the topic in the list of topics (the title corresponds to the subject of the topic);
- 6) To reply to a topic, click on its title in the list of topics (on the index page of the forum). The message and author will appear. Click then on "post reply", enter the message body and subject, and click on "submit";
- 7) To view a topic and the replies, go to the index page of the forum and click on the title of the topic. The original text of the topic and the reply will be visible.

***To edit or delete your own topics and replies:***

You can only delete or edit your own topics and replies! Exception is the moderator, who can delete topics and replies posted by other members of the forum.

- 1) Go to the index page of the forum and click on the title of the topic you want to delete or edit;
- 2) Once the text of the topic or reply is visible, click on "edit" on the right side of the message. Edit the message or the subject of the topic/reply and click on submit at the bottom of the page;
- 3) Once the text of the topic or reply is visible, click on "X" (= delete) on the right side of the message and confirm.

***To update your profile:***

Each member of the forum is able to update only his/her own profile.

- 1) Log in to the external forum;
- 2) Click on "profile" at the top of the page;
- 3) Actualise the data, i. e. your e-mail address or password;
- 4) Click on "submit" at the bottom of the page.

***To view the member list of the forum:***

- 1) Access the external forum;
- 2) Click on "member list" at the top of the page.

## **5. Revision process of Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91**

Currently the EU commission is working on the implementing rules for the new Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007, which should be come into force in 2009.

On 18th September, 2007 the European Commission provided stakeholders a non-paper on the new implementing rules, supported by a comparative analysis table. The table gives an outline of how the Commission foresees the transfer of annexes of the current organic regulation into the new implementing rules and what new areas have to be addressed. The document refers only to the Annexes of Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 and Regulation (EC) 1452/2003. In addition a questionnaire has been sent to the EU member states representatives in the Standing Committee for Organic Farming as well as the stakeholder organisations represented in the Advisory group of organic farming.

In November 2007 the organic unit in DG Agriculture, European Commission submitted to EU member states and members of the advisory group on organic farming in November a non-paper on imports and the draft results of its questionnaire.

In January 2008 the EU commission will present a revised document, taking into account the stakeholder comments.

More information on the state of the process can be found on the following link:  
[http://www.ifoam.org/about\\_ifoam/around\\_world/eu\\_group/web\\_Revision/Revision\\_information\\_page.html](http://www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/around_world/eu_group/web_Revision/Revision_information_page.html)

## 6. Other related news and events

### 6.1 European Organic Congress in Brussels 4 and 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2007

On December 4 and 5, 2007 the IFOAM EU Group organised the European Organic Congress, which took place in Brussels. Over 300 participants at this Congress developed clear political recommendations for the future of EU agriculture policy. The high level event, opened by Agricultural Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel, identified the future challenges the organic sector is facing, how these can be solved, and how policy makers can ensure that society benefits from the various advantages of organic production.

***Organic Congress – “No New Action Plan”, says Farm Commissioner. Press release Agra facts 7/12/2007.***

The European Organic Action plan should be “revised & updated” in order to provide a consistent policy throughout all agri-policy fields, with the current debate about the future of the CAP offering a “great opportunity to take serious action”, according to Francis Blake, President of IFOAM (the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements). Speaking at this week’s European Organic Congress\* in Brussels, his call received an immediate put down from EU Farm Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel, stating that the existing plan should be finished before a new one was discussed. So far the Commission has started putting into action 20 out of 21 of the measures listed in the Action Plan, but the new EU promotion campaign for organic food & farming, for example, should only be ready for launch early next spring (2008), she signalled. The new regulation regarding organic production & labelling, agreed at the June Farm Council stipulated that the EU organic logo would become compulsory on food, where at least 95% of the ingredients are organic. On the basis of the discussion over the two days, the new logo (to be agreed by Member States in the coming weeks) will comprise the European flag, with a white smile against the word “Bio”, this has met with opposition with the UK, which would prefer the retention of “Organic”. Set to come into

force on January 1, 2009, the new organic regulation will also allow national or private logos to be placed alongside the EU logo. On the "Health Check", the Congress welcomed the proposed increase in modulation, saying how some of the proposed increases in rural development funding should be targeted specifically at organic farming. It also called for "more formal recognition" on the role that the organic sector plays in soil & water conservation & the broader discussion on climate change, suggesting that targets for organic production should be set at Member State level. Moves towards a flat-rate Single Farm Payment was also welcomed.

\*See <http://www.ifoam-eu.org/> "The Future of Organic Food & Farming within the Reformed CAP- Reviewing the European Organic Action Plan & Future Perspectives" co-financed by DG AGRI.

\*See <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu> – then go to "Statistics in focus" Issue number 69/2007

### **Conclusions from the congress**

The conclusions from the congress identified the following necessary steps:

- (1) To make organic farming a specific focus of the environmental measures to be developed as part of the CAP Health Check.
- (2) To ensure that some of the proposed increase in rural development funding is targeted at organic farming, in particular in regions and member states that have so far given a low priority to organic farming support.
- (3) To support the development of a dedicated organic research vision and ideas forum to act as a focus for identifying priorities in research and development and knowledge.
- (4) Improve the involvement of stakeholders in the process of reforming the EU regulation defining organic food and farming.
- (5) Maintain the integrity of organic food with reference to core values to protect against devaluing the concept as the market expands.
- (6) Continue to campaign for GMO policies that protect the GM free status of organic products and ensure that liability for contamination is consistent with the polluter pays principle.
- (7) Recognise the urgency for rapid adoption of organic production due to rapidly increasing oil prices and the prospect of oil shortages in the foreseeable future.

Most speeches and presentations from the congress are available at the [congress website](http://www.organic-congress-ifoameu.org). <http://www.organic-congress-ifoameu.org>

## **6.2 Biofach Session on ORGAP topics**

There will be a special session organised at Biofach from the ORGAP Project:

**Thursday, 21 February 2008. 14.00 – 16.00, Room St. Petersburg**

**The European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming** - news and current status of implementation and policy analysis, including information about the ORGAP evaluation toolbox and its application.

Presenters are:

- Otto Schmid, FiBL, Switzerland
- Patrice Baillieux, DG AGRI, European Commission (enquired)
- Dr. Nicolas Lampkin, Aberystwyth University, Wales, UK
- Prof. Raffaele Zanolini and Daniela Vairo, University (UPM), Ancona, Italy
- Christian Eichert and Prof. Stephan Dabbert, University of Hohenheim, Stuttgart, Germany

- Victor Gonzalvez, IFOAM EU Group

- Katherine Rogy, French Ministry of Agriculture, FR

Discussion will be chaired by Danièle Tissot, DG Research. European Commission

### **6.3 Proposal for an Organic Research Technology Platform in Brussels - Project of IFOAM EU Group and ISO FAR**

#### ***Rationale and strategic dimension of the project***

The project of establishing a technology platform on organic food and farming has to be seen in the wider political context of EU research priorities. The research budget of the EU is one important policy tool to steer the direction where the European Community should be heading towards. So far, the European Commission has permanently increased the amount of money spent on organic research over the last decades. The European Organic Action Plan launched in June 2004 includes clear recommendations to strengthen organic research. Thus it was expected that organic research would also play a prominent role in the 7th framework research programme (FP7) which runs from 2007 to 2013 and has a budget of 53.2 billion Euros. However it appears that in the first and second year of this programme less funding for organic food and farming research is foreseen. Reducing research money for organic food and farming would mean to hamper the further development of a dynamic organic food and farming sector and market and even worse, would not balance the high spending on “green “ biotechnology (genetic engineering) and conventional agriculture research.

The set-up of the FP7 has shown that the so-called **technology platforms** (TP) were highly successful in influencing the research agenda of the European Union. EU officials informally confirmed a success rate of around 70%. **Technology platforms** are industry led collaborative platforms that gather stakeholders to develop strategic research agendas and thus give recommendations of future research needs (see also point 3).

Thus, it is of high strategic importance to have a TP on organic production. The European Commission supports financially two food-related platforms on Green Biotechnology and Processing industry. The support of an organic platform was rejected by the leading staff from DG Research. As a consequence, the IFOAM EU Group has started a process together with its partners to establish a platform for organic food and farming to a) set up a strategic tool to ensure future finances for organic research on European level and b) to develop a common vision on organic food and farming research. This kind of platform has to be financed by private money.

#### ***Purpose of the project***

The main purpose of the project is to establish a technology platform on organic food and farming providing public goods. This is designed:

a) as a strategic political tool to secure future finances for organic research on European level and

b) to develop a common vision and action plan on organic food and farming research

The IFOAM EU Group as a leading partner has initiated the establishment of a Research Technology Platform and is steering the process together with ISO FAR (International Society of Organic Agriculture Research).

The main outcome of the platform will be the development of a common research vision with guidance character for European and national organic research plans. The vision will be broken down into a concrete action plan, which will be published. The

process of drawing up these documents will be subject to a broad and transparent consultation. Input will be gathered from organic stakeholders of the whole organic production and processing chain, the economic sector, the industry (especially SMEs), national and regional authorities, researchers, NGOs and civil society.

The secretariat of the platform will be located at the IFOAM EU Group office in Brussels. The initial project duration of the Research Technology Platform is three years but it is meant to continue and grow beyond this period.

One of the first steps towards this TP was the discussion of a draft of a research vision for organic food and farming with participants of the European Congress held on the 4 & 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2007 in Brussels, organised by the IFOAM EU Group. In January 2008 a new draft will be elaborated based on the comments received.

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#### **6.4 Recognition of the environmental services delivered by organic farming in Spain, for the first time. SEAE PR Catarroja, 27/11/07**

Organic farmers in Spain will perceive payments for delivering environmental services. As a consequence of an amendment promoted by "**The Greens**" to the State General Public Budget 2008 (Presupuestos Generales del Estado), organic farmers in all Spanish regions will for the first time receive an average of 1 000 € per farm, as compensation for delivering environmental services. Spain will save around 127 millions of € in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions rights.

This amendment means that organic farmers in Spain will receive around 10 millions of Euros as compensations for organic farming delivering environmental services. Services like biodiversity conservation, landscape conservation, fight against soil erosion, or the contribution to mitigate climate change avoiding CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and retaining CO<sub>2</sub>, will have for the first time an economic assessment. This is only one part of all the services delivered by the organic farming in the production, food, social or public health sector. With this law the 2007 FAO (UN) report recommending the economical assessment and recognition of such public services and suggesting the payment as a priority measure, will be taken into account.

Furthermore this amendment is linked to another amendment presented to the law proposal on Rural Sustainable Development, legalizing these payments to organic farming in the future. The farms contracts, planned in this law, will be the tool used by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAPA) and the Autonomous Communities (Regions) to apply effectively the farm a payment, which will be a compromise from the farmer to guarantee sustainable practices in the farms. The amendment is also establishing the compatibility in receiving agri-environmental in-conversion aids for the first five years of activity, currently received by organic farmers, which compensate the reduced income in the conversion period to organic farming. This amendment will suppose that every organic farmer will perceive an average of 1.000 Euros per year per farm, additional to the agri-environmental scheme aids perceived until now. In total there will be 10 millions Euros more for the organic farming sector. This will set the basis for a more important economic recognition of such functions in the short term future.

To get an approximate idea on the economic value of this environmental services delivered we can estimate the contribution of organic farming to mitigate the climate change. Organic farmers are avoiding emissions of 6,4 millions of tonnes from CO<sub>2</sub> (or equivalent) gasses to the atmosphere (capturing CO<sub>2</sub> in the soils) or minimising these

emissions. This means that Spain will save around 130 millions of Euros in emissions rights of CO<sub>2</sub> due to organic farming. The approved 10 millions of € are only a small recognition — the first one and a pioneer one in Europe — of the relevance and socio-environmental function in organic farming.

SEAE is currently developing a Programme name “**Cultivate your climate**”, supported by the Ministry of Environment with the purpose to sensiblize agrofood stakeholders and other organisations about the benefits of organic farming.

More information: [vgonzalvez@agroecologia.net](mailto:vgonzalvez@agroecologia.net). Web: <http://www.agroecologia.net>

### **6.5 Sarkozy wants GMO ban ahead of France’s “Marshall Plan” for the Environment**

France will apply a moratorium on new GMO approvals and suspend commercial planting of “pesticide GMO’s” until a new independent French scientific body delivers its own conclusions, according to French President Nicolas Sarkozy. Speaking at the end of the 4-month “*Grenelle de l’Environnement*” - an unprecedented consultation process involving NGO’s, employers, trade unions & the government, to overhaul French environment policy - Sarkozy was keen to underline how France would “lead & be exemplary” in the environment debate. Citing the “precautionary principle”, he expressed French doubts about the dissemination of GMO’s, control measures & about the health & environmental benefits.

Referring to the suspension of commercial planting, he specifically stated that France did not mean “to condemn all GMOs, notably future GMOs” and he repeated the importance of continuing research. Mirroring the EP vote on the “pesticide package” earlier this week, Sarkozy also pledged a 50% cut in “dangerous” pesticides by 2020 & voiced his support for the expansion of the French organic sector. In broader policy terms, Sarkozy also championed the introduction of a new “green tax” in return for cuts in social charges, a €1bn four-year investment pledge into clean engine & fuel technologies, and to increase renewable energy sources to over 20%, as other fruits from the Grenelle consultation. He also advocated the introduction of a Europe-wide carbon tax & has requested that the Commission tax imports from Third Countries that have not yet signed the Kyoto protocol. Nodding to the 1947 “Marshall Plan”, he stated that “I want the *Grenelle* to be the pre-cursor in the “New Ecological Deal” in France, Europe & the world”. A work programme is set to be voted upon by the French Parliament in the first quarter of 2008, with Environment Minister Jean-Louis Borloo stating yesterday that “2008 will be the year to put the plan in place, 2009 to launch & 2012 the year of big results”. (France of course will hold the EU Council Presidency in the 2nd half of 2008.)

In response to Sarkozy’s statement, EU Commission officials have confirmed that a GMO moratorium would go against EU rules. Nevertheless, the Commission would “need to study Sarkozy’s proposals” & await “detailed precisions from the French” before considering any action. A ban on GMO planting would have no practical effect until next spring. On the question of Green Tax, the Commission confirmed that a similar call has been launched from London for a reduced VAT rate on imports from countries deemed “energy efficient”.

### **6.6 Co-existence Conference (GMCC 07) in Seville, Spain**

The third International Conference on Coexistence between Genetically Modified (GM) and non-GM based Agricultural Supply Chains”, was held in Seville (Spain), the last

20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>th</sup> of November 2007, organized by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS) from the European Commission. A total of 118 papers were presented (40 oral presentations, 78 posters). Only 4 papers were dealing with organic topics, of which 3 posters:

- GM cotton gene flow in small-scale farming systems: probable impact on organic cotton production in Africa. Hofs, J-L., E. Klein, J. Pierre, et al. (p87) Oral
- High levels of adventitious presence in certified oilseed rape varieties and organic oilseed rape fields. Andersen, N.S. and R.B. Jørgensen (p263)
- The economic impacts of GM contamination incidents on the organic sector. Hewlett, K. and G. Azeez (p336)
- Organic farming integrity in maize cultivation in Spain. Bello, A., J.L. Porcuna, V. González and C. Fabeiro (p373)

More information: <http://ipts.jrc.ec.europa.eu> ,E-mail: [jrc-ipts-agrilife-secretariat@ec.europa.eu](mailto:jrc-ipts-agrilife-secretariat@ec.europa.eu)

### **6.7 CORE Organic News**

- News on the 8 Pilot Projects
- Plan for continuation of the cooperation between the CORE ORGANIC partners. <http://www.coreorganic.org/corenews/nov07/index.html>

## **7. Organic Action Plans links**

Links to the national Organic Action Plans can be found on the project website under "National Organic Action Plan Library. <http://www.orgap.org/library.html>

For addresses of involved state institutions see also ORGAP newsletter No. 3.

## **8. Contact address for newsletter:**

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