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PRESS RELEASE

IFOAM ORGANICS EUROPE WELCOMES NEW ORGANIC ACTION PLAN

BRUSSELS, 25 MARCH 2021 – The organic food and farming movement welcomes today’s publication of the European Organic Action Plan 2021-2027, and particularly its “push-pull” approach, aiming at balancing increases in both production and demand of organic products.

Jan Plagge, President of IFOAM Organics Europe welcomed that “the EU Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies put organic farming at the heart of a transition to sustainable food systems, with a target to reach 25% organic land on average by 2030 and with the publication of a new EU organic action plan, which will mark a new era for the transformation of our food systems towards organic and agroecology”. He added that “the Commission has put forward concrete steps to boost organic demand such as the €49 million budget for organic within the promotion policies framework as well as the integration of organic products into the minimum mandatory criteria for sustainable public procurement. Given the importance of knowledge in organic food systems and the role that organic practices play in the internalisation of external costs, allocating at least 30% of the Horizon Europe funding for agriculture, forestry and rural areas to topics relevant for the organic sector, as well as carrying out a study on the real price of food and the role of taxation are timely steps forward”. Jan Plagge added that he already looks forward to the annual EU ‘Organic Day’ which will be an ideal opportunity to take stalk of how the organic action plan is performing.

Eduardo Cuoco, director of IFOAM Organics Europe said that “we must not forget the importance of the involvement of national, regional and even local actors for this action plan to be as successful as possible in reaching the 25% organic target and transitioning towards more sustainable food systems. This action plan provides tools for Member States to fully tap into the potential of organic farming to regenerate European agriculture and to reconcile farming and nature. Specifically, involvement beyond the EU level is vital for actions related to public procurement, promotion, the implementation of bio-districts, to name but a few”. On the CAP, Eduardo Cuoco added that “this action plan now needs to be implemented by Member States through their national CAP strategic plans. Therefore, the organic movement welcomes that the Commission will ensure Member States make the best use of the possibilities offered by the new CAP to support their national organic sector and that farm advisory services will be strengthened. It is time to properly reward organic farmers as well as conventional farmers transitioning to organic for the benefits they deliver to nature and society, and to properly fund farm advisory systems geared towards organic and other agroecological practices”.

IFOAM Organics Europe looks forward to collaborating with relevant institutions and interested stakeholders to make this new organic action plan a success, through concrete and workable actions on the ground.

Ends

More information

IFOAM Organics Europe welcomes that, compared to the 2014-2020 organic action plan, this new organic action plan includes more specific actions, foresees more actions to be taken beyond the EU level, and provides a timeline for most actions. IFOAM Organics Europe believes that the following actions in particular, if implemented adequately, will greatly contribute to the target of reaching 25% organic land in 2030.

- Action 2 on promotion policies, with an enhanced budget for organic products, is essential to boost the demand for organic products.
- Action 3, a comprehensive action about public procurement that looks at both a higher uptake of organic products in public procurement, as well as knowledge sharing and training, is crucial. IFOAM Organics Europe particularly welcomes the emphasis on boosting the awareness of 2019 GPP criteria and integrating organic products into the minimum mandatory criteria for sustainable public procurement.
- Action 4, about “carrying out a study on the real price of food, including the role of taxation”, reflects the fact that some agricultural practices, including organic, internalise more externalities than others. Therefore, organic practices provide a service for society and the environment, which should be compensated through, for instance, reduced taxation for these products.
- Action 9 is an important one, as it makes the link between conversion to organic and the CAP post-2020. Particularly, IFOAM Organics Europe welcomes that Member States shall assess their needs regarding the growth of the organic sector nationally and that they shall make the best use of possibilities offered by new CAP to support the national organic sector. As organic is a knowledge-based agricultural practice, IFOAM Organics Europe welcomes that farm advisory services on specific topics will be strengthened, notably as part of Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS).
- IFOAM Organics Europe is also delighted to see that the Commission will support Member States in the implementation of biodistricts (action 14).
- Increasing the share of research and innovation (R&I) and dedicating at least 30% of the budget for research and innovation actions in the field of agriculture, forestry and rural areas to topics relevant for the organic sector represents a step forward and we encourage the Commission to intensify the cooperation with [TP Organics](#) in order to respond to the Strategic Research and innovation needs of the sector. Research for alternative sources of vitamins and other substances that can be used for organic practices is also paramount, which is why IFOAM Organics Europe is pleased to see that, as per action 16, the Commission will support research and innovation under Horizon Europe on alternative sources of organic vitamins and other substances and explore means to support the application for feed additives produced without GMM, feed based on insects as well as marine feed stocks.

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IFOAM Organics Europe represents more than 200 member organisations in the EU-27, the EU accession countries and EFTA. Member organisations span the entire organic food chain and beyond: from farmers and processors organisations, retailers, certifiers, consultants, traders, and researchers to environmental and consumer advocacy bodies.

