



SPECIAL
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Montse Mulé Cardona,
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BIOFACH & VIVANESS

BIOFACH & VIVANESS 2024: a festival for the senses

BIOFACH & VIVANESS, the world's leading trade fair duo where all the organic movement & industry gathers in search of inspiration will hold a new edition at the Nuremberg Exhibition Center from February 13 to 16. BIOFACH & VIVANESS is the place where we can strengthen ties with agents throughout the entire value chain, meet clients, build new relationships, learn about and share trends and news on the global organic landscape. As the organisation NürnbergMesse say, is the perfect venue to see, hear, smell and taste organic products and to live an enriching experience.

The event welcomes the main players in the organic food sector and natural and organic cosmetics and personal care. From the origin of the seeds and the care of the soil to the raw materials and processors, distributors and traders who bring the final products to consumers. "We are already looking forward to welcoming all participants to Nuremberg and creating a framework with plenty of scope to explore the trends relevant to the future of the organic food industry", explains **Danila Brunner**, Executive Director of BIOFACH & VIVANESS.

"We are also expanding the supporting programme and creating additional features that encourage fo-



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cused exchanges, provide direction, and bring like-minded professionals together. Examples include our new pavilion for international start-ups or the HoReCa – GV & Gastro hub for the hospitality and out-of-home catering sector," adds Ms. Brunner.

International exhibitors, trends and innovations

Around 2,800 exhibitors from all around the world, 200 of them at VIVANESS, are expected in this edition. "We want to bring together the industry and facilitate networking, while encouraging communication and a future-driven discussion," says **Steffen Waris**, Director of BIOFACH & VIVANESS.

Trends and innovations could be discovered at the halls and at the

"We want to bring together the industry and facilitate networking, while encouraging communication and a future-driven discussion"

Steffen Waris

Novelty Stand, and visitors can vote for their favourite products for the BIOFACH Best New Product Award in seven categories. The ceremony will take place on the last day of the fair.

"Young innovators", subsidised by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK), provides a platform for 30 German startups. And, for the first time, BIOFACH is dedicating an area for international start-ups "International Newcomers & Start-ups", a great opportunity to create commercial ties with producers from all around the world.

Worlds of Experience, Forums and Network Hubs

The World of Olive Oil and The World of Vegan are two unmissable proposals of great interest, each in its own field. Olive Oil Award will be awarded during the fair. And trends and new organic plant-based products will be present with 100% plant-based alternatives for an ethical, clean and sustainable diet at The World of Vegan pavilion with content developed in conjunction with AÖL and VegOrganic. Specialist retailers will meet at Fachhandelstreff and HoReCa – GV & Gastro hub is the perfect place and occasion to acquire and share knowledge and close deals to improve the presence of organic food in public and private channels, restaurants, hotels, hospitals, army, prisons and schools.

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"Food for the future: Women's Impact on Sustainable Food Systems"

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is the motto of the Congress organised in collaboration with IFOAM-Organics International and BÖLW, the German Federation of Organic Food Producers.

Presentations to spotlight the power of women to transform the food sector and to achieve a more sustainable food system for the future. Knowledge sharing and acquisition, networking and transformation, these are the keys of the Congress and make the experience of visiting BIOFACH & VIVANESS an opportunity to be the best informed about the international landscape of organic sector. It's also possible to follow the event online on the event's digital platform where participants will be able to watch and listen to the live streaming support programme or watch on-demand video clips of parts of the Congress for several months after the event.

Co-organizers, IFOAM Organics International and BÖLW

IFOAM Organics International, the membership organization working to bring true sustainability to agriculture across the globe, emphasises that the world's food systems face major challenges such as climate change, loss of biodiversity, increased hunger and lack of recognition and support for farmers so that they can make a decent living from their work. And the way we produce food is essential to mitigate or aggravate these challenges.

Let's remember the four pillars on which the organic movement is



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based, as explained by IFOAM Organics International: **Health**, nurturing the soil's health to support plant and animal life, **Ecology**, the ecosystem is all interconnected and how biodiversity loss needs immediate attention, **Fairness**, human and animal welfare encourages a more equitable food system and provides fair and ethical treatment to farm workers and animals and **Care**, ensuring the well-being of future generations, the integration of scientific and indigenous knowledge is crucial to maintain the health and ecological integrity of organic agriculture and to provide practical and effective solutions in this field.

BÖLW, the German Federation of Organic Food Producers points out the demands of the actors involved in the organic sector: "The EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) decides which agriculture is worthwhile. EU money is well spent when it supports farmers, protects the environment and the climate and creates jobs." It's essential

It's essential to adequately reward all farmers for their additional environmental services

to adequately reward all farmers for their additional environmental services; to encourage fair competition given the true costs of environmental damage; to align policies with sustainability goals; to regulate genetic engineering; to educate all ages in ecology; and to make organic farming the norm for a healthy planet. ■

More information at
www.biofach.de and
www.vivanness.de

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Natural Newsdesk Editor | www.naturalnewsdesk.co.uk

ORGANIC MARKET

Resurgent organic sector steels for high-stakes year

The geopolitical shocks of the last few years and subsequent cost of living crisis led to significant negative impacts to organic markets across Europe.

But there are now strong signals that organic sales across Europe are staging a recovery, along with the sector's supporting infrastructure.

Locomotive for change

In November, Germany's minister of food and agriculture, Cem Özdemir, launched the country's Organic Strategy 2030, which formally commits Germany to achieving 30% organic agriculture by 2030. It is both an important practical and symbolic development, demonstrating a resurgent and determined organic sector. What is particularly striking about Germany's new strategy is that it also places organic practices at the heart of a transformation of the whole of German agriculture.

There are hopes that Germany's ambitious strategy (which exceeds the EU 25% organic target) can serve as a template for change more widely in Europe.

Commenting on the development, the prominent Danish organic consultant and IFOAM World Board Member, Paul Holmbeck, said that



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A study by the organic research body Biovista showed that specialist organic stores were growing sales and footfall again

the boost to policy and organic market development in Germany "can be a new locomotive for the organic sector in Europe as a whole".

Market recovery

The green shoots of an organic recovery are appearing across Europe. The recovery is modest in many cases, especially when market values are compared to the boom year of 2020. But it does seem reasonable now to think that organic market growth could soon start to resemble its pre-pandemic trajectory. So let's look at the evidence.

Denmark, which provided some of the inspiration for Germany's plan, seems a good place to start. Speaking in October at a conference in the UK, Organic Denmark's Mads Sejersens Vinther said that after a "small drop" in the last two years, the organic market was "already turning" and head-

ing back towards the world-beating 16% share it peaked with before the economic crisis.

In France, after two years of significant market contraction, there are signs from specialist retail that organic sales are growing again. Carrefour-owned organic chains So.Bio and Bio c' Bon both saw turnover increases in 2023 on a like-for-like basis. The country's biggest specialist retailer Biocoop, with over 740 stores, also reported growth in turnover (+ 2%). Just as significantly, Biocoop's growth was 3.7% above general grocery retail, suggesting that consumers are re-establishing organic habits.

A revival in fortunes for German organic retailing was also identified last year. A study by the organic research body Biovista showed that specialist organic stores were growing sales and footfall again. Investment in organic by leading discounters could also soon come to fruition. For example, Lidl Germany has committed to increasing its organic offer by 10% by 2025. Aldi Süd meanwhile has embarked on a plan to convert 25% of its entire private label range into Bio+Naturland certified products by the end of 2024.

In Spain, as well as continued growth of organic farming and

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ORGANIC MARKET

As Europe’s organic sector stages a recovery, we can expect 2024 to be a high-stakes year

production, fresh entrants and activity in retail is stimulating the domestic consumer market. Notable developments include the partnership formed between leading Italian organic retail chain NaturaSi and Spain’s Bioconsum cooperative (this currently totals 60 independent stores, 25 of which have already started using NaturaSi branding). Spanish specialist organic retail leader Veritas (80 stores) continues to evolve and innovate. Herbolario Navarro (54 stores) is also expanding and developing its experiential retail format. In e-commerce, Naturitas, with turnover in excess of EUR 80 million and distribution in 20 countries, is a standout actor.



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Reset moment

In a striking development in the UK, the Soil Association recently unveiled a new vision of ‘making organic for all’ in what it called a “reset moment” for the UK sector. As the Soil Association’s business development manager, Lee Holdstock, put it: “If we are serious about tackling the triple crisis of climate, diversity and health, organic agriculture must be scaled up and the products that come from organic agriculture cannot be the preserve of the privileged few”.

The Soil Association says it plans to rally all organic stakeholders and change-makers in the UK to dramatically step-up efforts to mainstream and normalise organic.

Political developments could also bring a change of fortunes for the UK organic sector, with a more pro-organic Labour Party widely expected to form a new government in 2024.

Slowly but steadily, the case for a holistic and participatory transformation of global food and farming

practices is being heard. Support for organic and agroecological solutions are gaining wider acceptance as they are increasingly seen as offering effective tools to meet UN Sustainable Development Goals and climate targets. The benefits of organic, a system that brings positive impacts on climate, food sovereignty, biodiversity, soil fertility and animal welfare are becoming difficult to ignore or deny.

High-stakes year

And precisely because of that, just as organic is poised on the brink of a breakthrough moment, it faces coordinated attacks from increasingly hostile opponents. Europe’s leading organic advocacy and industry groups are acutely aware of the disinformation wars being stoked by lobby groups. So there is the sense now that, as well as robustly making the case for organic through normal channels and approaches, the sector is having to actively take a stand. With organic resurgent, pushback from detractors is likely to become even more aggressive. With that in mind, we should steel ourselves for a high-stakes year. ■

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Building sustainable food systems for biodiversity and healthy environments

IFOAM – Organics International spoke to Dr Susan Gardner, the Director of the Ecosystems Division at UNEP, who shed light on the transformative potential of sustainable agricultural practices.

Why should we be mindful of food systems and how we grow, process and consume our food, in relation to biodiversity? Food systems and nature are intrinsically interlinked: Nature provides us with essential – and very often free ecological services, that are essential to food production: from pollination to pest control, water to soil fertility. However, our current food system's unsustainable production methods are a major contributor to our triple planetary crisis – the crisis of pollution, biodiversity loss and climate change. The way we produce food has a significant impact on the environment, and yet our food systems rely on a healthy environment to function. Around 75% of the



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world's food crops depend on natural pollination by insects, birds, and other animals. So, the production of food necessitates healthy, functioning ecosystems and vice-versa.

What is the role of gender equity in fostering a healthy environment and sustainable food systems? Gender equality and environmental sustainability are interconnected, with women playing a crucial role as

agents of transformational change and stewards of nature, especially in rural contexts. Women comprise approximately 40% of agricultural labour and about 47% of the global fishing workforce, highlighting their central role in food production. They are also key actors in building community resilience as a first line of defence against the impacts of climate change on rural livelihoods and food security. Unfortunately, women often

have limited decision-making power and control over the resources they manage. Globally, less than 15% of all landholders are women, resulting in an unstable situation where women play a significant role in crop production but have minimal empowerment as landholders. Additionally, women continue to be underrepresented in environmental leadership at the national level. This needs to change. Gender equity is essential for achieving sustainable food systems and environmental transformation.

Overall, food unites us around a common table. By working together to address the drivers of risk – we can prevent further environmental and humanitarian crises in the future while creating new pathways for a nature-positive and equitable food system for all. More inspiring content is available at www.organicwithoutboundaries.bio ■

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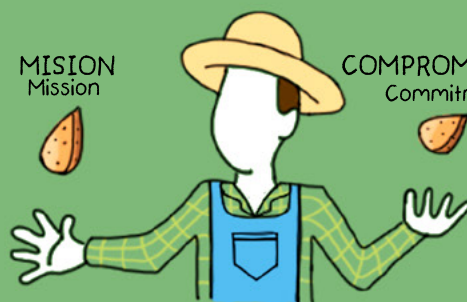


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Paul Holmbeck,
IFOAM Organics International World Board member

ORGANIC MOVEMENT

Denmark: organic policy and sector action driving organic breakthroughs

Denmark has the highest market shares for organic food in the world (13%). And for many basic foods like eggs, milk, flour and many vegetables and fruits the organic market share is 30-50%. Meals in schools, hospitals, government canteens and even military barracks are going organic and the capitol, Copenhagen is at 90%. The organic farm area doubled since 2007 and the national goal is to double again by 2030. Organic policy is supported by most political parties in the Danish Parliament because organics delivers on farm incomes, climate, biodiversity and clean drinking water. **None of these breakthroughs happened on their own.**

Organic NGOs as change agents

By building capacity in market development, farm innovation, communications and policy advocacy, Organic Denmark became a change agent in the market, the media, in farming and in



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politics. This is a missing piece in many nations where government and organic processors have not invested in their organic sector organizations. Collaboration with allied groups –consumers, environment, farming—has also been key. A strong feature is Organic Denmark's partnerships with supermarket chains, helping them expand organic product offers and communicate "the why" of organics. More than any other factor this has made organics more

available, affordable and, not least, meaningful for consumers.

Organic Policies work!

Organic Action Plans and policy drive organic innovation, farm conversion and market development, while organic lobbying ensures financing. There is now a wealth of tested national policy options as inspiration for other nations.

"Push" policies upscale organic farming: organic conversion support, free certification and "conversion checks (advice)" and investments in innovation and farmer-to-farmer learning. "Pull" policies grow market: support for supply chain collaboration, work with retail, consumer campaigns and **organic public procurement**, backed by sector collaboration with wholesalers, cities and kitchen trade unions. Denmark's organic cuisine label for 30, 60, and 90% organic has inspired labels in other nations, most recently Germany last year. Competition in policy and in the market is increasing. The organic sector –also in Denmark—must be on the offensive if policy makers, allies and retailers are to keep their focus on growing organics. We can make organics for all!

Paul Holmbeck is former CEO in Organic Denmark. Today Paul advises governments, business and NGOs around the world in organic policy and market development. ■



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Organic Market Expert

ORGANIC IN THE USA

The USA, the world's leading organic food market!

Sales of organic foods in the United States in 2022 surpassed the \$60 billion mark for the first time, setting a new record for the organic products sector. Total organic product sales in the USA, including non-food organic products, reached a record level of \$67.6 billion, according to the 2023 Organic Industry Survey published by the Organic Trade Association (OTA). Ten states represent approximately three-quarters (73%) of the 2021 sales. California leads the way, representing 32% of the total American market, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The success of organic products is not a new story in North America. Over the past decade, sales of organic products have more than doubled, with Americans consuming and using more organic products than ever before. Total organic product sales crossed the \$50 billion mark for the first time in 2018, and organic food



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sales reached \$50 billion for the first time just a few years ago, in 2019.

For comparison with the new continent: In 2019, the organic market in the European Union approached \$45.2 billion, according to the Agence Bio in France. In 2019, 54% of organic products (in value) were consumed in two countries: Germany and France. Germany, France, and

Italy have the highest number of specialized stores.

The distribution of organic products across the Atlantic

We can classify the types of stores into three categories: 100% "Organic Market," natural health & organic store chains, and conventional supermarkets.

1. «Specialized organic stores»

Natural Grocers: one of the few networks with a 100% organic product standard. Founded in 1955, headquartered in Lakewood, Colorado, it operates 166 stores in 21 states. Natural Grocers by Vitamin Cottage, Inc. is listed on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE: NGVC).

Mom's Organic Market: founded in 1987 by Scott Nash, it has 22 stores in the eastern USA (10 in Maryland) with the slogan «protect and restore the environment» and offers various organic services (electric vehicle charging stations, recycling devices at store entrances for cork caps from wine bottles, shoes, glasses, phones, and electric batteries, etc.).

Bristol Farms Inc. is a high-end grocery store chain in California, USA. Founded in Los Angeles, Bristol

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ORGANIC IN THE USA

Farms operates 19 stores: 14 under the name Bristol Farm and 5 under the Lazy Acres Markets brand in southern California.

Earth Fare (18 stores), Mother's Market (12 stores), Market of Choice (11 stores), etc.

GreenWise Market will convert its eight GreenWise Market locations into traditional Publix stores.

2. «Natural health & organic» chains

Whole Foods Market: founded in Austin, Texas, in 1978. It is a food distribution company for organic & health products. It is present in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom with over 530 stores and 105,000 employees. Amazon acquired Whole Foods Market in 2017 for \$13.7 billion. Over 27,000 tons of organic products sold in one year! 37,498 active organic products in stores by the end of 2022. Over 1,200 organic products under the brand «365 by Whole Foods Market».



123rfLimited@tea. New York (Circa), inside Gourmet Garage, specialty chain store

Trader Joe's: since 1979, the company has been managed by a family fund organized by German businessman Theo Albrecht, co-founder of Aldi supermarkets. It has 540 stores in 42 states plus the District of Columbia. The stores are relatively small for the USA (about 1,200 square meters) and serve as genuine neighbourhood stores. A limited number of products, around 3,400, and 23% of the products are organic.

Sprout Farmers Market: in 2018, the food retailer operated about 300

stores in 19 states. Sprouts recently opened its 400th store and currently operates in 23 states with 31,000 employees. 26% of its total sales are organic products.

Fresh Thyme Market: 71 stores in 10 midwest states.

3. «Conventional» players

Walmart: 10,500 stores and e-commerce sites in 20 countries with \$611 billion in revenue. Organic private label: Great Value Organic.

Kroger: 2,719 supermarkets with a total turnover of \$148.3 billion.

Albertsons Companies is an American retail company that operates supermarkets in the western United States with 2,271 stores for \$77.6 billion (ACME, Albertsons, Andronico's Community Markets, Balducci's, Carrs-Safeway, Eagle, Jewel-Osco, King's, Lucky, Pak 'N Save, Pavilions, Randalls, Safeway, Shaw's, Star 71 shops in 10 Midwest Market states, Tom Thumb and Vons). O Organics is the leading organic brand sold in Albertsons Cos. stores with over 1,500 USDA-certified organic products.

Target: 1,958 stores in the United States with its organic private label: Good & Gather Organic.

Publix: 1,300 locations throughout the southeast United States, with 4,049 certified organic or made with at least 70% organic ingredient products.

Ahold Delhaize: one of the largest food retail groups in the world with 7,659 stores, 1,108 of them in the USA, including Food Lion. ■

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ORGANIC MOVEMENT

Agroecology, Regenerative, Natural and Organics

Competition or one harmonic family? A controversial debate

Organic is not alone anymore. Various movements have similar principles and strategies. This BIOFACH discusses the scientific (FiBL) and political perspectives (IFOAM Organics International, Regeneration International and Agroecology Europe/FAO).

Agroecology is based on many definitions in its history of about 100 years. Most commonly, the definitions of Glissmann, the 10 elements of FAO and the 13 principles of Agroecology by the High-Level-Panel-of-Experts (HLPE) of food security are used. The use of terms and the understanding and definitions of the various stakeholders vary in various parts of the globe with usually civil society organizations being more demanding in terms of requirements and interpretation of principles to call concrete systems agroecological in practice. With the recent efforts of the stakeholders and the international community, the



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degree of description, common understanding and consensus has increased. There are no minimal standards nor predefined verification requirements, but tools (e.g. TAPE of FAO) have been or are being developed to assess the fulfilment of the principles in concrete cases. The term agroecology is not very commonly used in the market and there are no comprehensive statistics about e.g. areas of imple-

mentation. In recent years, international debates and governments have promoted agroecology more and more as a paradigm for food system transformation on global, regional and national levels and the momentum and recognition is growing fast year by year.

Organic Agriculture is also about 100 years old and started its work with the so-called organic pioneers. IFOAM Organics International is the global umbrella organisation since 1972. It defines Organic with member legitimated principles, definitions, standards, best practises, tools and visions such as Organic 3.0 (all being so-called organic landmarks). Organic is very descriptive through the standards and regulations of about 100 countries that define what can be called and labelled "organic", "ecological", "bio", "biological" (or other terms in other languages) in food products and what kind of conformity assessment processes have to be installed. There are governmental, private national (e.g. Switzerland) and regional (e.g. EU, East Africa or ASEAN) standards and regulations and there are international reference standards (e.g. Codex Alimentarius of WHO/FAO or the IFOAM Standard). Most of the countries have own definitions but there are harmonization efforts (e.g. of UNCTAD, or of UNFSS) and international trade agreements for the recognition of each other (e.g. between US and EU or between EU or UK and CH and Tunisia).

Regenerative Agriculture is less old in its concept and goes back to the Rodale Institute in the US in the 1980s, which recently introduced a certification system. It gained very fast momentum in policy and market uptake in recent years. In essence, it promotes similar values to agroecology and organic as a holistic land management

practice with a focus on soil and its organic matter. It promotes the benefits mostly about issues of climate change, desertification, and biodiversity.

Natural farming: Natural farming promotes resilient low- and ideally no-input farming system going back to the Japanese pioneer M. Fukuoka who combined the mimicking of nature with spiritual elements. The biggest initiative for natural farming is in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh targeting 6 million farmers to transition to natural farming. Recently, India started a process to regulate natural farming. Internationally, the term "Natural" is often used on products with the idea of promising production processes that are closer to nature, which are however not well defined and leave space for interpretation. The two "Natural" directions have however very few in common.

Other terms and schools include e.g. Biodynamic, Biocyclic (vegan), Permaculture, Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture (LEISA), Agro-Forest, and Fair Trade. All have their own definitions, promoters, practitioners and benchmarks. They are all similar to organic in some ways and different in others.

My opinion statement

Organic and Agroecology philosophy and principles overlap in their nature and differences inside the movements are often bigger than between the movements. The success of the Organic movement is that its paradigm is more and more recognized. Due to its market affinity and its rigidity (e.g. no synthetic inputs or no GMO in all cases) it is not so attractive to international policymakers. International policy debates avoid promoting it. However, the values are carried in the term Agroecology, which on the other hand can't demonstrate a broad market uptake. Together, we can be successful. IFOAM Organics International is part of the international Agroecology Coalition. Farmers that identify themselves as agroecological, market with organic labels. So, let us be smart, let us use a diversity of terms and concepts and let us follow synergistic strategies to achieve our overall purpose of truly sustainable agriculture and food systems. Interested in the topic? Visit the BIOFACH conference event with the same name. ■



FOOD

SEAWEED
ALGUES
ALGAS
ALGHE
ALGEN

PORTO-MUIÑOS
LAS VERDURAS DEL MAR

EUROPEAN UNION

www.glubglubmaps.com

www.portomuiños.com

info@portomuiños.com

Austria: naturally organic

In the Alpine country, organic farming is a matter close to people's hearts and has a long-standing tradition. Austria's fertile land provides unrivalled resources that encourage organic farming. The official red-and-white AMA label for organic farming "AMA-Biosiegel" guarantees the highest quality of products. Regular audits assure compliance with strict guidelines which are even tighter than those laid down by the EU's Regulation on Organic Production, thus allowing this organic farming pioneer to report steadily growing sales.

Thinking of Austria, two things immediately come to mind: nature and culture. Nature because there is an abundance of places that in fact are as stunningly beautiful as presented in advertisements. And culture comes to mind because this small country in the heart of Europe is fortunate enough to be considered a cultural superpower.



AMA-Marketing GmbH

Food culture is the area where nature and culture meet. Did you know that Viennese cuisine is the only type of cuisine in the world named after a city? Even though Vienna is not exactly the same as Austria and vice versa, they certainly have a lot in common.

As a matter of course, Austrian authorities emphasize the significance of high product quality through their own quality assurance programmes for foodstuff. With their own rules they even exceed European statutory requirements. This is where the "AMA-Biosiegel" for organic food comes into play. The exceptional commitment of the public sector is one of the reasons why food quality is high and why, by extension, food culture is much cherished and highly important in Austria.

Organic Pioneer

Austria started out on the organic trajectory particularly early, almost one hundred years ago. As early as in 1927, the province of Carinthia featured the first organic farm. Such a long-standing and strong tradition of organic farming facilitates a stable market for organic products even though economic conditions are unstable.

Agriculture in Austria is often-times a family matter. For families that have owned and operated their farms for generations it goes without saying that they take responsibility for future generations. And this makes Austria Europe's no. 1 in organic farming. 28% of arable land are managed in compliance with the rules applicable to organic farming.

Food culture is the area where nature and culture meet

But Austria wants more than "just" being Europe's organic farming champion. Pursuant to the action plan for organic farming issued by the Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management, the areas for organic farming are to be expanded to 30%.

The odds are good. The prerequisites are excellent. Austria's topography is perfectly suited for organic farming. Blessed with plenty of high-quality water. Even livestock are fed clean drinking water. Blessed with wholesome nature, from the bottom of clear lakes and rivers to high pastures on the hillsides of the Alps.

Austria is a green country. Green as in: nature. And green as in: organic. ■

Pay us a visit at hall 1 at the BIOFACH Nuremberg organic trade fair and experience for yourself the outstanding quality of Austrian organic products



ORGANIC IN AUSTRIA

ORGANIC BY NATURE

In the Land of Mountains, organic is a matter of the heart with a long tradition. Our natural, clean landscape provides unrivalled resources. The officially sanctioned, red and white AMA bio label ensures maximum quality. Regular audits assure compliance with strict regulations. Which are more elaborate than specified by the EU's Ordinance on Organic Farming, allowing this organic farming pioneer to report steadily growing sales.

LAND OF THE ALPS
AGARMARKT AUSTRIA

WWW.AMA.GLOBAL

Bavo van den Idsert,
Organic Consultant | www.bavovandenidsert.com

ORGANIC MOVEMENT

Time for organic to become the conventional practice

It is quite an understatement to write that we live in turbulent times. Even if you are able to narrow down to only the organic food sector, there are many more challenges than we could imagine during the Covid-years. In 2020 consumers in many EU countries decided to eat a lot more organic. Sales went up by 15-20% in one year. That was unprecedented and a good start for the realization of the aim of the Farm-to-Fork strategy to speed up to 25% organic in 2030. In 2021 we were still able to grow, but the start of the war in Ukraine in February 2022 caused a chain-reaction that hit organic much harder than conventional food. The parts of this negative chain-reaction were fast rising energy prices, followed by massive inflation, strong rising consumer food-prices and fast reduction of consumer trust. Organic sales in euros in 2022 were equal or slightly negative compared to the previous year, but volumes went down by an average of 10%, just



123rflimited@yanadjana

the opposite of the increase in inflation. Together with increased costs for energy, employees, rent and higher prices for organic ingredients, many companies had a hard time making enough profit.

The war in Ukraine had another effect that we could hardly imagine in 2020. The conventional lobby for a slowdown of the Farm-to-Fork ambi-

tions succeeded in the name of "food security". Who talks about reduction of pesticides now? It is overridden by the fear for food security. Even glyphosate is, at the time of writing this article, on the threshold to be allowed for another period of five or ten years.

And still, everybody knows and is aware that the transition of our food-

and farming system is more needed than ever. The climate change, the biodiversity loss and the health costs remind us every day that we can't do business as usual anymore. Organic needs to be the new business as usual. And forget about regenerative in the conventional sense: a little bit more crop-rotation in combination with a little bit less pesticides will not help us out. Too late, too little. And selling glyphosate as a perfect instrument for a no-tillage system that improves the soil is just a fraud; false diversions to obstruct real change.

We can be sure that climate change, biodiversity loss, soil fertility, water quality, animal welfare and health will continue to remind society of what is really at stake. And we know what organic food and farming can contribute to this package of crises. It is time for organic to become the usual practice. Organic as conventional practice. ■



FOOD



FOOD



Castello di Salasco

Organic gluten-free, vegan and lactose-free cereals and legumes

"Tradition and innovation"

We've been farming for generations, we've seen the market become more and more dynamic and what has always helped us meet costumers' needs is a beautiful balance between tradition and innovation.

Nowadays we are aware of how important diet is, people are more conscious of what they eat,

so the quality of the ingredients plays an important part. We are using our know - how to create organic, high quality products. One of our field of interest is gluten, it's a challenge for many of our customers, therefore we offer a wide variety of gluten free products, such as corn, legumes, rice and couscous.

Our company boast a delicious range of products which are very quick and easy to prepare and are a complete dish, providing gluten-free carbohydrates and vegan proteins. Our products are also free from lactose, sugar and egg. During SIAL Paris 2022 our selection of gluten free couscous has been recognized by SIAL INNOVATION.

www.castellodisalasco.it
+39 339 4126156
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Discover the fresh face of Tradin Organic

In the dynamic world of organic ingredients, we at Tradin Organic distinguish ourselves as more than mere traders. We are global industry pioneers in vertical integration and offer a broad portfolio of plant-based, organic raw ingredients to the bakery, beverages, cosmetics, confectionery, and baby food industries, among others. Beyond the basics of sourcing, distribution, and processing, we bring ‘boots on the ground’—a tangible commitment to authenticity and impact in every step of the organic journey.



Photo courtesy of Tradin Organic

A fresh look, same commitment

We are excited to announce a significant milestone in our journey—the completion of a rebranding process and the unveiling of our refreshed visual identity. This evolution, symbolized by our new logo, symbolizes our dedication to organic.

Witness the ‘fresh’ Tradin Organic at this year’s Biofach, where our commitment to providing the highest quality ingredients and services

remains steadfast amidst a changing appearance.

Pioneering organic practices

Our pioneering presence at local farms and processing facilities worldwide allows us to claim more than just ingredients; we deliver ‘ingredients with a story.’

From the fertile fields of local farms to state-of-the-art processing

facilities, we are actively involved at every stage. This direct involvement not only guarantees the organic integrity and food safety of our ingredients but also helps businesses and brands to develop their own authentic narratives.

Join us in making organic everyone’s first choice

Tradin Organic invites you to join us in our ongoing mission to make

organic everyone’s first choice. We are dedicated to building alliances, fostering equal partnerships, and strengthening awareness around organic farming and food.

Understanding the power of impact through organic ingredients, we don’t just follow supply chains; we tailor-develop them to align with your brand’s ethos. Whether it’s about ESG KPIs, biodiversity, reducing carbon emissions, or deforestation; our expertise empowers brands to meet their sustainability goals.

Come meet us at our booth 311 in Hall 5

As we unveil our refreshed visual identity at Biofach, we invite you to stop by and explore the same trusted services with a fresh perspective. Visit us at Hall 5 Booth 311, and let’s celebrate the new face of Tradin Organic—a face that reflects our commitment to a sustainable and organic future. ■

INGREDIENTS



Meet us at BIOFACH!
Hall 5, booth 311



**A fresh look,
same commitment:**

**100% ORGANIC
INGREDIENTS with a story**

- **Boots on the ground**
- **Organic integrity & traceability**
- **Sustainability beyond organic**

www.tradinorganic.com



Jan Plagge, IFOAM Organics Europe President
www.organiceurope.bio | info@organiceurope.bio



ORGANIC MOVEMENT

Let's make 2024 the year for organic

Dear BIOFACH Visitor,

As we step into 2024, let's pause the crystal ball gazing and rewind to the whirlwind of 2023. A turbulent year globally, with people facing myriad challenges and an air of uncertainty about what lies ahead. The EU's political landscape witnessed a noticeable shift rightwards, seen in many election results—an echo of the desire for simple answers to complex problems.

Amidst this backdrop, organic food and farming stood tall, proving its mettle in addressing contemporary issues like climate and biodiversity crises, resource security, and conflicts. A beacon of hope, highlighted during COP28, where over 100 nations formally acknowledged the crucial link between climate and agriculture, paving the way for more sustainable agrifood systems. This, to us, is a resounding mandate for organic food and farming.

At the forefront of Europe's climate ambitions lies the European

Green Deal, a pivotal initiative. Its Farm to Fork (F2F) and Biodiversity strategies clearly recognise organic as a tool to reach the EU's environmental goals. Setting an ambitious target of achieving 25% organic agriculture by the year 2030, these strategies serve as instrumental vehicles in propelling the agenda of transforming food and farming to aid nature restoration and foster the cultivation of resilient, nutrient-rich soils.

In the Farm to Fork context, there are many opportunities to increase both organic demand and its profile.

Policymakers can set targets for organic in sustainable public procurement (SPP). Take Denmark, for



©NuernbergMesse / Uwe Niklas

instance, where 90% of school meals already boast organic ingredients, showing many additional economic and health benefits. If you are a policymaker, I invite you to get inspired by sustainable public procurement's many benefits.

Trade and inter-trade associations, producers groups and agrifood bodies can access the EU's promotion policies to help sell their farm products in an increasingly competitive

global marketplace. These policies offer a big budget to co-finance organic products' promotion, opening doors to dive into a plethora of activities – public relations, advertising, point-of-sale initiatives, event participation, and social media campaigns.

As we embark on the journey of 2024, a rocky road awaits. But fear not! As the umbrella organisation for organic food and agriculture in Europe, we are your voice in the EU. To get acquainted with our organisation, I extend a warm invitation to our Policy Day at BIOFACH on 13 February. Join us to delve into policy developments and garner support for the organic market in times of crisis.

Together, let's make 2024 the year for organic.

Warm regards,

Jan Plagge, IFOAM Organics Europe's President ■



CERTIFICATION

DO YOU KNOW
WHAT
YOU'RE
BUYING?

The future is
in your hand

Demand foods that guarantee the legality and sustainability use of water, and workers' rights

CAAE
LEGAL &
SUSTAINABLE WATER

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Your essential trade events for organic & sustainable products

**natural
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PRODUCTS EXPO

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COMMUNICATIONS

ORGANIC IN FRANCE

Save the date: Natexpo 2024, new format!

The international tradeshow for organic products will be back on 23 and 24 September at Eurexpo Lyon, France, for Natexpo 2024.

On 24 October at Paris Nord Villepinte exhibition centre, the 2023 edition of Natexpo, the essential gathering for the organic sector in France, drew to a close. The show attracted 11,056 professionals over the space of 3 days, including 14% from outside France.

Every year, Natexpo is a key moment for the sector to demonstrate its incredible ability to innovate, progress and mobilise to take even more steps forwards and pursue a development that is both positively impactful and necessary.

The exhibition's teams are already hard at work to make the 2024 show in Eurexpo Lyon a success for the whole profession. **The show's format has therefore been revised to better cater to the expectations of visitors and exhibitors, and to market realities.**

For this new edition, Natexpo is ringing the changes and adopting a new, more **compact format, over two days, Monday and Tuesday. This opening period only on weekdays** includes the Monday to maximise the mobilisation of the retail sector. The exhibition stand options have been simplified, with a choice between



©Bio Eco Actual

stand space only and fitted stands to save exhibitors time and energy. Another new development at the show is **Natexpo Tchîn Tchîn!** Fizz on the stands and music in the aisles: come and enjoy a festive and relaxing moment on Monday evening from 6pm to 9pm, open to both visitors and exhibitors.

1,500 exhibitors and brands are expected, spread across **6 sectors** that represent the entirety of the **organic offering**: Food, Dietary Supplements, Cosmetics & Hygiene Products, Eco-friendly home products, Ingredients & Raw Materials, and Services and Equipment for stores and brands.

Around 10,000 professionals are expected to attend these two days

of meetings and business. They will have the chance to get up to speed on the sector's latest hot topics through a series of exclusive talks, and benefit from targeted business meetings with organic manufacturers and processors. **More than 1,000 pre-scheduled appointments** took place at the 2023 show.

93% of the exhibition visitors are looking for information on new organic trends and innovations. Natexpo is the perfect place to do just that. The show offers an incubator space at the heart of the show: the Seeds Village and the Big Splash, to highlight the innovation in the sector. Trends are also on display in the New Products Gallery, a showcase for exhibitor innovations and a platform for exciting new finds, visited by all

the journalists and visitors looking out for new products. Another reflection of the organic world's limitless inventiveness: the **Natexpo Awards**, which since 2005 have distinguished the **most original, useful and eco-friendly products** launched on the market over the previous year, through **10 categories representing the entire organic sector**, with, in addition, an International Special Commendation, rewarding the most innovative product presented by a non-French company. Presented by a jury made up of experts, journalists and professionals from the organic and nutritional sectors, the Natexpo Awards provide proof to retailers and consumers of the added value and the standout nature of the product.

Natexpo offers the perfect opportunity to fill up on innovation and meet future business partners. Make a date for 23 and 24 September at Eurexpo Lyon, France, for Natexpo 2024! ■

For more information
on this new edition, visit
www.natexpo.com



TRADE SHOW

Save
the date

natexpo LYON 2024
INTERNATIONAL TRADE SHOW
FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

23-24 SEPT. 2024
EUREXPO LYON - FRANCE

A NEW FORMAT
2 DAYS
on Monday and Tuesday

≥ **1,500**
exhibitors
and brands expected

≥ **6**
areas

≥ **10,000**
professionals
expected

Bulk • CSR • Deposit • Eco-designed packaging
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Your free visitor badge
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Fédération des transformateurs et distributeurs bio

ORGANIZED BY **Spas**
Organisation

Trade visitors only



Hello! I'm your organic soap made in Spain

Jabones Beltrán will showcase its latest innovations in eco-cleaning and organic cosmetics at VIVANESS

Through a new message, with vibrant, fun, and attractive packaging and design, the centennial company Jabones Beltrán is ready to launch its revitalized Essabó cosmetic line of organic, solid, and handcrafted soaps in Nuremberg.

The captivating product line, already featuring seven references, presents an innovative addition: **Sports soap** for the shower. Ideal for cleaning, refreshing, and revitalizing the body post-workout, thanks to the cooling sensations of menthol and mint, coupled with the analgesic properties of Epsom salts.

That's not all. Essabó offers **three solid shampoos** crafted with 100% naturally sourced ingredients. Made with natural conditioners based on carbohydrates, plant-based oils and plant-based surfactants with powerful



cleaning and foaming properties. Additionally, active ingredients that promote styling, provide shine, volume, and mobility to the hair. The varieties include *Essabó Frequent use*, ideal for daily use; *Essabó Purifying*, for those days when you need a washing boost; and *Essabó Nourishing*, when you want to give your hair extra hydration. Combine as needed for a smooth transition to "effective" solid shampoo.

The entire Essabó range comes with the assurance of NATRUE certification and Artisan Seal, ensuring a handmade, respectful, and sustainable production process.

Eco laundry and household cleaning Made in Spain

Jabones Beltrán is a family-owned company based in Castellón, Medi-

terranean Coast of Spain, founded in 1921. Their commitment to blending tradition and innovation led them to become the first Spanish manufacturers to produce and certify soaps and detergents under the Biobel brand (Ecocert) in 2011. Thirteen years later, Biobel stands as the leading brand in the Spanish market, boasting an extensive catalog for clothing and home care. During VIVANESS, the company will showcase its latest innovations in solid formats and zero waste. With an established presence in several European countries, Jabones Beltrán is actively expanding into new markets. For visitor's interested in high-quality, innovative, and trustworthy ecological products, **booth 3C-357** is a must-visit. Appointments can be scheduled via export@jabonesbeltran.com or simply by stopping by to explore the entire range and collect samples to judge for themselves. ■

COSMETICS




biobel



VIVANESS
Stand 3C - 357

essabó

Eco-cleaning products based on traditional soap, organic cosmetic bar soaps and natural solid shampoos.

Own artisanal production



Plant-based ingredients

VEGAN



Certified products



Montse Escutia,
Red Ecoestética ProjectNúria Alonso,
BioVidaSana Certification Responsible

ORGANIC COSMETICS

The eco-natural cosmetic standard BioVidaSana for responsible consumption

The BioVidaSana standard was created with the aim of providing small and medium-sized businesses with access to the certified cosmetics market. For this reason, the BioVidaSana standard was developed in 2010, with the participation of various experts in the industry. In addition to the standard, certification criteria were defined, and quality and procedure manuals that companies must comply with to achieve certification for their products were drafted. The standard features various seals corresponding to different product categories: organic, natural, or vegan. Additionally, there is the EcoPlus category for companies where 75% of their cosmetic products are certified organic.

The four pillars of the BioVidaSana project

These are: the Vida Sana Association, the promoter of the standard, which is responsible for promotion;



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the entity Biocertificación S.L., which handles technical-logistic aspects and product evaluation, as well as inspection of laboratories; and certification, which is carried out by the accredited certifier bio.inspecta AG. The fourth pillar is the consumers, who, through their direct intervention or through social networks, express their questions and opinions to those in charge of the BioVidaSana project.

provides a local alternative for small and medium-sized Spanish cosmetic businesses, many of which are artisanal.

The BioCultura Advisory Committee, consisting of technical personnel from certified companies, gathers at BioCultura to discuss aspects of improving the standard and strategies for better consumer attention and information.

Conclusions

BioCultura Fair

One of the main platforms of the BioVidaSana cosmetic project is the BioCultura fair organized by the non-profit association Vida Sana. BioCultura is held annually in Madrid, Barcelona, and two other Spanish cities, and it is the main fair for responsible consumption in Spain. Through the BioVidaSana standard, BioCultura

The BioVidaSana standard does not pursue profit, and its objectives are focused on sustainability, responsible consumption, rural development, and the protection of consumers and the environment. The BioVidaSana certification is not limited to small businesses; any cosmetics laboratory or brand can apply for BioVidaSana certification by writing to info@cosmeticabiovidasana.org. ■



COSMETICS

eco
denta
supernatural oral care

All perfectly balanced, all
super+natural
& certified organic

BIOK LAB
Manufacturer from Northern Europe
Innovators of natural beauty
biok@bioklab.com

CERTIFICATION



BIOVIDASANA COSMETIC STANDARD

The certification that guarantees the highest quality of your cosmetics

Category I: products with 90% of organic ingredients; Category II products with 15-89% organic ingredients

For companies with 75% of their products in Category I and do not produce conventional cosmetics

For products containing less than 15% organic ingredients (natural cosmetics)

For BioVidaSana-certified products that do not contain ingredients of animal origin

For BioVidaSana-certified products that do not contain ingredients of animal origin

BioVidaSana cosmetics are certified by bio.inspecta

Guaranteed by the
Association VidaSana

www.cosmeticabiovidasana.org
info@cosmeticabiovidasana.org



Satu Mäkinen,
European Natural Beauty Awards Founder



European Natural Beauty Awards – a compass for consumers in an ever-evolving cosmetics market

In today's conscious consumer landscape, transparency and quality steer purchasing decisions. The journey toward embracing natural cosmetics usually begins with a positive first experience, but for an average consumer, today's unregulated market can be difficult to navigate. For the natural sector, labelling plays a crucial role in consumer education, as well as elevating industry standards and contributing to the industry's overall growth and advancement.

As a consumer can already count on existing certifications to ensure the naturality of a product, the European Natural Beauty Awards (ENBA) brings a new point of view to the table and represents the overall consumer experience. By guiding consumers to find Europe's *finest* natural cosmetic products, ENBA offers clarity and simplifies the decision-making process for consumers – with a touch of luxury. A panel of international



Irene Atance, the founder of Go Cirkulär, one of the awarded brands in 2023. Copyright Surr Studio

stars, voices of European consumers, rigorously assesses shortlisted products for four months before the award ceremony. To enter for consideration, a product must contain a minimum of 99% natural ingredients and be made in Europe.

Instead of the previous editions' competitive product vs product model, the 2024 edition of the European

Natural Beauty Awards will embrace a new paradigm — where a product will be evaluated for overall quality standards. All the cosmetics products that reach a pre-set point level, qualify for the excellency label of ENBA.

New to this edition, an expert panel composed of industry experts, such as cosmetic chemists and beauty buyers, will highlight and award the most

innovative and sustainable products of the year. This shift reflects the dynamism of the industry across Europe and provides retailers and consumers with a broader curated selection of top-tier natural cosmetics.

The participation of stars as representatives of consumer preferences adds a layer of influence. We want ENBA to serve also as a tool for natural brands to amplify their visibility and pique broader interest. Natural brands dedicated to excellence are invited to submit the brand registration for the 2024 awards by April 30. The 2024 awards ceremony will be organised on October 9, 2024. Mark your calendars! ■



Looking for the best European natural cosmetics products?

Us Too.



www.europeannaturalbeautyawards.com



ORGANIC COSMETICS

www.natrue.org

Mark Smith, NATRUE Director
Paula Gómez de Tejada, NATRUE Communications Officer

Navigating the trends and regulatory landscape shaping natural and organic cosmetics in 2024

People are not just buying cosmetics; they are investing in their well-being, fairer practices, and the environment. In 2024 Mintel anticipates that the trend of integrating mental well-being into the beauty industry will start to become a mainstream. The consumer desire to know more about a product has steadily been requiring companies to demonstrate both responsibility and accountability as brands align themselves with ethical and sustainable actions when creating products that not only enhance beauty but also respect the planet. So, what's the evidence? According to Mintel, 81% of Brazilian adults agree that beauty brands should provide more scientific evidence to validate the claims they make; and 47% of Italian adults say they are buying fewer products that they did before due to concerns about the environmental impact of their beauty /grooming routine.



©NürnbergMesse / Frank Boxler

How can brands adapt to 2024's consumer demands?

For the average consumer, the first indicator of product's characteristics is its on-pack claims. To support claims, brands need to share verifiable evidence of responsible practices to validate the claims they make (e.g., through third-party cer-

tification), and demonstrate the sustainability characteristics of their product throughout its entire value chain. The chain's footprint covers everything from cosmetic raw materials to packaging; from transport and distribution to the final point-of-sale; to the way products are used, disposed of and how their waste is managed. The overall organisational

and product-based environmental footprint remains a core activity for beauty brands, and this is only set to accelerate.

Striving to find ways to improve its social and environmental footprint is a non-trivial task, as formulators must balance such expectations with the need to select ingredients that do not compromise a product's safety, efficacy or sensory profile. Furthermore, the fact that 85% of consumers¹ would be willing to pay more for beauty products with proven efficacy or benefits, also reflects the focus of sustainable consumers on quality (and efficiency) over quantity—the well-known “less-is-more” trend.

The accumulation of such trends means that in 2024 consumers are seeking out:

- **Sustainable natural cosmetics:**
Production linked to resource



TRADE SHOW

Alimentaria

International Food, Drinks & Food Service Exhibition

A unique Food, Drinks and Gastronomy Experience

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Organic Foods
ORGANIC CERTIFIED FOOD

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Business Platform

Alimentaria Exhibitions

ORGANIC COSMETICS

conservation (i.e.; moving towards waterless products), increased efficiency (i.e.; multi-functionals) and waste reduction (i.e.; upcycling and use of biotechnology); greener methods for active raw material extraction; eco-designed products; and greater use of biodegradable ingredients.

- **Reduced and/or more sustainable packaging:** minimising waste and curb excess plastic usage through more sustainable packaging solutions include mono-material packaging to facilitate recycling, bio-based plastics, selling bulk/refillable packaging products, investment in prefilled-refillable schemes or even selling products without packaging.
- **Innovative and Sustainable formulas:** minimalist compositions (few ingredients but in high percentage), multifunctional products, water-free products (like solid bars), cosmetics based on active botanical extracts (e.g., CBD) or microbiome-friendly ingredients—since the “good” bacteria are now recognized to have a role in maintain body and skin health.

Adapting Cosmetics

Whilst the CLP Regulation revision has proceeded to finalisation through its December trilogue negotiations (European Parliament, Commission and Council), the delay to REACH, and removal from the Commission’s 2024 work programme, has been met with criticism from politicians and NGOs alike. The targeted revision of the EU Cosmetics Product Regulation (CPR) started in Q1 2022, and a Regulatory proposal is anticipated in late Q4 2023 or early Q1 2024.

The targeted revision is expected to include:

- Prohibition of ‘known or presumed’ endocrine disruptors (Category 1);
- A new nanomaterial definition (cf. 2022 Commission Recommendation);
- Voluntary digital labelling for certain parts of the current requirements;

Ultimately, the EU CPR is a politically sensitive issue; specifically, the discussion over how to deal with:

- Substances that are respiratory



sensitisers and STOT-RE (Specific target organ toxicity–repeat exposure);

- Mixture Allocation Factors (MAFs);
- the ‘Essential use’ concept

Given the European elections in June, consensus in the co-decision process would only be expected after the new representatives of the institutions are in-place (i.e., at the beginning of 2025). Consequently, the earliest application date for the targeted revision, considering an effective transition period, would be 2026-2027.

Empowering Consumers

A provisional agreement from the trilogue phase on amending Directives 2005/29/EC and 2011/83/EU on empowering consumers for the green transition was reached in October 2023. The agreed text reflects aspects from earlier points of discussion related to promotion of third-party certification to deal with non-credible labels and addressing misleading claims concerning environmental (‘greenwashing’) and social (‘social washing’) product characteristics. Given the current timeline, the legislation is expected to be published before the June elections and come into force 30-months after.

For the average consumer, the first indicator of product’s characteristics is its on-pack claims

Greener Claims

The Green Claims Directive is not only linked to the empowering consumers for the green transition Directive, but also sets specific rules for environmental claims and schemes, as well as promoting third-party certification. The main topics for discussion reflect the *ex-ante* verification process – whether environmental claims would be allowed on products containing certain substances – and the adequacy of the transition period for the accreditation of a sufficient

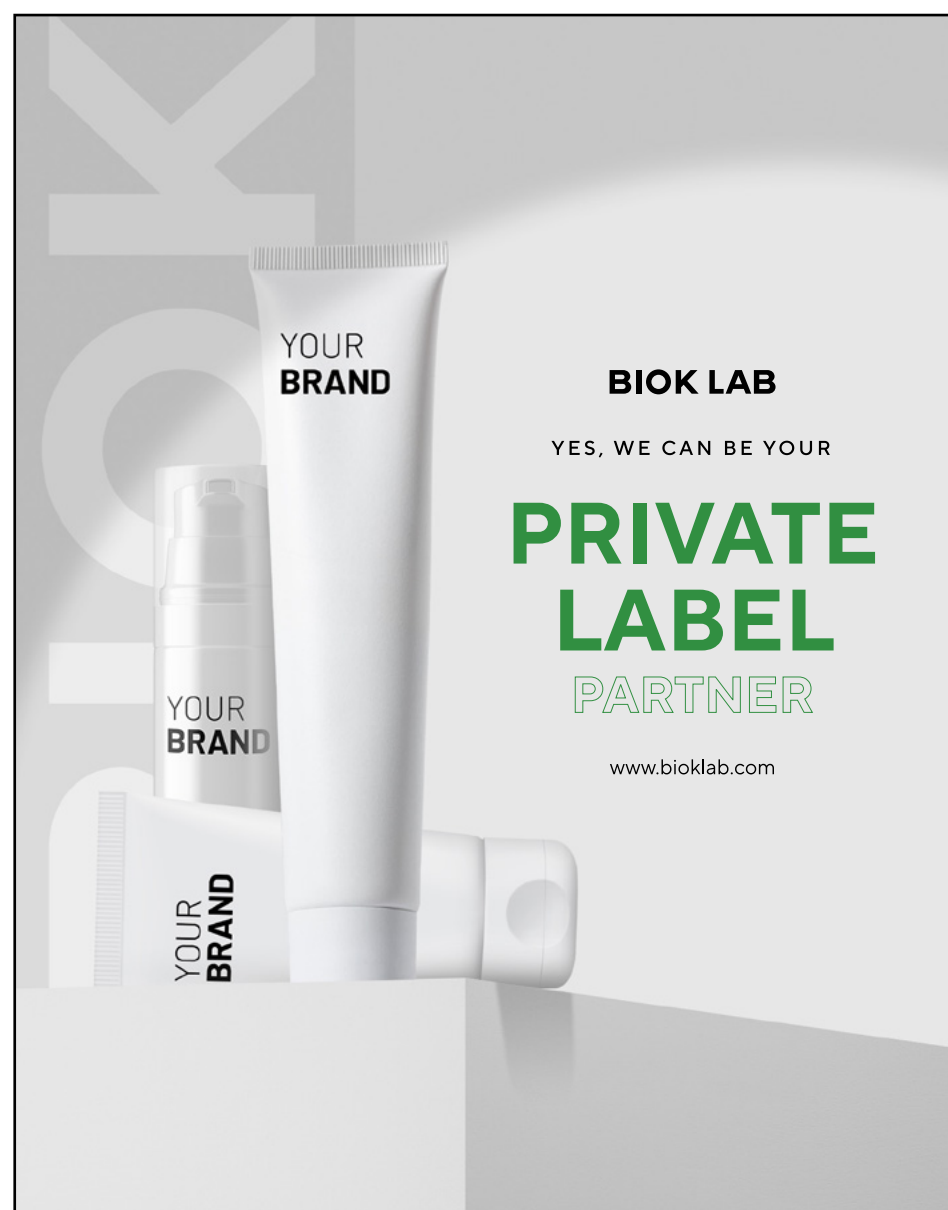
number of verifiers to control claims. Considering the October 2023 ENVI and IMCO Joint Committee Draft Report, the foreseeable aim of the EU Parliament would be to conclude its negotiating position by April 2024 before the elections.

Recycling and reuse

The revision of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive to a Regulation, goes beyond the Directive’s Essential Requirements (reduce waste, design requirements for materials and goods) to include also measures to reduce (over)packaging and packaging waste alongside actions to improve packaging design for reuse and recycling and to drive the uptake of recycled content. Tentative next steps indicate that both institutions (EU Parliament and Council) could reach an agreement on the text before the June elections, followed by a possible publication of the regulation in mid to late 2024 and application 12-months afterwards. ■

1. <https://lp.euromonitor.com/white-paper/2024-global-consumer-trends/wellness-pragmatists>

COSMETICS





OPTA EUROPE

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Aurora Abad,
OPTA Europe Secretary General

New EU trade regime: let's seize the opportunity to promote organic products around the world

The new EU organic regulation, which entered into force in 2022, involves a complete overhaul of the trade regime for organics. The list of control authorities & control bodies as well as the third countries recognised by the EU for the purpose of 'equivalence' will expire end 2024 and 2026 respectively. A brand-new trade regime, based on 'compliance' and 'mutual recognition' will apply as of then.

This major shake-up of the trade system will tremendously affect EU organic stakeholders, from brands willing to expand internationally to processing companies sourcing core ingredients outside Europe. It will also impact our trading partners, from performing North American exporters to the thousand of smallholders in Asia, Latin America and Africa whose livelihood rely on the access to the EU marketplace.

For OPTA Europe, this shift represents an opportunity to consolidate longstanding trading partnerships and also to expand organics worldwide, but only if some principles are respected:

Firstly, predictability and sufficient transitional periods are necessary for growers, importers, exporters and processors to anticipate the changes, make informed decisions and organize the necessary adjustments. For



example, the list of recognized control authorities and control bodies for the 'compliance' import regime must be known several months before it enters into force. Likewise, the reciprocal equivalence agreements with major trading partners and high potential ones (US, Japan, Canada, India) must go through the EU ratification process sufficiently in advance to be in place by the 2027 deadline.

Secondly, the reciprocal organic equivalence agreements with third countries are a welcome step forward to open new markets for EU organic products. To maximize the export opportunities, the future trade agreements must overcome the variances between standards that are considered 'critical' - thus unacceptable - (such as antibiotics in veterinary treatment) and to address those regulatory divergences (such as nutrient

fortification) that prevent some EU organic products to reach key export markets.

Critical variances and regulatory divergences between standards must be overcome so that all EU organic products without exception can benefit from the export opportunities.

Thirdly, the continuity of imports of organic ingredients must be integrated. Given the limited sourcing alternatives under organic quality, imports are essential for EU manufacturers to ensure a consistent and reliable supply that spans various growing conditions and seasons; let alone organic companies processing raw material that are not grown in the EU such as cocoa or coffee. To avoid imports disruption, the controls on 'compliance' at EU borders and in origin must be proportional, fit for purpose and non-

discriminatory of imported products as compared to EU ones.

"Given the limited sourcing alternatives, it is essential to secure the imports of organic raw materials that EU companies need for their production processes", said Stefan Hipp, president of OPTA Europe.

Finally, the 'equivalency' trade talks are an opportunity to set up a structured cooperation with like-minded partners such as US or Canada, to jointly promote organics worldwide. We also see the switch towards the 'compliance' regime as an occasion for the EU to transfer knowledge and offer technical assistance to emerging countries, to support them in the development of organics.

If properly structured and implemented, the new organic trade regime is a timely opportunity to scale up relations with international partners on the front lines of using agriculture to combat climate change and boost biodiversity. We are optimistic about the opportunities to collaborate with longstanding and new partners to develop organics around the world. ■

Join the joint OPTA Europe-FiBL panel 'The new EU trade regime for organics'
Biofach Congress-15 February
13h30 in St Petersburg room



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