Winners announced for the first EU Organic Awards

PUBLISHED SEP 22, 2022
BY EUROPA

The award-winning initiatives come from cities and regions in Austria, France and Italy.

The President of the European Committee of the Regions , Vasco Alves Cordeiro, congratulated the winners saying: " The European Union is made of people that every day make it a better place. It is inspiring to see the winners of the EU Organic Awards as they show us the path towards a more sustainable Europe. Regions and cities are key drivers of organic production across the EU and they will continue to support these inspiring initiatives for a better future ."

Ulrika Landergren (SE/Renew Europe), Chair of the CoR's commission for Natural Resources , stressed that " local and regional authorities have a key role to play in developing organic production in their regions, and are able to drive relocation and structuring processes as part of a solidarity-based, social economy. There are several levers that they can use upstream, such as land policy promoting the setting up of new farms and encouraging farmers to switch to organic farming, and downstream by creating local markets and ensuring that those who take up organic farming have an outlet for their products. "

The EU Organic Awards aim to promote different actors throughout the organic value chain who have developed an excellent, innovative, sustainable and inspiring project, producing real added value for organic production and consumption. The awards comprise seven different categories, the winners of which were announced during a special ceremony hosted by the EU Commissioner for Agriculture, Janusz Wojciechowski.

The winners of the three categories dedicated to local and regional authorities and bio-districts, are:

Occitanie, France – for its comprehensive approach within the frame of the region’s Green Deal and its Organic Plan, involving an inclusive

regional governance and the complete value chain from production to consumption.

Gemeinde Seeham am Obertrumer See, Salzburg, Austria – with 80% organic farming, organic local supply and organic producers, Seeham strengthens regional agriculture, secures and creates jobs and ensures a healthy lifestyle for its inhabitants.

Associazione Bio-Distretto Cilento, Campania, Italy – as a pioneer and a model for other bio-districts, at regional, national or international level.

The full list of winners and their video presentations are available here.

Increases in organic farming, aquaculture and food contribute greatly to reductions in the use of chemical fertilisers, pesticides and anti-microbials and have positive effects on our climate, the environment, biodiversity and animal welfare. That is why organic production has been identified as playing a key role in the achievement of the objectives of the European Green Deal , the Farm to Farm to Fork strategy and the Biodiversity strategy . For this reason, the Commission has defined a target of 25% of EU agricultural land under organic farming by 2030 and a significant increase in organic aquaculture, which is strongly supported by the CoR.

The Commission has adopted the Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production in March 2021, which includes the launch of the annual awards. They aim to reward the best and most innovative organic actors, contributing to the reduction of agriculture's impact on the environment and climate. Last year the CoR adopted its opinion on the EU Action Plan for organic farming.

Organic production is increasing in the EU. In 2019, 8.5% of EU agricultural land was under organic farming. This equalled 13.8 million hectares, up from 9.5 million hectares in 2012, a 45.8% increase. The countries accounting for most of the EU agricultural land under organic farming were Spain (2.4 billion hectares, 17.4% of the EU total), France (2.2 billion hectares, 16.2% of the EU total), Italy (2.0 billion hectares, 14.5% of the total) and Germany (1.3 billion hectares, 9.4% of the EU total) as per Eurostat organic farming statistics .

Press release distributed by Wire Association on behalf of Europa, on

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