

COOPERATION
AGREEMENT

**ORGANIC CITIES
NETWORK EUROPE**

PARIS, CITY HALL - JANUARY 2018

■ WHY AN ORGANIC CITIES NETWORK EUROPE?

Since the turn of the century, European cities, towns and regions have played an increasingly important role in promoting organic agriculture, the organic industry and organic food. Source of inspiration and boosting was the work of Città del Bio the Italian network of cities that shows the need, the possibilities and the benefits of promoting organic agriculture and food. At last, the idea of founding an organic cities network at European level is due to the dedication of Città del Bio since the year 2003. There is consequently a wealth of expertise and experience at the local level on how to contribute to a European agricultural policy that pursues food security and sustainable development, improves the quality of life of local and regional residents, and contributes to achieving the objectives and targets set out in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact. The fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse impacts of climate change. The EU 2030 Agenda will further catalyse a joined-up approach between the EU's external action and its other policies and coherence across EU financing instruments.

An Organic Cities Network can also harness this expertise to promote thriving, competitive organic farming within and outside of Europe, boosting choice, creating employment and improving health outcomes, particularly for children and young people. The Network also responds to the strong desire amongst European consumers to access local, seasonal and affordable food, and to support local farmers and producers. Accurate, consistent and reliable labelling of organic products form a core component of more informed consumer choice in this context.

■ NETWORK MISSION

Partner cities, municipalities and districts of the Organic Cities Network Europe share a common goal of improving the quality of life of their citizens by enabling access to good quality organic food. Good quality organic food in this context means sustainable, fresh, seasonal, enjoyable and regionally produced food.

The Organic Cities Network shall be understood as partner for all institutions, organizations and companies that want to cooperate. In particular, the network can collaborate with EU institutions to promote and influence EU initiatives for organic agriculture and organic food in Europe and in the World. It can also provide a platform for the development of local, regional and national policies and relationships that ensure a strong basis for organic food production in towns and cities across Europe, and ensure these local and regional dynamics policy and initiatives at the European level.

In support of our mission, partner cities work to:

- introduce more organic products into regional and local food supply chains;
- create employment opportunities for local and regional populations by boosting the competitiveness and market share of the organic food sector;
- ensure public procurement policies and approaches incorporate organic products to the fullest extent possible, thus facilitating the development of local and regional organic industries and increasing public awareness of organic food products;
- contribute to improved health outcomes for European residents by promoting healthy, varied and balanced diets;

- promote organic agriculture and organic processing enterprises, and boost demand for organic food via value creation at the regional and European level;
- support research and innovation programs;
- support the achievement of aims and objectives in a diverse range of policy areas, including waste reduction, climate change,
- support the use of further ecologically produced and fair trade organic products, including for example textiles, cosmetics and others.

■ NETWORK OBJECTIVES AND IMPACT

a. To provide a European platform that supports cities, municipalities and regions to:

- i. access mutual support and partnership opportunities that reinforce their commitment to improving local and regional quality of life through access to organic food;
- ii. engage in positive policy development at the local and regional level;
- iii. strengthen local and regional policy implementation in relation to organic food;
- iv. share successful practices and approaches with other cities, municipalities and regions in the network, developing new approaches and building capacity for innovation.

b. To support and influence the development of a European policy framework that:

- i. ensures that European green procurement policy incorporates a regional perspective, in particular in relation to small organic farmers and producers;
- ii. highlights and fully incorporates the positive impact of organic food production and consumption on policy issues such as climate change, air and soil quality, biodiversity, health, animal welfare and food security;
- iii. ensures a strategic focus on organic food production and consumption in European food quality policy, for example within the Common Agricultural Policy, the Regulation and Action Plan for Organic Farming, and rural development policy.

c. To engage in evidence-based policy advocacy highlighting the benefits of organic food and agriculture in relation to:

- i. environmental and ecological policy aims of actors at the local, regional, national and European levels, including for example aims for climate protection, soil and water quality, and reductions in CO2 emissions;
- ii. increasing awareness and understanding amongst local and regional populations of the health, environmental and other benefits of organic food, in particular for children from social backgrounds in which access to good quality, healthy food can be limited;
- iii. creating new employment opportunities for local and regional populations, within organic industries that command consumer interest, are strong on innovation and represent a sector with outstanding prospective future growth;
- iv. enhancing food security by facilitating cooperation and circular flows at the local and regional level, in particular close cooperation between cities and surrounding rural areas, ensuring a strong basis for regional food production that can withstand economic and political crises.

Founder Members of the "Organic Cities Network Europe"

Paris, City Hall

As of 8th of January 2018

ORGANIZATIONS / INSTITUTES

Bio Forschung Austria

Dr Bernhard Kromy

Città del Bio

Antonio Ferrarino

Eco-Estonia

Netzwerk Bio-Städte

[Signature]

Milan Center for Food Law and Policy

Van Paerbo

Founder Members of the "Organic Cities Network Europe"

Paris, City Hall

As of 8th of January 2018

CITIES

Correns (France)

Lauf (Germany)

Nuremberg (Germany)

Paris (France)

Porec (Croatia)

Växjö (Sweden)

Vienna (Austria)

i.v. Anzhela Jankishovec

Dr Bernhard Kowatz

Seeham (Austria)

■ **POLITICAL APPROACH**

Organic Cities Network Europe aims to improve the quality of day-to-day life for local and regional populations. Our work therefore encompasses projects, initiatives and events to motivate and support the general public to voice their demands for healthy, organic nutrition.

The Organic Cities Network forms a crucial component of the movement working to create an Organic Food Intergroup of the European Commission, to coordinate political efforts and strategies at the European level and ensure the grassroots activities and the views and opinions of network members inform political action.

The member cities, municipalities and regions will pool their powers and competences to produce policy change at the national and European level, ensuring that relevant policy areas focus much more strongly on the organic sector; support relevant cooperation projects; and link agricultural policy and economic policy measures far more closely with municipal activities.

They also commit to outreach and engagement to ensure more cities, municipalities and networks are made aware of the network and become engaged as members.

In order to achieve these goals, Cooperation Partners agree to work together to develop joint strategies and problem-solving approaches, to source funding, to implement joint projects, and engage in coordinated public and political advocacy and information activities. The latter will focus particularly on building public awareness of and support for organic food and farming, and engaging the general public in local and regional advocacy activities, in particular those aiming to strengthen the position of the organic sector in relation to public procurement.

■ **FIELDS OF COOPERATION**

The fields of cooperation comprise:

1. Development of joint strategies, activities, and measures to promote the use of organic produce; change public procurement within municipal institutions such as canteens, catering for kindergartens, childcare centres, and schools; increased presence of organic produce at municipal events and at local markets – all with a good balance between plant and animal produce.
2. Support existing companies from the organic (food) sector in the context of economic promotion, via individual projects and the promotion of networks of enterprises, organizations and other stakeholders.
3. Offer incentives for city farming initiatives to consider adopting standards of organic agriculture into their practice.
4. Give preference to organic enterprises when agricultural areas owned by the municipality are to be newly leased or otherwise contracted, unless there are objective or legal reasons for alternative contracts.
5. Where biological and fair trade alternatives to current municipal procurement exist, switch municipal sourcing and procurement.
6. Implement public relations information campaigns at the European level that aim to inspire the general public and catering companies to switch to sustainable organic produce.

7. Establish new education projects to improve nutrition and agricultural knowledge of children in schools and day-care centres.
8. Jointly exert political influence at the European level to influence agricultural and consumer policies that are based on clear ecological and social criteria.
9. Cooperate and exchange experience and good practice with other cities and towns, and with Europe-wide networks (for example Slowfood, Eurocities) and national networks such as "Città del Bio" (Italy), "Netzwerk Deutsche Bio-Städte" (Germany) and Sustainable Food Cities Network (UK).
10. Collaborate with network partners to identify and acquire funding for implementing the cooperation goals.

■ PRECONDITIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR CITIES AS REGULAR MEMBERS

All cities, regions and municipalities that share the aforementioned vision and mission are welcome in the Organic Cities Network Europe. Membership must be commenced via a formal declaration of intent from the City Board or City Council.

Within the Organic Cities Network Europe, it is possible for prospective members to engage in the network by beginning a policy working process. Such prospective members should intend:

- i. To have a council decision to focus on organic food and agriculture
- ii. To follow goals they set for themselves
- iii. To implement projects, activities and measures within their financial possibilities, and
- iv. To name a responsible contact department and a contact person.

The members of the Organic Cities Network constitute a **Network Council** that has the task

- i. To appoint of the executive board and the managing director.
- ii. To decide the joint activities, projects and priorities for the coming year and the connected budget.
- iii. To decide about the establishing of fixed-term working groups.
- iv. To recognize the yearly report of the network's work and funding.

A network meeting will be hosted by a different network partner city each year. Organization of annual network meetings and the implementation of decisions will be the responsibility of the Executive Board.

The members of the network appoint the **Executive Board** that consists of 3 member cities, 1 associate partner and the managing director.

The executive board is responsible for running the network and represents the network into public, media, members of parliaments and the EU commission and other EU authorities

The **Managing Director** has the task to prepare strategic decisions, to realize the planned projects and activities, to manage the budget, to support and advice the executive board and to represent the network in agreement with the executive board.

■ PRECONDITIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR OTHER ASSOCIATIONS AS ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

All organizations that share the goals of the Organic Cities Network Europe are welcome in the Network as an associate partner. The membership starts by declaration by the management of the organization and by confirmation of the majority of members.

The associate partners play a role as consultant and can accompany and support the work. But only representatives from cities are authorized to make decisions.

■ FUNDING

The common work will be funded by a financial contribution that depends on the population of a city. Financial contribution per year:

5.000 €	more than 500,000 inhabitants
4.000 €	from 250,000 to 500,000 inhabitants
3.000 €	from 100,000 to 250,000 inhabitants
2.000 €	from 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants
1.000 €	from 10.000 to 50,000 inhabitants
500 €	up to 10.000 inhabitants

Associate partners should also assume a financial contribution. The executive board will decide the amount of the financial contribution.

Each cooperation partner will bear the costs arising in their activities themselves. No expenses will be reimbursed.

■ CHANGES TO THE COOPERATION AGREEMENT

Any changes to the Cooperation Agreement will require a majority of two-thirds decision of all cooperation partners. Cooperation partners may leave the network at the end of a year: the decision to do so must be communicated to the Secretariat in writing and with three months' notice.

■ COMING INTO EFFECT

This Cooperation Agreement was signed by the municipalities listed in the annex (founder members) on 08/01/2018 and therefore is in effect. The cooperating cities, municipalities and districts are recommended to have this Agreement endorsed by their city council, local council or district council.