

2nd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

on the **organic sector** development
in **Central/Eastern European**
and **Central Asian countries**



Press release

During September 10 to 11 2009, the "2nd International Conference on Organic Sector Development in Central/Eastern European and Central Asian countries" was successfully held in the building of the Georgian State Agrarian University, Tbilisi (Georgia), followed by excursions.

About 200 participants from 22 countries came together in Tbilisi to meet and interact with each other, to share advanced expertise and experiences, to make new and refresh old contacts and to build up partnerships with representatives of the organic sector from different parts of the world.

The conference was opened by Mariam Jorjadze representing Elkana, the organic farming association from Georgia followed by the representative from the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia (Mrs. Ketevan Laperashvili) and the Rector in the Agrarian University Prof. Gela Javakhishvili. On behalf of the Orthodox Church of Georgia the participants were welcomed by Bishop David Aalaverdeli. Eugene Milovanov (Organic Federation of Ukraine) presented an overview of organic in the region. Gerald A. Herrmann, IFOAM past president conveyed greetings on behalf of the international organic movement.

During the two day conference 50 speakers from 19 countries discussed the latest developments in the organic sector focusing on the region. The sessions included:

- Plant production
- Animal husbandry
- Market sectors beyond food
- Wine growing and processing
- Standards and certification
- Domestic market development
- Wild collection
- Manufacturing
- Export markets

Hanspeter Schmidt, lawyer and expert on organic legislation from Germany introduced into the new EU organic regulation. **Victor Ananias**, Secretary General of the European Centre for Ecological & Agricultural Tourism presented what Eco-Agritourism and organic holidays offer to the region. **Prof. Dr. Hardy Vogtmann**, President of EuroNatur and the 'Association for the advancement of an ecologically and socially sustainable nutrition and landscape culture' gave an outlook for a sustainable development of the region.

The Tbilisi conference declaration was unanimously supported by the participants which asks for more targeted policies and general public attention to the organic development in the region.

In the foyer of the Agrarian University, Georgian and Ukrainian organic products and traditional handicrafts, as well as Elkana publications and information material about participating organizations were presented.

After the conference, participants joined **wine tours** and visited Elkana member farmers in Kakheti region where they learned about Georgian winemaking and baking traditions, listened to Georgian folk music and enjoyed cultural monuments and the beautiful nature. Others joined the international forum on organic production and biodiversity conservation in Batumi, organized by the Ministry of Agriculture of Adjara, an Autonomous Republic situated in the south-east of Georgia at the Black Sea coast.

The conference was organized by the **Biological Farming Association "Elkana"**, the **Georgian State Agrarian University** (Georgia), **Organic Federation of Ukraine** (Ukraine) and **Organic Services GmbH** (Germany).

The organizers express their special appreciation to the supporters and sponsors of the conference (complete list see at right) including **International Federation of Organic Movements (IFOAM)**, **Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia**, **World Bank**, **Avalon Foundation** and **Oxfam Novib (The Netherlands)**; **GTZ**, **EED** and **Misereor (Germany)**, **BioFach** as well as **other organizations**.

For proceedings and other information please visit: www.organicconference.elkana.org.ge

Supporters



Platinum Sponsors



Silver Sponsors



Media Supporters

