



## EU Organic Day: the Commission celebrates the winners of the first EU organic awards

Brussels, 23 September 2022

Today, the Commission unveiled the eight winners, from farmer to restaurant, of the first ever [EU organic awards](#). Coming from Austria, Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Sweden, they all represent the growth and innovation of the European organic sector and value chain, and its contribution to reducing agriculture's impact on the climate and the environment. The first EU organic awards mark the second celebration [of the EU Organic Day](#) launched last year by the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission.

Presenting the prizes at the award ceremony, EU Commissioner for agriculture, Janusz **Wojciechowski** said: *"I have been impressed by each and every one of the stories behind the winners. These are incredibly committed people, organisations and institutions, who have promoted organic production long before it became popular, often in very difficult circumstances. They come from all over the EU, showing that organics is alive everywhere, and that organic excellence can be found everywhere. In this sense, they give me much hope for the further development of organic production and the benefits it can bring for our farmers, rural communities, and society as a whole."*

Since a growing consumer demand for organic products is essential to stimulate organic production, the Commission works to promote the characteristics and benefits of organic production. The EU organic awards acknowledge different actors along the organic value chain that have developed an innovative, sustainable and inspiring project resulting in real added-value for organic production and consumption. They are jointly organised by the European Commission, the [European Economic and Social Committee](#), the [European Committee of the Regions](#), [COPA-COGECA](#) and [IFOAM Organics Europe](#), with the involvement of the European Parliament and of the Council in the jury for the awards.

Eight awards were presented:

- **Best female farmer** to Ms Nazaret Mateos Álvarez in Spain. Ms Mateos Álvarez runs an organic mushroom production site in the north of Spain. She developed a unique cultivation method maximising product quality while minimising input and cutting drastically the consumption of water.
- **Best male organic farmer** to Mr David Pejić in Croatia. Mr Pejić runs the oldest organic farm close to Zagreb, in Croatia, growing over 60 different crops. The farm is engaged in education, training and advisory activities with an on-site bakery and a restaurant as well.
- **Best organic region** to Occitanie in France. Organics is a priority for the development of Occitanie, in the south of France. Currently, 19% of all agricultural land is under organic farming, involving 608 285 hectares and 13 265 farms. The target is to achieve 30% of all agricultural land under organic farming by 2030. A comprehensive approach is taken, involving an inclusive regional governance and the complete value chain from production to consumption.
- **Best organic city** to Seeham in Austria. This city, located in the northwest of Austria, is a member of is part of the "[Organic Cities Network Europe](#)". Public canteens in the city, kindergartens and schools cook and serve 100% organic food. There is also an intensive collaboration with touristic infrastructures, bringing organics to gastronomy and hotels.
- **Best organic bio-district** to [Associazione Bio-Distretto Cilento](#) in Italy. The Cilento bio-district invests in the sustainable and local production of food, linking as well tourism initiatives like bio-beaches and bio-trails to it. This benefits job creation, social cohesion and the revitalisation of the area.
- **Best organic SME** to The [Goodvenience.bio](#) in Germany. With its ten employees, this enterprise produces handcrafted and organic broths, soups, sauces, spices and oils. It puts a strong emphasis on sustainable, circular and innovative production and promoting healthy diets via a recipe blog and cooking videos.

- **Best organic retailer** to [La ferme à l'arbre de Liège](#) in Belgium. This small-scale supermarket located on a farm, sells organic products such as meat and flour from across the region since 1978. With a strong focus on sustainable and circular production, the company also uses green energy, avoids packaging and limits transport emissions by focussing on local procurement.
- **Best organic restaurant** to [Lilla Bjers](#) in Sweden. Located in Gotland island in the Baltic sea, Lilla Bjers is an organic farm and restaurant operating under the 'seed-to-plate' concept. 300 different crops are grown on a farm which preserves biodiversity and is free from fossil-fuel. The restaurant has become a hub for training young organic farmers and chefs.

The [applications](#) for the first EU organic awards were open from 25 March to 8 June 2022 and the [24 shortlisted finalists were announced](#) in July 2022. They were chosen from a pool of over 200 submissions from 26 Member States. The jury for the awards was composed of representatives from the Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Committee of the Regions, COPA-COGECA and IFOAM Organics Europe as well as representatives from the European Parliament and the Council of the EU. Entries were invited from any actor or institution along the organic value chain and were reviewed against [the criteria](#) of excellence, innovation, sustainability and possibility to replicate the project elsewhere in the EU, thus contributing to greater accessibility and affordability of organic products in the EU.

The [action plan for organic production in the EU](#) sets out the way forward to achieve the target of 25% of EU agricultural land under organic farming by 2030 and a significant increase in organic aquaculture. More organic production means less use of chemical fertilisers, pesticides and anti-microbials and positive effects on our climate, the environment, soil, water, biodiversity and animal welfare, all key objectives of the [European Green Deal](#), the [Farm to Fork strategy](#) and the [Biodiversity strategy](#).

## For More Information

[EU organics awards](#)

[Organics at a glance](#)

IP/22/5670

Press contacts:

[Miriam GARCIA FERRER](#) (+32 2 299 90 75)

[Thérèse LEREBOURS](#) (+32 2 296 33 03)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)