

2nd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
on the **organic sector** development
in Central / Eastern European
and Central Asian countries



Conference declaration

197 participants from 22 countries of the 2nd International conference on the organic sector development in Central/Eastern European and Central Asian countries that took place on September 10-11, 2009 in Tbilisi, Georgia, passed this declaration.

In general the attention paid to agriculture by governments in the region is still low. Attracting investors to create big conventional farms or increasing production with conventional means including genetically modified plants (GMOs), including the distribution of inputs like synthetic mineral fertilizers to small scale farmers for free is often more in their focus than the strategic development of agriculture and domestic markets. Negative effects on the environment and human health impacts of conventional production methods are not sufficiently taken into account. It is organic agriculture that offers the most sustainable solution to develop the agricultural sector and food security without negative impacts on the environment and humans. In addition, high quality organic foods can provide access to valuable national and international markets. Organic farming offers strategies and solutions for rural development. Organic farming maintains and creates jobs and therefore enhances economic prosperity especially in rural areas disadvantaged by policy, technology and globalization.

The participants of the conference request from governments and public institutions:

- National or regional standards or regulations in line with international organic guarantee systems shall be adopted. Existing organic laws shall be enforced and the term "organic" protected against any misuse.
- Laws shall ban GMO in food and agriculture as co-existence is not viable.
- Regional cooperation among all actors (research, NGOs, training institution and others) shall be enhanced. The organic movement is ready to contribute to such cooperation. Comprehensive Organic Action Plans shall be introduced in cooperation with the non-governmental organic sector comprising of funded activities for research, training, promotion and other complementary activities like Eco-Agro Tourism and volunteer ship as additional income generation for farmers, in line with existing rural development policies.
- Financial support mechanisms shall be introduced such as more affordable and accessible (long term) credit and tax schemes for the organic sector on all levels, while subsidies for conventional production systems shall be stopped. Efficient market policies shall be adopted.
- Promotion and legalization of organic farmers' markets and fairs, public communication campaigns and the introduction of a common organic logo on the national or regional level shall be introduced.
- The concept for research and education shall introduce organic food and farming practices into curricula of schools, higher education colleges and universities.
- Practical on farm research and education about organic practices shall be supported and applied to local conditions. Exchange of research results between organic actors in the region and with international actors shall be enhanced. Local capacities shall be widely used also across borders without discrimination due to nationality, gender, religion or culture.

Tbilisi, 11 September, 2009