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## MEETING REPORT

### A snapshot of the meeting

The tenth MOAN meeting was held in Beirut, Lebanon on October 05-09, 2018 at Monroe Hotel, Beirut Downtown. The core theme of discussion was the secondary EU organic regulation with a special focus on the Delegated acts (DA) and Implementing Acts (IA) for organic control and international trade and their possible amendments.

The three-day gathering (Annex 1) included a half day dedicated to the organic sector of the hosting country, one day technical visit, a half day of MOAN internal meeting for planning future activities and updating information from the countries organic sector, and one day workshop co-organised with IFOAM EU to debate and work in groups on the text of the new EU regulation.

This meeting gathered thirty-six (36) participants: fourteen (14) representatives from MOAN countries, the four (4) members of MOAN Secretariat, two (2) IFOAM EU experts, six (6) speakers from the Lebanese organic sector as well as ten (10) members of the Lebanese Organic Technical Committee – OTC (Annex 2).

### The meeting major facts

#### Day 1, morning – open conference and debate

This year, the plenary session for the presentation of the hosting country's organic sector was opened to all the stakeholders and actors of the Lebanese organic sector to exchange views and discuss about salient issues and problems they face. It hosted also an exposition for producers, processors and retailers to introduce their products and share experience and point of views with the participants.

After the National Anthem, *Pauline Eid* head of the OTC - MoA and Lebanese representative in MOAN, opened the plenary session at 10.15 welcoming all the presents and giving the floor to the CIHEAM Bari director, *Maurizio Raeli* who pointed out the long CIHEAM Bari's collaboration activities and interventions in Lebanon in support to the national organic sector. He also highlighted the growing international reputation MOAN network is having. The warm welcoming speech of his H.E. Minister of Agriculture *Ghazi Zeaiter* followed in which he congratulated all the organizers and the exhibitors for their good work and participation to the event.

A 45 minutes coffee break allowed visiting the stands, interacting with the exhibitors and buying organic Lebanese products.

After the break, *Lina Al-Bitar*, from MOAN secretariat outlined the activities and achievements of the Network as well as their interactions with the field of research, cooperation, education and institutional support within the Mediterranean.

*Eduardo Cuoco*, IFOAM EU director, presented the IFOAM EU activities and role in the EU policy areas mainly the work that his institution is undertaking in the framework of the new EU organic legislation. He stressed on the importance of a transition to agro-ecological intensification as a solution to face both the growing political challenges and the alarming socio-economic, health and environmental ones revealing the strategic direction of IFOAM EU to achieve such changeover.

*Pauline Eid*, on behalf of the OTC-MoA, gave a general overview of the Lebanese organic sector including history milestones, legislations, and technical capacities of the operators. She presented the latest figures on production, processing and international trade, as well as prices and the Lebanese consumer profile. She concluded with a list of challenges that the sector still has to deal with.

*Michel Frem*, head of El-Kleiat station of the Lebanese Agriculture Research Station (LARI) outlined the studies and experiments carried out by this station of the research institute entirely dedicated experiments for organic agriculture in terms of plants protection and fertilization using available and authorised products and substances.

*Youssef Khoury Hanna*, the Chairman & General Manager of CCPB Middle East introduced his inspection and certification body for agrifood and no food organic products and for environmental and sustainability certificates. He presents the process for the certification and the list of required documents to get the organic conformity certificate for both food and no food products. He quickly went through the used organic production standards of CCPB for certification and the organic agriculture value chain in Lebanon.

*Mirella Aoun*, a visiting professor at the American University of Beirut, gave an overview of the ongoing contributions to the organic agriculture sector in Lebanon. AUB played a key role in the starting up phase of organic agriculture in Lebanon back to the establishment of the first Community Supported Agriculture program, Healthy Basket, to the institution of the first local certification agency LibanCert to the founding of the Association of the Lebanese Organic Agriculture ALOA. Currently the university includes organic agriculture in its research, teaching curricula and development project. Including on farm trials on: i) breeding varieties of tomatoes and their performance under organic management, ii) biological control solutions and iii) technological solutions in tree fruits production as well as students summer projects workshops and training and eco-friendly projects.

Three success stories of entrepreneurs were also presented:

- Success story 1: Organic taste of life, by *Hadi El Solh*, a young expat who came back to Lebanon with the idea of producing tasty food for tasty dishes, certified since 2006 he stills grows organic for its principles.
- Success story 2: Salim Organic Farmer consumer online market place, by *Richard Hanna*, a farmer who decided to launch an online platform for consumers to help them find and reach easily organic farmers buying directly from them and receiving their orders where they want.
- Success story 3: including organic farming in ecotowns, by *Rima Tarabay*, within the network of eco-towns present in five countries (Egypt, France, Lebanon, Morocco and Slovenia) organic agriculture practices has been introduced to contribute to the protection to the green spaces preserving environment and producing tasty food.

After the intense presentations session, the audience engaged in an animated and very participative debate with the speakers on salient issues of the Lebanese organic sector. The discussion tackled mainly organic certification and control, the complexity and the long-time procedure for authorisation to import some products and living materials for plant propagation and protection, the high costs of these latter as well as the need for more institutional support and tutelage. The protracted debate lasted for over an hour.

### **Day 1, afternoon – workshop on secondary legislation on control system and international trade (session 2)**

The afternoon session started with a large delay due to the protracted debate in the morning plenary assembly. *Marie Reine Bteich*, from MOAN secretariat started the workshop by introducing how the working session was organised and the three topics that will be covered in the work groups. Topics chosen based on the participants expressed preferences and common interest.

*Emanuele Busacca* from IFOAM EU, briefly outlined the paths of the EU legal framework and the routes that the secondary EU regulation took before its publication on the official act. He also explained the differences between the Delegated acts (DA) and Implementing Acts (IA) and who and how amendments could be brought. A quick exercise of identification of such acts in the text legislation was carried out and results presented in a voluntary way. The world café method was explained and three discussion groups were formulated. The members of MOAN Secretariat closely monitored the dynamics and the contents of the group discussions which came out very rich with active participation from MOAN delegates.

Due to the slippage of the established work timetable it was possible to cover only one round of discussion. Details on the outputs of this session are reported in Annex 3.

### **Day 2, morning – workshop on secondary legislation on control system and international trade (session 3)**

This session was structured as the previous one held on day 1 and started on previewed time covering two topics discussion in world café. Details on the outputs of this session are reported in Annex 3.

### **Day 2, afternoon – MOAN internal meeting**

After lunch break, the internal MOAN meeting took place and consisted of a round-table exchange of views and attitude towards the working sessions held in the meeting days and to discuss three major points:

1. The production by the end of 2018 of a folder-shape publication enclosing under a fiche format the country report including a quick and easy to read information about the organic sector of all MOAN members. Such fiche is meant to be updated and/or reconfirmed yearly to have always available a rationalised information accessible for a wide range of readers (international fairs or dedicated events). A draft of such country fiche was already developed based on information communicated by the network members to which they were asked to make integrations and comments by the end of November to allow its finalisation and printing on due time.
2. Insights to technical topics of common interest for the Mediterranean. A round table to identify common topics of interest to be investigated and reported in a strategic document/paper to be proposed as a regional contribution at high-level policy discussion

tables was done. It was convened that to reach such purpose, it is necessary to establish a task force to carry out the investigation research work and its reporting. The task force could be composed of 3-4 country representatives, 2 international experts and MOAN secretariat.

3. The hosting country and possible time of the next MOAN meeting, two countries proposed to host the 11<sup>th</sup> MOAN meeting in 2019:

- Jordan, period preferably between October and November
- Montenegro, period between September and November

The proposing countries will. Details will be communicated to MOAN General Assembly as soon as they are available.

The discussion and workshop on the secondary EU organic regulation were reconfirmed for the next meeting.

### **Day 3 - technical visit**

The technical tour started with a visit to a farm in Fatri (Jbeil district), Adonis Valley ([https://www.facebook.com/pg/AdonisValley/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/AdonisValley/about/?ref=page_internal)). A small organic farm wrapped up in the green valley managed by *Fady Daw* an agricultural engineer and entrepreneur, who believed in organic and was one of the pioneers in Lebanon to start applying organic management to his farm. The Adonis Valley project aims at protecting the environment and preserving the Lebanese Food heritage through sustainable agricultural means of production. After the farmhouse, processing unit and the farm visit, a delicious and rich organic breakfast was served.

The next step was the visit to BioLand ([https://www.facebook.com/pg/Bioland.Lebanon/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/Bioland.Lebanon/about/?ref=page_internal)), a charming place located in a small village called Sghar (Batroun district), relatively recent and managed by Adham Haddad. Vegetables and fruits are grown on the farm as well as cows, chicken and goats are raised for milk, eggs and meat production. This farm has the principle of “from farm to fork”, all the food served in the farm restaurant come from the farm production or from other contracted and trusted and monitored organic farms in the region. Before leaving, a generous and delightful organic brunch with hot and cold mezze was served.

The third and last technical stop was at Biomass (<https://www.facebook.com/biomassorganic/>). Biomass started in 2007 by growing, packing and selling organic products from the family farm, to become now a collecting and packing point for a network of 40 certified organic farmers, providing national and export (mainly arab Gulf countries) markets with Lebanese raw and processed products. The manager Mario Massoud guided us through the farm starting with the packing unit, visiting the green houses and the free grazing chickens to end up in the garden eating freshly baked traditional bread with traditional toppings and filling and fresh vegetables.

The third day ended with a touristic visit to Byblos old city guided by the mayor after a welcoming address in his office.