

# Information Letter for Organic Agriculture of Central and Eastern Europe

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## Avalon

Promoting sustainable rural  
development in  
vulnerable agricultural  
areas

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## Dear readers,

We are happy to introduce our last Information Letter for 2010. During this year we have worked on its improvement, signed up many new subscribers and received lots of positive feedback. Some of the new features have been, for example, colourful pictures accompanying articles and easy-to-use hyperlinks in the content table. Meanwhile, about 12.000 subscribers in 60 countries regularly receive our Information Letter in 10 languages. We would appreciate it if you recommended the letter to all who might be interested or provide us with information to publish.

We thank sincerely all the translators, proofreaders, authors and sponsors who make this Information Letter possible.

Winter holidays are approaching and we would like to wish you a happy Christmas and New Year. We hope to bring you plenty of good news on organic agriculture in our regular communications in the new year.

Our current Information Letter has a lot of positive news indeed. Interesting organic initiatives of different scale have been recently taken up in various countries. For example, in Turkey, the development of an organic project for an entire district, an initiative supported by the government; in Bulgaria, the Dutch organizations Avalon and Ark are implementing a special nature protection project to support the Rhodopes area; in Hungary, local activists initiated an interesting action to support regional organic products. As we see, from individuals to governments, all institutional levels are involved in turning our world into a more ecological place every year.

We hope you enjoy reading our articles.

Christoph Arndt, Katya Bykova & Linda Huisman

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**EKOCONNECT**  
Organic Agriculture Moving East

**avalon**

## 1. Turkey plans to increase organic farming in South-East Anatolia

The Turkish Prime Minister has recently launched a project in Southeast Anatolia to increase organic farming. With the new Ataturk High Dam on the Euphrates, the irrigated area in this region will increase from its present size of 340,000 ha to over a million.



Since cotton is the major cash crop in the region, there's a risk that this could result in depletion of soil fertility through intensive conventional cropping. Good soils represent one of the very important assets of the area, which is also known as Mesopotamia, the birthplace of arable cropping many thousands of years ago. In order to make sure that these assets are maintained, the Turkish Government is keen on providing an institutional framework which gives incentive to as many farmers as possible to convert to organic farming. The Organic Agriculture Cluster Project covers nine provinces along the Turkish border with Syria. This area is called the GAP region (Turkish for South-East Anatolian Project), and the organic logo of the region is therefore: "GO" (for "GAP ORGANIK"). This logo is meant to represent organic products grown in fertile soils with plenty of sunshine and providing developmental opportunities in an area which has until recently been the poorest in Turkey.

Potential organic value chains are based on bio-cotton (for the Turkish garment industry), tomatoes (for paste and sun-drying) as well as oil seeds, pistachios and almonds (for the European and US markets). Since the demand for organic food is growing fast on the Arab peninsula, the GAP region could also export fresh organic fruit and vegetables and organic animal products into the Middle East.

Organic agriculture is not new to Turkey, and a large amount of the organic raw materials processed in Europe, such as hazelnuts, sultana raisins, dried apricots, figs and pulses, originate from Turkey. Organic apples were at the top of Turkish organic crops until being recently replaced by organic cotton. Today Turkey's organic certified area approaches 200,000 ha with more than 35,000 farmers. Since December 2004, Turkey has a law of organic agriculture, and the country has recently made good progress to become included into the EU's third country list for equivalence with the EU Regulation which will make organic exports into the EU much easier. Turkey has two active associations, ETO and Bugday, and a large support in the population to remain GMO free.

In the GAP region the organic area amounts to only 10,000 ha (with some 220 farmers), but growth can be expected if marketing opportunities are developed and organic farms are supported in the transition period. Though it may seem like a great task, the combination of farmers seeking new niches for competition and the national pride in the country's long agricultural heritage may just make it feasible.

Author: Christoph Arndt, EkoConnect, editing: Erin Mallon

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## 2. Starting the first school year with a healthy organic breakfast: an example from Berlin

For many families it is their first contact with organic food: 47 local initiatives in Germany and Austria promote a healthy organic school breakfast for their first-year pupils. Thousands of voluntary helpers, along with food, transport and material sponsors help to obtain organic breadboxes which will be on the desks of the pupils on their very first school day. The breadbox initiative is a suitable platform for local companies to promote their organic products and to demonstrate commitment to the healthy nutrition of school kids. A participant reports from Berlin:



Photo: Christian Lietzmann

Departure by car, 6:30 a.m., from Dresden. The elderly couple who gave us a ride to Berlin (2 hours) was so delighted by the initiative that they brought us all the way to the gates of Terra Naturkost, the organic wholesale company where the event was going to take place. As we arrived, hundreds of tables were already set in the emptied warehouse of Terra, and many pallets of products were waiting to be

packed. After some initial words from Meinrad Schmitt, the Director of Terra, the procedure was explained to us. We had to follow a precise packing list to make sure every pupil will receive the same amount of food. Some people were packing the bread slices, others were packing the boxes in 6 to 8 per table, and everyone put one single item into the box: first the bread, the next person added the juice, then the carrot.... Staff of UPS got the big cardboard boxes filled with packed breadboxes very quickly, sealed and labelled them and loaded them on their trucks. The whole hall was teeming with people busily packing, chattering and running to get more boxes and products from the different packing stations. Time passed quickly and every few hours the current number of packed boxes was called out. By mid-day, most of the tables had emptied and products to pack became scarce. An organic catering company had sponsored lunch for everybody, so that we could finalize the last boxes at around 3 p.m. Despite the busy atmosphere, people were very nice and up for a chat. We caught our ride back at 4 p.m., tired and happy to have completed this important task for promoting healthy organic food in schools.

The facts: On 30th of August, 2010, 53.000 first-years in nearly 1000 primary schools in Berlin and Brandenburg were supplied with organic Bread Boxes. Many local celebrities and politicians were present at the event. Around 45 companies in and around Berlin were financing this initiative with around 350.000 €, and 600 volunteers - staff of many companies as well as private individuals - came to help with the packing. An enormous logistical achievement was carried out by UPS who delivered the exact number of boxes to each school in Berlin and Brandenburg. The boxes were sponsored too, and contained fresh bread, one carrot, tea varieties, some juice, different spreads, dried fruits, and muesli products. For the parents, they contained information on the initiative, a guide to how to shop organic in their region, and a voucher for one litre of organic milk. Experience from last year's event showed that parents who have never been in contact with organic do indeed take the chance to go into an organic shop to get their litre of milk. Since the BreadBox Campaign first started in 2002, more and more initiatives evolve every year, in Austria too, and there have been requests from interested groups in other countries, e.g. from Poland.

[www.bio-brotbox.de](http://www.bio-brotbox.de), [www.terra-natur.com/unternehmen/biobrotbox\\_presse.php](http://www.terra-natur.com/unternehmen/biobrotbox_presse.php)

Author: Inka Sachse, EkoConnect, editing: Kathleen Hewlett

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### 3. Biodynamic movement in Russia

**In Western Europe, biodynamic agriculture has existed for almost 100 years. However, in the USSR, the name of Rudolf Steiner, anthroposophy and all related ideas were not allowed. Thus, biodynamic agriculture reached Russia only after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is still in its early stages of development and even though quite a few farmers produce biodynamic products, it is difficult to find them in shops or markets.**

Promotion of biodynamic agriculture in Russia was an initiative of a German-Canadian farmer Bernhard Hack, who closely cooperated with Maria Thun, the author of the calendar used in biodynamic agriculture. In 1992, he set up a 100 ha biodynamic farm about 150 km away from Moscow in Bolotovo village and started to spread the word about biodynamic farming. Using biodynamic principles, the farm was producing milk, milk products, cereals, bread and vegetables. Some more German activists settled there to develop the movement and over time the farm could supply local communities and schools with its products. However, one year ago, due to some administrative problems, the farm's last manager Markus Schumacher moved away from Bolotovo. This time he has settled in the Republic of Mordovia which is around 700 km away from Moscow, close to Nizhny Novgorod. He is now managing an organic farm and next year he is planning to allot a plot of the land to breed goats and produce biodynamic dairy products which will be available for purchase in Moscow. Unfortunately, the land in Bolotovo, which was the site of the most successful biodynamic project in Russia for many years, is no longer in use.



[www.rgbstock.com/user/jarsem](http://www.rgbstock.com/user/jarsem)

Another remarkable example of biodynamic initiative is the Tuzhyliny family, who live in Siberia, not far from Irkutsk. They learnt biodynamics from Bernhard Hack and have become the most active members

of the movement in that part of Russia. Tuzhyliny run a club called “Harmony”, where they teach biodynamic agriculture, publish an on-line newspaper, produce biodynamic preparations and seeds for sale and have a small on-line shop where one can buy hand-made cosmetics, herbal teas and dried herbs. [www.biodynamics-sib.narod.ru](http://www.biodynamics-sib.narod.ru)

The non-profit organization “Biodinamika,” based in St. Petersburg since 1995, carries out similar activities. Currently the director of “Biodinamika” Irina Belyakova sees her mission in bringing biodynamic agriculture into a new level by lobbying the local government, educating farmers and school children. Every year “Biodinamika” gives a large national 5-day seminar where all the biodynamic activists can get together and new-comers can get acquainted with the biodynamic philosophy, get theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Their plan is to create a school, where they could organize regular seminars and support for farmers. [www.biodinamika.narod.ru](http://www.biodinamika.narod.ru)

The most successful production project has been accomplished by the “Tul’sky Zveroboy” company. Since 2007 the farm is certified as organic, and last year they started to use biodynamic preparations for the green crops production. All the products can be also ordered on-line at [www.gor-polyana.ru](http://www.gor-polyana.ru) in Moscow.

All together, the area utilized by biodynamic agriculture in Russia is relatively small – around 300 ha.

Non-profit Partnership Agrosophie, based in the Moscow region, plays an important role in the development of biodynamic agriculture in Russia. The partnership creates a network of biodynamic farmers, consults those who want to convert their farms into biodynamic farms, and leads projects on production, processing and distribution. Agrosophie introduced Demeter biodynamic standards in Russia and also carries on development of legislative framework for organic and biodynamic agriculture on the governmental level. [www.biodynamic.ru/ru/agrosafia](http://www.biodynamic.ru/ru/agrosafia). Agrosophie is also IFOAM member.

In Russia, farms can also be certified as biodynamic. Responsible for certification is Eco-Control company [www.eco-control.ru](http://www.eco-control.ru).

Author: Katya Bykova, EkoConnect; editing: Kartini Kochar

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#### 4. Give Organic food a face: De-anonymising the food chain

**In the supermarkets we find organic pumpkin seeds from China and organic peppers from Egypt. Consumers have become more and more aware of food miles and carbon footprints, and question if products coming from so far away are still trustworthy? As a consequence, the direct link to the farmer has become more and more interesting for some consumers.**

Just a small percentage of products are sold directly from the producer to the consumer. Having one’s own farm trademark is not always possible. What are other methods to link the producer to the final consumers of their products in organic shops or supermarkets? Direct links can be built by putting the farmer’s name and address on the shelf with the product, by adding a simple label on the packaging with the logo and address of the local producer, or by creating special packaging with the farmer’s picture or a code to enter on the internet. Here are some examples:

Kornbauern (grain farmers):

Behind every product stands a local farmer or processor from the German organic association Bioland. They can be seen in black and white pictures on the packaging of pasta or cereals and introduce themselves on the website in their regions, mainly in the south of Germany.

Ei.Q. (Egg.Q.) – From families, for families. This scheme is for organic eggs from family farms working under strict Bioland guidelines. Every egg package contains a visiting card from the producer. On the professionally made website each family introduces themselves with a picture, some short text, and an invitation to visit the farm. They have a fair price system and support social member associations. This initiative is supported by Bioland and a marketing agency. They provide customers with transparency and enable them to support committed organic family farmers.



Source: European Commission



Bio mit Gesicht (organic with a face) - a quality initiative from the German farmer's association Naturland, the local retail companies "tegut" and "Feneberg", along with the research institute FiBL in Switzerland. By entering a code from the packaging into the website, the consumer can identify the producer or processor of the product. It is possible to virtually visit the producer: to see who is working there, to find out which guidelines apply and learn other interesting information about the farm. Information on different products and recipes can also be found there, and consumers can leave comments. The products with this label can be found at tegut, Feneberg, and some organic shops.

Organic Farmer's Association's shop in Latvia (LBLA): All local suppliers are members of the Association, so even if processed products are not certified due to lack of organic processing infrastructure, the consumer can be sure they have a product made of certified organic raw material. The shop has locally produced fresh and dry products. The producer's names can be found on the packaging, and the addresses are on the Farmer's Association's website.

(Sources: [www.kornbauern.de](http://www.kornbauern.de), [www.ei-q.com](http://www.ei-q.com), [www.bio-mit-gesicht.de](http://www.bio-mit-gesicht.de), [www.ekoprodukti.lv](http://www.ekoprodukti.lv)).

Author: Inka Sachse, EkoConnect, editing: Kathleen Hewlett

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## 5. Multiple benefits in the Rhodope mountains in Bulgaria

**In the spectacular natural area of the Rhodopes in Bulgaria, with its strange rock formations and deep canyons, the Dutch organizations Avalon and Ark are implementing a special project in which synergy plays an important role. There is a synergy between three components: organic farming, eco-tourism, and nature management. Because all three components are equally important, this has potential to be a real win-win situation.**

The eastern half of the Rhodopes is characterized by unspoiled nature and very friendly people. However, the region is suffering from poverty. Local farmers are abandoning the area because the vast grasslands that used to be very fertile are now degraded due to overgrazing. Intensive grazing by herbivores has given the vegetation too little time to recover. With the objectives of fighting poverty, bringing land abandonment to a halt, stopping overgrazing, and to promote sustainable agriculture and tourism, Avalon and the nature organization Ark Foundation started a project in 2009 to boost the economy of the region.



Throughout Eastern Rhodopes, farmers, entrepreneurs in the tourism sector, shepherds and nature conservation organisations are being engaged in the project. The local project experts support them in their efforts to improve and extend their activities. Ark and Avalon have established a national project team in Bulgaria for the purpose of further exploring all aspects of the three components and optimising the synergy between them. For example, selected farmers and (potential) entrepreneurs in the tourism industry are provided with English lessons and farmers are trained in organic production techniques.

### Projects and activities

The possibilities for developing an organic food chain (from farm to fork) are being explored and farmers are encouraged to start farm shops. The project team also assists in the identification of sources of finance for new activities, such as funding for new nature-friendly types of tourism. Furthermore, local endangered grazers are being reintroduced to prevent the half-open landscape from becoming a dense forest. The halfopen landscape has a very high ecological value because it allows for such a wide variety of wild flora and fauna. It is one of the landscapes with the highest biodiversity in Europe.

The long-term success of the project depends, in particular, on the economic growth of this region. On one side this is supported by the sales of organic products and on the other side through attracting tourists to come and visit this beautiful, naturally maintained region. It is therefore important that all project activities come together in a clear communication plan: a website and maps are being developed, explaining all aspects of the project so that potential visitors can easily find the hotspots of this area. In the region, work is being done on path finding for the participating farms, B&B's, activities for tourists, etc.

The aim is that the project will establish a clearly recognizable “experience concept” (i.e. brand) that will be connected to the participating parties using a name and logo.

Author: Linda Huisman, Avalon, editing: Kathleen Hewlett

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## 6. Winter Peas and Winter Beans in Organic Farming

The cultivation of pulses in Europe has declined over the past years. The dominant varieties of field peas and field beans cultivated in summer have trouble coping with weeds and suffer from early drought. Until now winter varieties have not been cultivated much in Europe. This is because of a lack of winter hardiness and the replacement of pulses by other arable crops. Yet cultivating winter hardy legumes has considerable advantages: The vegetation serves as a protection against soil erosion and is effective in controlling weeds. Furthermore, especially in arid spring conditions, winter varieties show a higher yield potential than summer varieties.



*SP Veres*



In Germany, winter field peas were cultivated on a small scale during the first half of the last century, but then became totally irrelevant. The University of Kassel in Germany analysed different winter field peas from a gene bank to test their suitability for cultivation in organic farming. The variety EFB 33, currently registered in Italy, proved to be remarkably winter hardy. The biomass yield of this pea in a pure stand is around 6 t/ha. EFB 33 can be used as green forage, silage or to feed biogas fermenters. When EFB 33 is cultivated for grain it is recommended to combine it with a support crop to reduce risk for lodging. Rye and triticale are suitable for this. Grain yields of winter peas lie between 2 and 4 t/ha. Depending on water supply, winter peas allow for two organic harvests a year: When sown in the middle of September, the whole plants are ready for harvest by the middle of May. Fields are then almost free from weed and maize can be sown directly into the stubble by direct sowing.

The cultivation of winter field beans is slightly more difficult. In Germany there is only one variety available: Hiverna. Winter field beans tolerate cold only up to about -10°C. Experiments in Saxony have shown that due to the relatively high tannin levels they can only be used as forage for ruminants. However, in years of late spring sowing and summer drought, winter field beans will produce higher yields than spring varieties. Field beans demand much water – a reason why it may be beneficial to take advantage of the moisture of winter. This becomes even more important in times of climate change. More information is available for download [here](#). A resource person for winter peas is Mr. [Werner Vogt-Kaute](#) from the organic association Naturland.

Author: Christoph Arndt, EkoConnect

Translation from German: Anton Himmelspach, editing: Erin Mallon

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## 7. Farmers from Belarus Exposed to Organic Potato Production

**Potatoes are important in Belarus: The country has the highest per capita consumption of potatoes in the world. In addition, Belarus is one of the main providers of potatoes to Russia.**

Growing potatoes is an important source of income, particularly for the few private farmers in Belarus. There is considerable demand for organic potatoes on the Russian market. However, there is not a single hectare of arable and certified organic land in production yet.



*Boris Voelkel*

In September 2010, EkoConnect took a group of fourteen farmers and farm managers to meet organic potato farmers in Northern Germany – Baukhof (Dementer) and Gut Oersen (Bioland) – and visited Europe’s largest potato exhibition, PotatoEurope, which links potato farmers from across Europe. The event, which was sponsored by Avalon Foundation and Bosch Foundation, led to a greater awareness of or-

ganic farming amongst the farmers. The farmers understood that well managed organic potatoes will produce higher yields than poorly managed conventional fields.

Author: Christoph Arndt, EkoConnect, editing: Ian McCarthy

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## 8. Local eating for global change in Hungary

A particular diet began on October the 10th in Hungary, inspired by a Canadian couple who decided to promote “local eating for global change”. They called this the 100 mile diet, which lasted the duration of an entire year. In Hungary, the name of the project is 50 kilometer diet, and lasts one month.

The concept is very simple: the participant agrees to buy from local producers who live within a radius of 50 kilometers from his or her home.

Why are participants of this initiative convinced that this is good?

First of all, it dramatically reduces Co2 emission, because the produce is not traveling hundreds and hundreds of kilometers before reaching the customer. Secondly, rubbish will be reduced by several tons, since the produce is not shipped, and therefore can do without the packaging. Furthermore, if you eat seasonal food, you consume far less chemicals: the food does not have to resist hours of shipping. Finally, by supporting a small local producer, the person on this diet is efficiently helping that producer to compete with the big supermarket chains.

So, being involved in the 50 kilometer diet means that the participant can be healthier and eco-conscious at the same time! There are three levels of participation – beginner, intermediate and advanced – so everyone can decide to what degree they will adopt rules for their particular diet. After all, the aim of the initiative is to change the habits of shopping, in order to include more seasonal and local food. The participants of this initiative exchange their experiences at <http://messzelato.hu/50km/?lang=en>.

Author: Zsófia Pilhál, editing: Ian McCarthy



## Donations to the victims of the red sludge catastrophe in Hungary

Dear readers, probably all of you have heard about the red sludge catastrophe that took place in Hungary on 5th October 2010. The incident ruined entire residential areas and affected the lives of many thousands of people. The rehabilitation of the area and easing the effects of the disaster require enormous efforts from both public and the authorities. You can find more information about the accident and ways to support Hungary, including making donations, by following these links:

[http://www.mfa.gov.hu/kulkepvisolet/JP/en/en\\_Hirek/Szamlaszam\\_en.htm](http://www.mfa.gov.hu/kulkepvisolet/JP/en/en_Hirek/Szamlaszam_en.htm);

<http://www.segelyszervezet.hu/>

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## 9. Upcoming Events

Date	Event	Place	Topic	Link/Contact
22.11.-23.11.2010	Organic Romania	Romania, Sibiu	International meeting for traders, processors, farmers and organisations who are interested in the Romania market for organic food, non-food and commodities.	<a href="http://www.sibiu-market-conference-2010.org">Sibiu-Market- ing-Conference- 2010</a> or <a href="http://www.eko-connect.org">www.eko-connect.org</a>
24.11.-25.11.2010	International Conference "Conservation of the Agrobiodiversity and Sustainable Development of Agriculture".	Tbilisi, Georgia	At the conference will work 3 sections: Agrobiodiversity, nano-, agrobio-, and IT technologies; food security and safety; ecological, economical and energy problems of agriculture development.	<a href="http://www.gsau.edu.ge">www.gsau.edu.ge</a>
25.11.-04.12.2010	Permaculture Design Certificate Course	Istanbul, Turkey	Bill Mollison and Geoff Lawton will teach and show permaculture theory and all the necessary aspects to become fully conversant with Permaculture design.	<a href="http://www.permaculture-turkey.org/en/">www.permaculture-turkey.org/en/</a>
04.12.-05.12.2010	Nationwide conference of genetically unmodified regions and activities	Leipzig, Germany	Strategic planning and action initiatives for 2011	<a href="http://www.abl-ev.de/aktuelles.html">www.abl-ev.de/aktuelles.html</a>
07.12.2010	Beekeeper's Meeting - The collision between ecologic beekeeping and green genetics	Neustadt, OT Babe, Germany	Issues with genetically contaminated seeds, and provisions dealing with admission and coexistence	<a href="http://www.oeko-komp.de">www.oeko-komp.de</a>
16.02.-19.02.2011	BioFach 2011	Nürnberg, Germany	Leading trade fair for organic products for suppliers and decision makers across the world	<a href="http://www.biofach.de">www.biofach.de</a>
18.05.-20.05.2011	Conference "Organic Food Quality and Health Research"	Prague, Czech Republic	The first International Conference will focus on quality and safety of organic plant and animal products, impact of organic food on humans and animals, health concepts, etc.	<a href="http://www.fqh2011.org">www.fqh2011.org</a>
26.05.-27.05.2011	International Meeting 6 <sup>th</sup> "Organic Marketing	Warsaw, Poland	The Organic Marketing Forum is the most important international meeting for the Organic Market in Central and Eastern Europe for	<a href="http://www.organic-marketing-forum.org">www.organic-marketing-forum.org</a>



Forum”

**Processing and Marketing of Organic Products and Raw Materials. The conference is accompanied by an exhibition, excursions and a business partner platform.**

Did you enjoy this information letter?

If yes, please be sure to recommend it to your friends and colleagues. But if you have any comments, critics or other ideas for improvement please send an email to: [Linda.huisman@avalon.nl](mailto:Linda.huisman@avalon.nl)

This information letter is a joint project of EkoConnect and Avalon and this year it replaces the "EkoConnect – Information letter on Organic Agriculture of Central and Eastern Europe" and the "Avalon Network Newsletter". If this information letter was forwarded to you and you would like to receive it directly, please send a short e-mail with the subject 'Subscribe Information Letter' [to\\_redaktion@ekoconnect.org](mailto:to_redaktion@ekoconnect.org)

If you do not wish to receive the newsletter any longer, please send us an e-mail with 'Unsubscribe EkoConnect Information Letter' as a subject.

Best regards,

Your Editorial Team

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**Avalon** is an international, non-profit organisation, based in the Netherlands and active in promoting organic agriculture. Avalon supports rural communities in the Central and Eastern European region and beyond in building sustainable rural societies. In this way we support nature and environment, social conditions and local economy, always in close cooperation with local organisations such as communities, farmers, governments, etc.

#### **Avalon Network**

One of our main goals is to **connect organisations, governments, universities, and associated experts by informing and discussing about organic agriculture and nature conservation**. Knowledge and capacity building as well as market and chain development play an important role in agro-environmental policy programmes. Activities include seminars, training of trainers, demonstration farms, institution development and capacity building projects.

Bringing together all stakeholders results in a vast network of more than 150 actors in the field of organic agriculture, nature conservation, biodiversity and sustainable rural development. This network links people who are active in Avalon projects with each other and with professionals on EU and international level. Avalon facilitates this network by providing communication and capacity building tools.

#### **Membership registration**

Do you want to become a **network member**? Please fill out the application form on our website ([www.avalon.nl/network](http://www.avalon.nl/network)). Already a member? Then please invite co-workers, friends or other stakeholders to become a network member.

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**EkoConnect** is a not-for-profit organisation based in Germany which enforces and supports the exchange of information, knowledge and experience in the field of organic agriculture. The organisation serves as a network for people and organisations involved in the organic sector in Western and Eastern Europe in order to meet and interact with each other.

Our primary focus is to **support activities and actors involved with sustainable development and organic agriculture within the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries**. EkoConnect also promotes rural development and the availability of organic products and foods in those markets. Activities include: being a centralized source of information, knowledge transfer between actors and organizations, networking opportunities and continuing education opportunities such as seminars and field trips and supporting private and public facilities implementing structures for the organic agriculture. EkoConnect and its activities are overseen by an Advisory Board that guides the organization in terms of technical and strategic issues.

#### **Membership registration**

EkoConnect members include experts and organisations from all over Europe with years of experience in implementing organic agricultural structures, but also non-experts who are interested in learning or supporting the organic idea. You can help support our work by becoming a "**supporting member**" or as an "**ordinary member**". Please fill out the application form on our website (<http://www.ekoconnect.org/membership.html>). Already a member? Then please invite co-workers, friends or other stakeholders to become a EkoConnect member



In Partnership with Avalon under the Network programme 2010 financed by DG Environment Life +