The 2017 General Assembly of IFOAM - Organics International passed a recommendation to ask all candidates running for the World Board the same questions regarding our strategy, policies and positions, for the voting members to know more about the people they vote for.

Charikleia Minotou, Greece

1. The strategic plan of IFOAM - Organics International 2025 refers to 3 key levers to promote the principles of organic agriculture: supply, demand and policy. On which lever would you like to put the emphasis in your work for IFOAM – Organics International, and why?

According my experience I can contribute at the policy level, as it has an holistic approach for achieving an increase in the organic sector, the amelioration of awareness as concerned agriculture and environment, the compilation and implementation of strategic priorities and actions. At the same time, policy could focus and influence different targets groups and contribute in a long-term plan, focused at the adoption of environmentally friendly attitudes. And last but not least, policy could also include the sustainable development, the multifunctionality of agriculture and the ecosystems services values and benefits.

2. Please share your thoughts on which actors in our movement could contribute to which parts to make our common vision come true.

As I am an organic farmer, since 1996, I can work with/for farmers and stakeholders involved at the agricultural production. At the same time, because of my scientific and professional experience I can work with/policy makers, certification bodies, Universities and Research Centers.

3. What do you propose in order to get a real transformation in agriculture, in general, and more specifically, in your role as a WB member?

A real transformation in agriculture could be achieved if people, farmers and consumers will recognize the significant role of organic agriculture as a sector which is close connected with sustainable development, the human’s health, the viability of rural areas, the long term benefits for the environment, the biodiversity and the next generations. As a result, initiatives and actions have to focus on training and awareness.

4. Reflecting on the development of new GM breeding techniques such as Crispr CAS: where do you see challenges and issues for the organic sector?

The organic sector has the privilege to be connected with any natural profile for a technique or for a variety. In this term, OA support and enhance the biodiversity and the biotic and abiotic balance in the nature. During and after covid 19 period, it seems easier to argue that everything natural ensure safety and less health’s problems. People started to count again on values related to the environment, the biodiversity, local varieties, sustainability. This challenge could be part of the policy for the dissemination of OA and its effective and dynamic implementation worldwide.
5. The SDGs of the United Nations are aiming at sustainability in all areas of life and development. How do you make the SDGs a reality in your own life?

The SDGs goals were and remain the core benchmark for my personal life. Since early 1990 I am working only on environmental issues and I have adopted eco-priorities and adapted my daily life in an approach which is focusing on the protection of the environment. Moreover, I am following an environmentally friendly model of living and working and I am trying to ameliorate my environmental footprint in a daily base. In parallel, since 1990 I am involved in training programs and initiative for the environment, the biodiversity, the protected areas, the diets, the organic agriculture, the sustainability & more. I also participate in volunteering programs for practices related to OA, for protecting the environment, for ameliorate social issues (ex. immigrant). Last but not least, I am working with Universities for enhancing the research for the sustainable development, the nature and the ecosystem services.

6. The work of IFOAM-Organics International is partly financed by membership fee, and for a greater deal by donors and foundations. What experience and skills can you bring to support acquiring financial resources?

I can contribute to the compilation of financial proposals (to choose topics, to adapt and combine different cultures etc) based not only on the environmental approach of OA but at the same time on the sustainability of human, nature and business. Moreover, my experience, by my participation, at financial programs as MED, Interreg, Life etc. could potentially help on the compilation and implementation of attractive and eligible proposals.