

## Editorial

Time flies – we have entered the 4<sup>th</sup> and last year of the ORGANIKO LIFE+ project. Being in the right place at the right time applied quite well to our project, when 4 years ago Cyprus ranked at the bottom of the EU countries list of organically farmed area, presenting also with the highest EU percentage of childhood obesity prevalence. During these past 4 years, a dual action plan was implemented by the ORGANIKO LIFE+ team to generate high quality field data while interacting with policy makers and communicating the science to the public. It is now rewarding to observe the policy uptake of our results and efforts with the Cyprus' governmental approval of key measures to increase the organic food market share and at the same time to tackle childhood obesity in the country; both of these important policy milestones have benefited from the ORGANIKO LIFE+ team efforts. Another major accomplishment was the organization of the project's final conference, [CLIMATICO 2019](#); participants from various countries attended and the latest updates on climate change research in the fields of agriculture, public health and food were discussed.

Summer is just around the corner, what a perfect timing to initiate a healthy eating lifestyle with organic veggies and fruits.

Read more about our latest news in this newsletter. Enjoy!

Konstantinos C. Makris, PhD  
ORGANIKO LIFE+, Coordinator

## About ORGANIKO LIFE+ project

ORGANIKO is a LIFE-co-funded project with duration of 4 years (2015–2019), coordinated by the Cyprus University of Technology jointly with: the Agricultural Research Institute (CY), the Department of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (CY) and the Kyoto Club (IT). The ultimate goal of the project is to demonstrate the comparative advantages of organic versus conventional farming and products using indicators of:

- Mitigation efficiency to climate change
- Agronomic and environmental quality
- Decreased body burden of children to diet-based pesticides
  - Healthy food promotion for better children's health

[Read more...](#)



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## Policy impact in Cyprus

### Consensus Declaration on healthy eating at schools

A consensus declaration on healthy eating at schools as a primary means of tackling childhood obesity was unanimously signed by universities, governmental departments from three Ministries, parental and primary school associations, school teachers and NGOs at the [event](#) organized by the ORGANIKO LIFE+ team on December 13, 2018. The participants suggested a number of targeted recommendations to policy makers of education and health with the objective to substantially promote the health and well-being of children in primary education.

- Enhancement of physical exercise time and teaching by specialized teachers
- Revision of contracts with canteens and upgrade of the operation of the Canteen Supervisors
- Compulsory education for all parents on child nutrition and exercise through the Parents' Committee
- Creation of restaurant in each school
- Further strengthening of bilateral ministerial partnerships since obesity is a multifactorial disease
- Conversion of all elementary schools to full-day schools with a specific diet that promotes healthy eating
- Creation of a systematic and in-depth intervention plan for school nutrition
- Establishment of a State Food Authority with a holistic approach to nutrition and health issues

### Approval of governmental intervention programmes for childhood obesity

On February 20, 2019 the Ministers' cabinet approved programmes for tackling childhood obesity. These include:

- ✓ Implementation of the World Health Organisation's European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI)
- ✓ Implementation of a mobile phone application offering nutritional information and suggestions to children and their parents
- ✓ Introduction in schools of a lunch programme based on the Mediterranean diet
- ✓ Reinforcement of efforts for the reduction in advertisements for processed foodstuffs aimed at children
- ✓ Reinforcement of a programme on the education of parents
- ✓ Expansion of health programmes from pre-school to high school



- The ORGANIKO LIFE + project team welcomes the above decision as it is fully aligned with the results and recommendations of the ORGANIKO LIFE+ team. The proposed measures are in the right direction and will require constant monitoring and evaluation for effective implementation of the intervention measures targeting the Cypriot children.

### Agreement with Public Sector – Green Public Procurement Progress

Another important step towards the implementation of the Green Public Procurement Policy in Public Services was made by the Public Procurement Directorate who signed a contract with suppliers / producers of organic food.

In a [recent letter](#) (dated March 26, 2019) to the general directors of the three Cypriot Ministries (Education and Culture, Health and Defense), the list of the awarded organic products was presented and **it was recommended that the aforementioned Ministries purchase organic food either based on this list or through tenders submitted by their departments.**



- ORGANIKO LIFE+ welcomes the agreement after having made various efforts over the past 3 years towards this direction, such as stakeholder meetings, information seminars and short-chain organic markets.

## Project Activities

### CLIMATICO 2019 conference

The ORGANIKO LIFE+ project team hosted the CLIMATICO 2019 international conference on Thursday 11 April and Friday 12 April 2019 at Elias Beach Hotel in Limassol, Cyprus. Attendees represented several countries, including Cyprus, Serbia, Germany, Greece, The Netherlands, Lebanon, Serbia, and Italy.

The conference's major theme was Act on Climate Impact in the Mediterranean. The conference focused on the impact of climate change on key societal sectors, such as public health, agriculture, and food. [Read more...](#)



First day of the CLIMATICO 2019 conference



Among the speakers there were representatives from local authorities and business companies from the Veneto Region.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Climate dissemination event in Venice, Italy

To celebrate its first 20 years, Kyoto Club organized, together with Confindustria Venezia – the Venice branch of the main association representing manufacturing and service companies in Italy – a conference having as main topics the environmental sustainability and climate justice, where the next steps to be followed for a climate-friendly economy have been highlighted. The event took place on March 25, 2019 in the beautiful location of Palazzo Labia, a sumptuous palace of the 18th century: currently, the building hosts the RAI (Italian State Broadcaster) headquarters in Venice. [Read more...](#)

### Public seminar «Children's nutrition and health»

The CUT's School of Health Sciences and the Swiss Center for Biological Medicine organized a seminar on children's nutrition and health in Cyprus on March 21, 2019.

Dr. Xydas (from the Swiss Center for Biological Medicine) reported that disease is linked to toxicity and that toxicity stems from individual diet and personal behaviors, including the quality and quantity of the diet. The relationship between nutrition and the health of children was highlighted by Dr. Makris, who presented the ORGANIKO intervention study. [Read more...](#)



Dr Konstantinos Makris presenting the ORGANIKO intervention study on organic diet and children's health



All participants received a printed presentation summarizing the ORGANIKO activities and results,

## Investing in children's nutrition at school as a means of promoting health

A workshop was organized by the Cyprus International Institute for Environmental and Public Health, on December 13, 2018, within the framework of the ORGANIKO LIFE+ project. The event was held under the auspices of the Minister of Education and Culture, Dr. Costas Chambiaouris. Participants are supporting the promotion of targeted actions to substantially promote the health and well-being of children in primary and secondary education. The awareness of participants from universities, government bodies, associations and federations is reflected in a series of contributions to policy makers on education and health. [Read more...](#)

## 1<sup>st</sup> Dissemination event in Italy

Within the framework of the QUALENERGIA, the 1<sup>st</sup> dissemination event took place. During the whole morning sessions on February 15, from 9:30 to 13:30, Eugenio Barchiesi, from Kyoto Club, took part in several meetings with the people participating to the Forum, illustrating the LIFE+ ORGANIKO project objectives, activities and results, and answering many questions about the organic sector and how it is linked to the energy business. [Read more...](#)



Scientific evidence suggests that children's health is closely related to the probability of morbidity when he or she becomes adult. Adopting a healthy lifestyle is considered necessary from infancy.



## Visits with Italian government

The last study visit took place on December 6–7, 2018 by representatives from all the ORGANIKO LIFE+ partner organizations in Rome, Italy. The visit has served the following purposes:

1. Sharing with relevant Italian institutions and NGO representatives the preliminary results of the two ORGANIKO LIFE+ demonstration studies in Cyprus.
2. Informing the United Nations FAO officials about the project and its demonstrated results, including the forthcoming project initiatives.
3. Updating the partners from Cyprus about the latest organic farming (OF) developments in Italy.
4. Extending the invitation to the Climatico conference, scheduled to take place in Limassol on 11 and 12 April 2019, to all Italian colleagues met.

[Read more...](#)

## 6th Italian awareness-raising programme

The 6th Italian awareness-raising programme took place on November 28, 2018 at the Ara Pacis museum within the activities of the Qualenergia Forum, a two-days event dedicated to the energy sector. The fifth session of the second day (November 28), focused on the interaction between biomass for energy production, soil consumption and organic farming, represented an occasion to explain the LIFE+ ORGANIKO project with its preliminary results. [Read more...](#)



The speakers were Annalisa Corrado, Roberto Calabresi and Danilo Marandola.

## 5th Italian awareness-raising programme

The 5th awareness-raising programme was organized on November 26, in collaboration with Fondazione Bio Campus and Istituto di Istruzione Superiore San Benedetto. Francesca Masselli, Head of the Secretariat of Fondazione Bio Campus (Bio Campus Foundation), first introduced the seminar to the participant – mainly students from the Istituto Professionale Agrario (Agricultural Professional High School) San Benedetto, selected among those more interested in the organic sector. Some of them are already working in organic farms and companies. [Read more...](#)



During and after the various speakers' interventions there were many questions/answers with the attentive and reactive audience. Some of the participants were owners of small farms, and were interested in the conversion from conventional to organic.

## 4th Training course for local authorities and farmers in Italy

The training course took place on September 26th in the meeting room of the Association of Agronomists and Foresters of the Roma Province, where also Federbio has its Roman office. The Association included this course among those officially giving "training credits" to the participating agronomists. The training was focused on the role of organic farming in the risk prevention in agriculture, and the related monitoring methods and analysis. Since, in the latest years, the risk prevention in agriculture has been deeply connected to the climate change effects, the ORGANIKO LIFE+ activities and its first results attracted great attention by all participants. [Read more...](#)



The speakers were: Roberto Calabresi - from Kyoto Club - who coordinated the session; Donato Ferrucci – Responsible for the area of Central Italy for BioAgriCert; Dr. Claudia Fontana and Dr. Silvia Socciarelli - from CREA; Dr. Stefano Vaccari from ICQRF.

## Milestones

- ✓ ORGANIKO LIFE+ project featured as a success story in the European Commission's Invest in the EU plan of activities → [see relevant publication for Cyprus](#)
- ✓ Dissemination of the project through another LIFE project (LIFE CYCLAMEN) on multiple occasions (23/11/18, 13/12/18 and 18/4/18)
- ✓ Introduction of organic food items in school canteens for the first time (following communication with the Ministry of Education in Cyprus).
- ✓ The biggest in duration (40 days organic diet) and number of participating children (150 children), health intervention study in Europe and beyond (worldwide) has been completed in Cyprus.
- ✓ Business opportunities in organic barley between FederBio, Italy and Cypriot organic farmers.
- ✓ Implementation of two short-chain organic markets at a university (Cyprus University of Technology, CUT) premises with the collaboration of the Cyprus Organic farmers association (COFA) and the CUT Green Office.
- ✓ Manuscripts were submitted and others are under preparation by ARI and CUT.
- ✓ 2 notice boards disseminating the project were placed at the sides of the Nicosia-Limassol highway.
- ✓ The final conference of the project (CLIMATICO 2019) took place on 11–12 April 2019.
- ✓ The so far progress and findings of the ORGANIKO LIFE+ project were discussed in the Parliament House of Cyprus via a question made by a Senate member regarding the project's impact.
- ✓ A member of the ORGANIKO LIFE+ consortium, Dr. M. Omirou was appointed as a member of the Cyprus National Council of Organic Farming.
- ✓ The recent Green Public Procurement plan for Cyprus includes organic food options for public authorities and organizations; ORGANIKO LIFE+ members contributed to the discussions before the implementation of this plan.
- ✓ Organic lifestyle starts at primary school -- this was the title of our innovation that was among the shortlisted applications for the Call for Organic Innovations 2017 at the EU level. While our innovation was not selected as the winner, the jury found it promising. The EU TP Organics platform featured it in the [Innovation Arena](#) on its website.

## Deliverables

- ❑ [The impact of organic diet intervention on antioxidant capacity and biomarkers of inflammation and oxidative stress: A systematic review](#)
- ❑ [Organic farming and climate change: Literature Review](#)
- ❑ [Stakeholder Organic Sector Mapping in Cyprus](#)
- ❑ [Stakeholder Organic Sector Mapping in Europe](#)
- ❑ **Informative material (flyers in Greek)**
  - ❑ [Πέντε Λόγοι για να Προτιμήσετε Βιολογικά Τρόφιμα](#)
  - ❑ [Βιολογική Γεωργία και Κλιματική Αλλαγή](#)
  - ❑ [Βιολογικά Προϊόντα στη Ζωή μας](#)
- ❑ [Newspaper articles](#)
- ❑ [Plant Nutrition Fertility Scheme in organic farming systems: Apples and Barley](#)
- ❑ [Review Report on Irrigation Management Scheme](#)
- ❑ [Review Report on Soil Fertility Improvement Scheme](#)
- ❑ [Βιολογική καλλιέργεια κριθαριού – Protocol for organic farming practices in barley](#)
- ❑ [Βιολογική καλλιέργεια μηλιάς – Protocol for organic farming practices in apples](#)
- ❑ [The Behavioral Model of the Cypriot Consumer of Organic Food: The Foundation of a National Strategic Plan for Promoting the Consumption of Organic Food](#)

## Videos

- [Research study “Organic diet and children’s health”](#)
- [Discussing the behavior model of the Cypriot consumer of organic products – RIK morning show](#)
- [Preparation of organic meals for children participating in the study “Organic diet and children’s health” – RIK morning show](#)
- [Organic farming and its links to climate change and health](#)



### Contact us

