

## Freshfel represents the fruit and vegetable sector at the 2016 EU Agriculture Outlook Conference



For the first time ever, fruit and vegetables were part of the agenda of the EU Agriculture Outlook Conference. This is one of the major agriculture conferences taking place in Brussels each year.



The conference focuses on future outlook trends for the sector. Taking place on the 6th & 7th December, the conference was opened by the President of the European Commission, Mr Jean-Claude Juncker and by EU Agriculture Commissioner Mr Phil Hogan. More than 400 participants participated at the event, representing the entire agri-food sector. Freshfel General Delegate was part of a panel on the future trends for fruit and vegetables, wine and olive oil. One of the main emphasis of the debate was on tools to stimulate consumption for a growth of the sector. More information, and access to all the presentations during the conference can be found here:

[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/2016-outlook-conference\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/2016-outlook-conference_en)

## Freshfel Board discusses priorities and meets new Head of Unit DG AGRI



On 6 December, the Freshfel Board met in Brussels, where Freshfel reviewed priorities for 2017, at a time when the sector remains confronted with a number of challenging topics. The Board looks at several aspects of the EU fresh fruit and vegetable policy, at the EU food and plant safety regulatory changes and on the need to secure compliance with these two sets of legislation. Besides, the Board also reviewed trade issues at a moment when growing protectionism is perceived.

The Freshfel's involvement in Research and Innovation projects was also evaluated and further enhanced as well as other initiative of Freshfel in regard to sustainability but also nutrition and health with a view to stimulate consumption. The

Board was also an excellent opportunity for a first exchange of views on topical issues with the newly appointed Head of Unit for fruit and vegetables at DG AGRI of the European Commission, Mr Joao Onofre.





Freshfel is again present at Fruit Logistica. Come visit us in Hall 20, Stand B06.

### Trade policy matters in December 2016 and January 2017

December and January are usually months of closing accounts and setting new priorities for the upcoming year. With this regard, Freshfel has been busy to follow-up on current pending topics and dossiers. In this context, Freshfel had been invited, to give a presentation to an official delegation from the Taiwanese Plant Protection authority “BAPHIQ” at the end of November 2016. The presentation intended to give the delegation an overview of the current state of fruit and vegetable trade, but also to highlight the common European approach with regard to food safety, quality and plant health.

Freshfel attended further various stakeholder meetings at Commission and European Parliament, setting the priorities for the upcoming year. The public hearing of Commission Hogan in the beginning of January at the European Parliament once again wrapped up the results of the Agricultural Market Task Force, and underlined the willingness to set the scene for 2017 to tackle unfair trading practices within the supply chain. The Civil Dialogue on the Mercosur free trade negotiations highlighted the strong focus on SPS and agricultural trade and the Commissions need for constructive and feasible ideas. Other priorities arising, are effects of the Trump administration on global trade and reinforced focus on Asian markets by the policy makers.

### Freshfel participates to the debriefing session on Commissioner Hogan High Level Trade Mission

Freshfel’s General Delegate participated to the evaluation meeting of the three High Level business delegation visits organised by the EU in 2016 under the leadership of EU Commissioner Phil Hogan. The missions took place in Colombia, Mexico, China, Japan, Vietnam and Indonesia. On behalf of the different participants of the fruit and vegetables sector that participated to these missions, Freshfel’s General Delegate, Philippe Binard, shared with the Commission the main outcomes of the mission in the 6 countries from our sector perspective. For these countries the main priorities related to opening of the market by addressing SPS barriers. Diversification of destinations is a key objective for the fruit and vegetable sector, as it support most than 40% of the EU burden for the agriculture sector from the Russian embargo. In 2016, EU exports to the countries visited by Commissioner Hogan grew on aggregate by 70 % compared to the same period of the previous year, while at the same time the overall EU exports to other third countries declined on aggregate by 10%. In the aftermath of the mission in China, Freshfel also conducted a follow up meeting in Beijing with CIQA and AQSIQ in November 2016. While the missions with Commissioner Hogan are creating a momentum, addressing SPS hurdles remain complex, costly and request time to overcome challenge of third countries partners. The EU fruit and vegetables sector represented by Freshfel needs to continue to build on the engagement of Commissioner Hogan to get concrete results on a number of SPS pending dossiers.

### Freshfel joined a stakeholder platform on cooling

Freshfel has joined a stakeholder platform on cooling. This platform, coolingEU is a forum that brings together stakeholders representing the European cooling demand and supply sector in Brussels. Freshfel represents the demand side of cooling, given the amount of cooling needed for the sector. Cooling in the fruit and vegetable sector is needed to realise a continuous cooling chain (from production, via trade and transport, via storage to supermarkets, food hospitality and end users).

The food supply relies overwhelmingly on a continuous cold chain of refrigerated warehouses and vehicles. The platform has been set up to promote a more efficient and cleaner cooling supply, increase the number of dedicated research projects and raise awareness on the importance of cooling. More information via: [www.coolingeu.eu](http://www.coolingeu.eu)





### Cooperation with Growing Media Europe

Freshfel Europe has started a cooperation with Growing Media Europe, similarly to the cooperation with Europatat. As such, the Freshfel offices now also includes the Secretariat of Growing Media Europe, which is led by Cecilia Luetgebrune. Growing Media Europe is the Association for the growing media sector, also known as “substrate” or “potting soil”. A growing medium is a material, other than soil on the spot, in which plants are grown. As an important supplier to the modern horticultural industry, the peat and growing media sector is an important contributor to its sustainability. Growing media are used by the horticulture industry as well as consumers to support the development of plants. The growing medium ensures that the plant can healthily grow by providing it with a range of essential elements.



Freshfel Europe is excited to have started this cooperation and is looking forward to a successful partnership. More information about Growing Media Europe and their activities can be found here [www.growing-media.eu](http://www.growing-media.eu)

### Organic Innovation Days

On 6 December 2016, TP Organics, the European Technology Platform for organic food & farming research, organised a second edition of the Organic Innovation Days, which Freshfel attended. The conference showcased innovation that were made within the organic food and farming sector at large and served as a platform to discuss innovative trends, challenges and opportunities in the field between the participants. The event was preceded by a stakeholder forum and followed by a brokerage event to respond to the CORE organic call.

### FRESH-DEMO project coming to an end

The FRESH-DEMO project, in which Freshfel has been involved since March 2015, is coming to an end. The date of ending is 28 February 2017, but the project consortium is scheduled to have its final meeting on 7 February 2017 in Berlin, with afterwards a final demonstration of the technology at the Fruit Logistica itself. Freshfel was mainly involved as an actor in the wider dissemination of the project results (of which more to come in the next month), and acted as a support in the legal status of the natural acidifier.

The project aimed to develop an innovative humidification and acidifying technology to contribute to the food waste targets by simultaneously enhancing the shelf life and the hygienic properties of fruit and vegetables. By means of ultrasonic humidification, applied along the whole supply chain, as well as a natural acidifier, a cool, humid, and germ-free climate is established preserving quality and freshness of fruits and vegetables along the entire post-harvest supply chain. In five real-scale case studies (with strawberry, peach and nectarine, asparagus, table grapes, and cauliflower and escarole) the market potential of this technology was demonstrated. Reporting on the final meeting and on the finalised test cases will follow in the next edition of the Freshfel Headlines.

