

# OUR MOMENTUM IS NOW. TIME TO TAKE THE LEAD!

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# ACTIVITY REPORT 2022

## General information

Freshfel Europe’s Activity Report is published on an annual basis for the Freshfel Europe Annual Event. This report provides a general overview about Freshfel Europe, its structure as well as a review of topics pertinent to Freshfel Europe’s members.

The work of Freshfel Europe would not have been possible without the leadership of the Freshfel Europe Board and the active support of all Freshfel Europe’s members and associated members throughout the year and the Secretariat staff. Finally, the support of Freshfel Europe’s sponsors has been fundamental in making the publication of this annual report possible.



“ I would like to thank all Freshfel Europe members and associated members for their continued support in helping Freshfel Europe represent the common interests of the entire European fresh fruit and vegetables supply chain for the benefit of all stakeholders and consumers. ”

*Philippe Binard*  
*General Delegate, Freshfel Europe*



## Membership-driven

A strong association is built through the support of all stakeholders in the fresh produce supply chain. Freshfel Europe is a membership-driven association and Freshfel Europe’s resources exclusively result from membership fees.

All companies and associations of the European fruit and vegetables sector are invited to join forces with Freshfel Europe for a mutual win-win benefit.



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BOUQUET STARS 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

# EUROPE'S PIONEERING SEEDLESS WATERMELON

BOUQUET STARS



## FOREWORD

This Activity Report, covering the period of June 2021 to June 2022, provides an in-depth overview of the work of the Freshfel Europe over the past 12 months. It also showcases the efforts of the Association to continually best represent the European fresh fruit and vegetable sector across the entire supply chain from production down to retail.

The 2022 Activity Report looks back on a period of continued market uncertainty and change, with the fresh produce sector still needing to adapt to an array of challenges. Operating in a world recovering from, and in some parts still battling, COVID-19, the sector

sustainability of global and local food systems. The European Green Deal, and in particular the Farm to Fork Strategy, are paving the way for Europe to become the first climate neutral continent. Fresh produce has a significant role to play in achieving this, after all no diet can be more plant based than eating plants or their fruit.

Under my leadership Freshfel Europe has efficiently navigated these turbulent times over the last year. The Association's success in representing the sector at European level to defend the assets of fresh fruit and vegetables and ensure legislation and non-regulatory initiatives

**“ In an ever-changing world, it's time for the fresh produce sector to take the lead and build on the momentum for a healthy, sustainable diet and future for our planet based on fresh fruit and vegetable consumption. ”**

has taken this last year to reestablish day-to-day business operations and a 'new normal'. On top of this, the fresh produce sector has additionally been impacted by geopolitical events, including the Belarussian embargo and the terrible war in Ukraine. We are yet to witness the full effect of these events, not only in terms of fresh fruit and vegetable supply in Europe, but also how the consumer will react to the inflations which have only started.

Consumer habits continue to constantly evolve, both as a result of emerging events but additionally because of increasing focus on the

in all areas are appropriate. They also reflect operations on the ground stemming from the Association's extensive and diverse membership across the supply chain. The Association's ability to facilitate dialogue and exchange between members representing all elements of the supply chain to voice one unified position has been vital in this period. Freshfel Europe's activities in EU policy on trade, the CAP, sustainability, food safety, promotion and consumption among others have resulted in positive outcomes for the sector and created further opportunities for sector strength and growth. This Activity Report reviews these positive actions.





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## FOOD GONE GOOD.

### #Unwaste with Us!

Food waste is one of the largest contributors to climate change. By using more of the food we buy, we can do our part to fight food waste in our own kitchens. We post challenges on Apeel's social channels to encourage one another to take action. Follow along at [@apeel\\_sciences](https://twitter.com/apeel_sciences) and share your #unwaste tips.

Don't forget to tag us!

While this period marks the end of my mandate as Freshfel Europe President, I also hope that it marks an ending to the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic for the fresh produce sector, but also a new path for fruit and vegetable consumption. 2021 was the UN International Year of Fruits and Vegetables and the sector must build on this focus and energy to boost consumption across the Union. Meeting the minimum WHO intake recommendation of 400g per day per capita across all Member States still remains elusive.

In the year ahead, I invite all members to continue actively participating in Freshfel Europe's activities and supporting the work of the Association. Freshfel Europe brings a professional and operational perspective to integral market and policy discussions in Brussels, where decisions made in meeting rooms effect all of our diverse businesses at large.

Let me end this foreword by thanking you for the trust in electing me twice as Freshfel Europe's President. I was the first representative of a retailer in this role. I believe this was symbolic, showing that in our industry we have a



unique association in Brussels representing so many different roles in one organization. It also reflects the many productive partnerships we witness since decades ago through the lines of our quick and complex supply chains.

*Stephan Weist  
President, Freshfel Europe*







## ABOUT FRESHFEL EUROPE

### Who We Are

Freshfel Europe, the European Fresh Produce Association, is the forum for the fresh fruit and vegetable supply chain in Europe and beyond.

Founded in 2001 consolidating organisations dating from the 1960s, Freshfel Europe has a vertical membership structure with members from across the entire supply chain in Europe, including producers, traders, wholesalers, importers and exporters, logistics providers and retailers.

Freshfel Europe is a non-profit association under Belgian Law and is registered in the EU Transparency Register.

### What We Do

Freshfel Europe is in continual contact with its members and the European institutions, ensuring that the European fresh fruit and vegetable sector and its interests are well-represented and have a strong voice in Europe and globally.

Freshfel Europe ensures the European fresh fruit and vegetable sector is dynamic, supplying healthy products using the highest quality, safety, environmental and social standards to meet consumers' changing needs.

### Our Mission

Europe is the global leader in the fresh fruit and vegetable industry and Freshfel Europe's mission is to:

- Build a strong European fresh fruit and vegetable sector from production to retail.
- Improve the efficiency and competitiveness of the sector.
- Create the highest safety and environmental standards for fresh produce.
- Facilitate intra-EU & international trade of fresh produce.
- Advance research and innovation in fresh produce.
- Promote the benefits of consuming fresh produce for health and the environment.







# Marketability + Biologicals: Enhancing Crop Protection

With multiple modes of action, Serenade is an excellent fungicide choice for anyone concerned about marketability. That's because Serenade biological fungicide easily meets local and regional MRL standards, enabling growers to reach more markets. When used in combination with our other world-class crop protection products, Serenade is a vital component of an integrated crop solution that reliably boosts yield and the potential for profit at harvest time.

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## THE FRESHFEL EUROPE TEAM

### Freshfel Europe Board

The Freshfel Europe Board governs the Association. The Freshfel Europe Board includes an elected President, Vice-President and Treasurer on a two-year term. The Board is assisted in its deliberations by several appointed representatives of the membership representing the various segments and business aspects of the supply chain from production down to retail. These representatives also take responsibility to guide the Secretariat and steer the work of the different Divisions and Committees of Freshfel Europe. Freshfel Europe's Divisions and Committees cover specific segments of the supply chain as well as pertinent horizontal focus areas for the Association's work.

### Freshfel Europe Secretariat

The Freshfel Europe Secretariat is based in Brussels, Belgium, the heart of European policy-making. The Secretariat, presided over by Freshfel Europe's General Delegate, is composed of policy experts who guide Freshfel Europe's policy work with its members and represent the Association in its external activities.



Philippe Binard  
General Delegate



Eglè Baecke  
Director,  
Food Quality



Nelli Hajdu  
Director,  
Trade Policy &  
Business Development



Nicola Pisano  
Director, Sustainability,  
Health & Communications  
Manager



Gil Kaufman  
Policy, Project  
& Data Advisor



Linda Bloomfield  
International Membership &  
Marketing Support

### Engagement with Members

Freshfel Europe operates in an open manner and coordinates regular meetings with its members and associated members on topical and emerging issues. This flexibility allows the Association to quickly respond to the rapidly changing and evolving fresh produce market. Freshfel Europe is highly active in both the European and international policy arenas and conducts meetings with institutions and other stakeholders to ensure the sector's interests are well represented.



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## BUSINESS BEGINS IN BRUSSELS

Freshfel Europe is involved in European level decision making in all policy areas relevant to the European fresh fruit and vegetable sector. Located in Brussels, Belgium the Freshfel Europe Secretariat is situated at the heart of European policy making to ensure that the interests of the fresh produce sector are well represented.

In close collaboration with its members Freshfel Europe is actively involved in activities in the EU policy arena with the European institutions and its Member States as well as other international

bodies, such as UNECE, WHO, FAO, OECD and WTO. In doing so, Freshfel Europe conducts its advocacy work on behalf of the general interest of the whole sector.

Freshfel Europe regularly participates in European Commission Civil Dialogue Groups (CDGs), Market Observatory and Agri Outlook meetings as well as ad hoc Expert or Stakeholder Groups. Both the Freshfel Europe Secretariat and Freshfel Europe member representatives attend these policy meetings.

Freshfel Europe is actively involved in the European Commission DG AGRI CDG meetings, including:

- CDG on Horticulture, Olives & Spirits: Fruit & Vegetables (Chair)
- CDG on Organic Farming
- CDG on CAP
- CDG on International Aspects of Agriculture
- CDG on Quality & Promotion (Chair)
- Market Observatory for Fruit and Vegetables (for apples and pears, citrus, peaches and nectarines, and tomatoes)

Freshfel Europe is actively involved in the European Commission DG TRADE committees, including:

- SPS Market Access Working Group
- Market Access Advisory Committee
- Civil Society Dialogues on ongoing trade policy and negotiations

Freshfel Europe is also an active member of stakeholder dialogue platforms organised by the European Commission, which help guide European policy and initiatives, including:

- Advisory Committee on the Food Chain and Animal and Plant Health
- EU Health Policy Platform
- EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste
- EU Biodiversity Platform
- Expert Group on the European Food Security Crisis Preparedness and Response Mechanism





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## FRESHFEL EUROPE'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2022

Freshfel Europe has set a number of priorities that will shape its political and policy agenda for 2022 and onwards. They serve to address the main challenges faced by the fresh produce sector. The priorities derive from dialogue amongst the Freshfel Europe membership, while also considering the agenda and priorities of the EU institutions, such as the implementation of the objectives set under the European Green Deal.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the war in Ukraine have radically

modified the priorities of the fresh produce sector as well as the political agenda of governments, institutions, local and regional authorities and actors that influence the supply chain. This illustrates the need to be able to adapt to a new situation and sanitary, social, economic and political challenges. Many of the lessons learnt from the pandemic and those that the sector is learning through the aggression in Ukraine remain relevant also under different circumstances or situations of crisis.

Experiences gained by the sector over the years are integrated in the five thematic areas identified as the priorities for the Association's mandate for 2022 onwards.

### Freshfel Europe's five major priorities for 2022 and onwards:

- ✓ Position fruit and vegetables and plant-based diets as essential goods in all policy areas.
- ✓ Move towards greener production and sustainable supply.
- ✓ Build on the momentum to stimulate consumption.
- ✓ Foster competitiveness through market intelligence and contingency planning.
- ✓ Secure sustainable trade opportunities within internal and international markets.





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## THE 2022 SUPPLY CHAIN

The European as well as the global fruit and vegetable industry are currently experiencing an unprecedented situation. With the continuous challenges arising from COVID-19 related shifts in logistics costs and container availability and resulting cascading effects for cost and availability for inputs such as fertilizers, labour as well as energy and services, the fresh produce sector is facing unprecedented high costs along the entire supply chain in an already low-margin environment. With electricity costs increased by 350%, oil prices by 250% as well as paper and cardboard prices up by 50%, pesticides and fertilizers up by 80% and transport prices up to 50%, new solutions must be found to support the sector's long-term economic viability in a current policy environment, which requires further investments towards environmental and social sustainability.

In conjunction with the current geopolitical crisis in Ukraine, this cost and availability crisis has been snowballing towards a complex global

**Cost hikes, scarcity of inputs and geopolitical challenges – united perspectives needed to tackle the global complexity of the 2022 supply chain.**

food security debate, in which it is Freshfel Europe's priority to secure and share the voice of the fresh produce sector in the regulatory debate. As such, Freshfel Europe is continuing its effort through its membership in the European Food Security Crisis Preparedness and Response Expert Group as well as with regard to its engagement in the Global Coalition of Fresh Produce. The objective of the Global Coalition of Fresh Produce is to unite different international fresh produce associations to give a voice to the fresh produce industry in relevant multilateral bodies such as the WTO, FAO, OECD and others as well as to support resource building for a common argument, to place fruits and vegetable as strategic goods in the public debate about food security and global nutrition.

### Stakeholders involved in the Global Coalition of Fresh Produce







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## MARKET & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENTS

### Intra-EU trade – 5-year trend

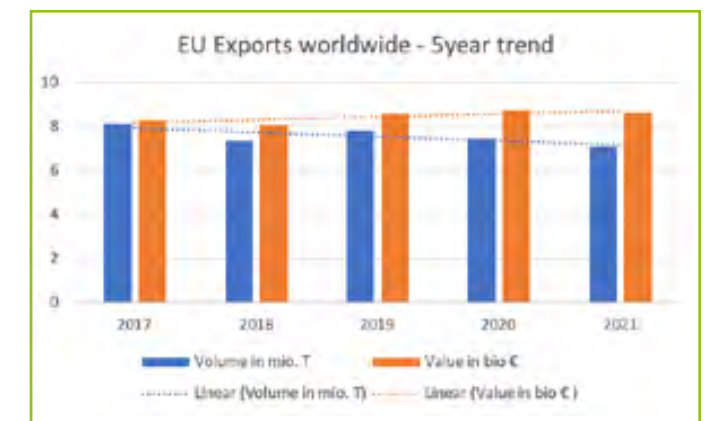
In 2021 intra-EU trade amounted to 29.2 mio T worth 32.8 billion euros. The largest suppliers were Spain (10.4 mio T), the Netherlands (7.4 mio T) and Italy (2.7 mio T). The biggest recipients were Germany (7.8 mio. T), France (4.1 mio. T) and the Netherlands (2.1 mio.T). Intra-EU trade continues to be a stable pillar to economic development in the EU fruit and vegetable sector with a total production of 68 mio. T (2019). The trend towards local consumption continues with 38 mio. T being consumed where it was produced, which marks an increase of 8% compared to 2021.



### EU exports worldwide – 5-year trend

European exporters have been trading in 2021 7.11 mio. T of fresh fruits and vegetables with a market value of 8.65 billion euros. Despite a very difficult trading environment for European exports with further decrease of open markets in the European neighbourhood and various market barriers related to COVID-19, the steep downward trend of the mid-2010 years was

broken. While export volumes continued to decline by 3% on average since 2017, product value remained stable over the past 5 years with a slight upward trend and increase of 1% in market value from 2020 to 2021.



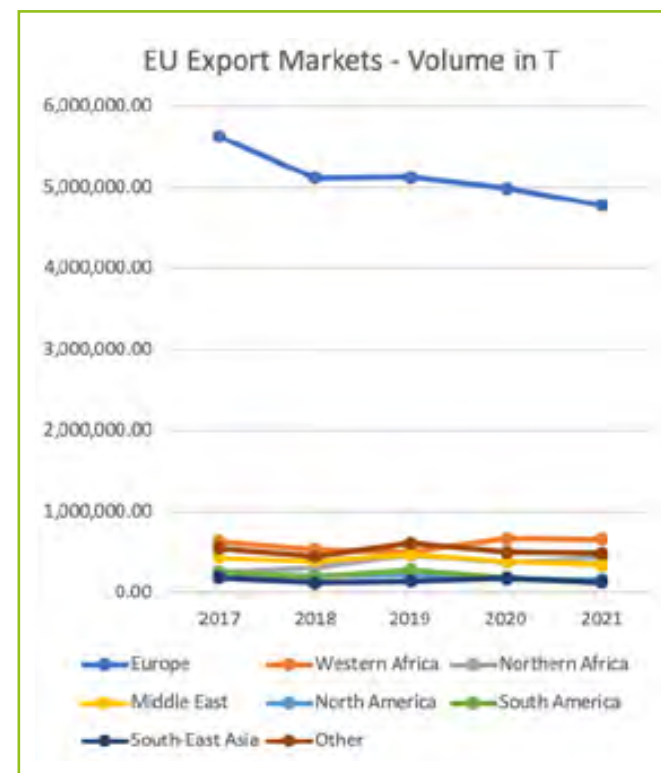
The European neighbourhood markets remain a key pillar of European exports, driven by the U.K. with nearly 3 mio T, Switzerland with 621,000 T, Belarus with 366,000 T and Egypt with 330,000 T. However, European exporters are experiencing a very difficult market situation with the latest embargo to Belarus further impacting trade in proximity with an annual average decrease of 4% over the past 5 years and overall decline of 15% from 2017 to 2021. Other markets are shaped by strong fragmentation of destinations. New market opportunities have been arising in Northern and Western Africa in particular with a respective annual average growth of 18% in the north and at least 2% growth in the west of Africa. Other markets such as South America as well as South-East Asia have stabilized after the strong decline in 2020 caused by COVID-19 related barriers but have not yet recovered to previous market situations.





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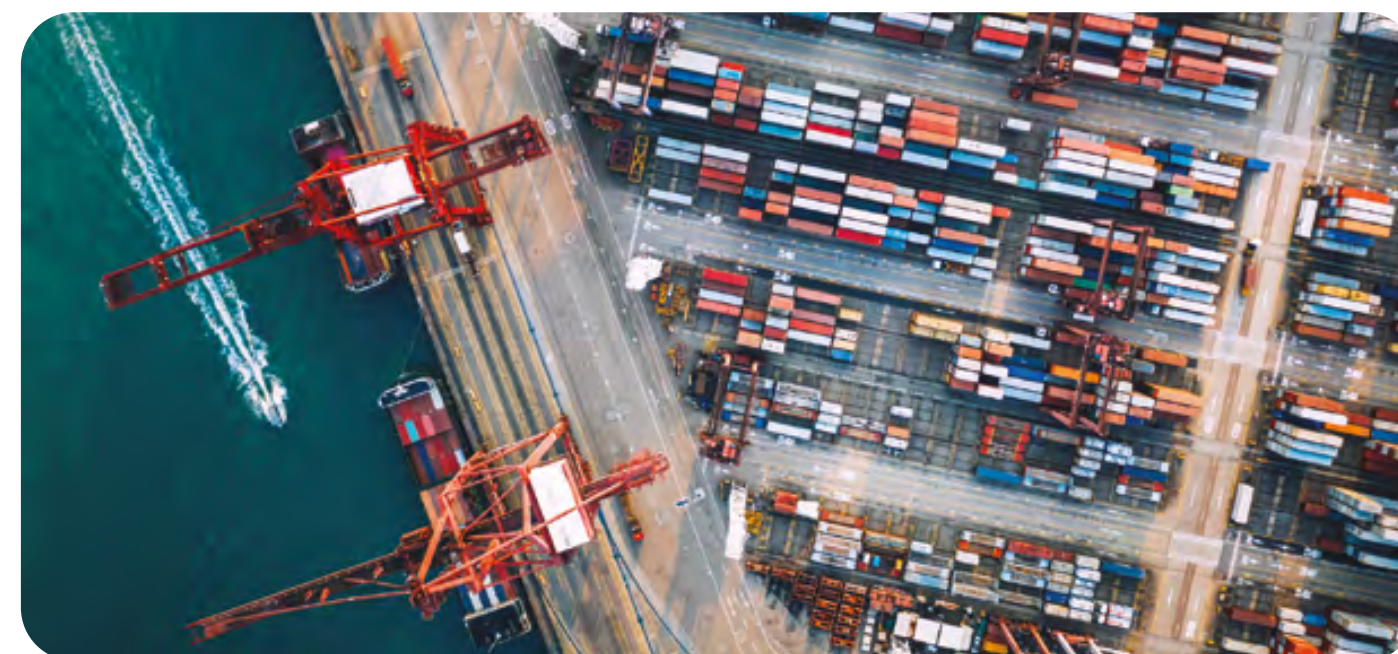
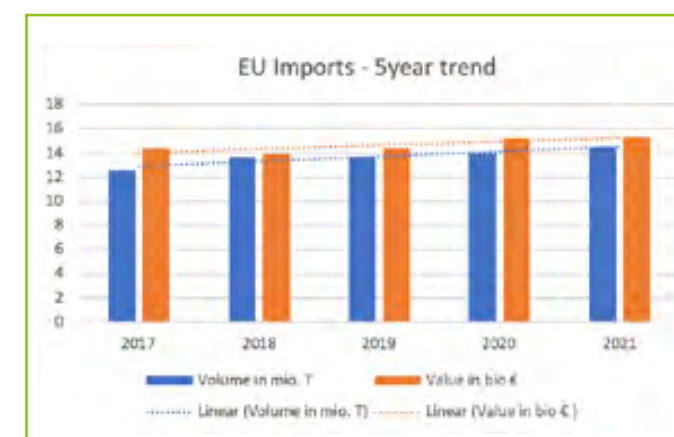
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been increasing from 2020 to 2021, imported value remained relatively stable with only 1% of growth in the same period. Major importers are Costa Rica (1.8 mio T), Ecuador (1.7 mio T), Morocco (1.4 mio T), Colombia (1.4 mio T) and South Africa (1.2 mio T). Key imported goods in 2021 have been bananas with a relatively stable level of 5.1 mio T, oranges with an imported volume of 906,000 T, pineapple with 825,000 T and increasingly avocados with a new peak of imports around 677,000 T in 2021, one of the main drivers for continued growth trends.

## EU imports – 5 year market trend

Imports into the EU have been growing by an average of 4% in volume and 2% in value over the past five years up to 14.5 mio T worth around 15.4 billion euros. While volume has





**Together we are  
the suppliers of  
fruit and vegetables  
in Europe**



Fresh Produce Centre represents the interests of Dutch businesses and is a source of knowledge and inspiration.

Our members are trading companies and producer associations involved in the sales and marketing of fruit and vegetables. They specialise in the domestic wholesale, import, export, treatment, processing, packaging, storage and transshipment of fruit and vegetables.

Fresh Produce Centre is leading the way towards a new healthy perspective for both society and the market. We're focussing on Health, Sustainability, Social, Market & Economy and Food Safety.

Coordinating the supply and demand of fruit and vegetables is a complex process. Collaboration with other suppliers and organisations in Europe is the key to success.

## PROMOTING MARKET ACCESS & DIVERSIFICATION OF EXPORTS

Tackling sanitary and phytosanitary and other barriers to export, as well as to promote EU fresh fruit and vegetables exports in key markets, remains a key priority for Freshfel Europe. To achieve this objective, the Association counts on the support from its members, the Member States, the European Commission and the EU delegations in third countries.

Thanks to the European Commission's increased focus on trade enforcement, prior to COVID-19 Freshfel Europe was invited to take part in several EU export promotion missions, which were the perfect opportunity to continue advocating for facilitating market access to trade partners. *Now at post COVID-19 stage Freshfel Europe will continue its active involvement in the European Commission's initiatives on market diversification in non-EU countries to represent the interests of the sector in order to boost exports, which has been identified as a key priority to tackle current cost hikes and supply chain disruptions.*

The fresh produce industry welcomed the efforts of the European Commission to financially support the agricultural industry in the time of crisis caused by the war in Ukraine. However, while the European Commission's priorities lie on other aspects in relation to the ongoing geopolitical conflict, on several occasions Freshfel Europe stressed that in parallel the European Commission should reinforce its efforts on market diversification to open new markets for European high-quality fresh produce.

Recent political incidents, such as the Belarussian



embargo in December 2021 and aggression in Ukraine have had far reaching implications for the fresh fruit and vegetable sector and proved there is a necessity to further address market access restrictions. European fresh fruit and vegetable producers still have not recovered volumes following the Russian embargo, while meanwhile the sector has additionally faced the closure of other markets, such as Algeria and difficulty to supply to Egypt due to new banking restrictions. All of this impacted trade opportunity worth 3 billion euros annually.

*Freshfel Europe continues to engage with EU authorities to discuss how to maximise the benefits of EU Free Trade Agreements in force for fresh produce.* So far not all SPS hurdles have been removed leading to ongoing excessive requirements within the bilateral plant health protocol, which still needs to be negotiated on a product-by-product and country-by-country basis. Freshfel Europe has therefore proposed to EU authorities several innovative approaches that could be included in the SPS Chapters of EU FTAs or discussed bilaterally with trading partners to facilitate market access.





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## PLANT DIETS – THE FUTURE OF FRUIT & VEGETABLES

The latest figures from Freshfel Europe's yearly Consumption Monitor, published in late 2021 and based on figures up to 2019, indicate that fruit and vegetable consumption in Europe has decreased to 349,19g per capita per day, which is well below the minimum daily recommendation of WHO of 400g.

To reverse this trend, Freshfel Europe advocates building on the momentum of policy review to promote a plant diet. The policy initiatives that started in 2018 thanks to the Tartu Call for a Healthy Lifestyle, which sees fruit and vegetables as part of the solution to current societal challenges such as climate change and non-communicable diseases, are well reflected in the ambitions and strategy of the European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy, the FIT for 55 Package, the Circular Economy Action Plan, as well as Europe's Beating Cancer Plan. In addition to these policy initiatives, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed the purchasing habits of Europeans, who increasingly value action towards environmental causes and climate change.

Fruit and vegetables have one of the lowest environmental impact productions among the food groups and, at the same time, one of the highest consumption recommendations by the WHO. Stimulating consumption through raising awareness of the sector's environmental and climate benefits has substantial transformative power in the move towards healthy and sustainable diets for a more sustainable food system. The shift towards plant diets is a win-

win situation for the health of the planet and consumers alike, in addition to representing an opportunity for the fruit and vegetable sector. Boosting consumption to reach the recommended 400g per capita per day means that the sector would need to supply almost 15 million tonnes more of fresh produce every year.

In light of these developments, Freshfel Europe will continue advising, guiding, and coordinating the European sector's perspective from a supply chain approach, which needs to focus on both the farm-to-fork and fork-to-farm perspectives. It is crucial to meet the diverse expectations of consumers and supply products according to their preferences, meaning high-quality, tasty, fresh, and convenient fruit and vegetables to encourage the transition towards a plant diet.



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2023

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## HOW SUSTAINABLE IS SUSTAINABILITY?

Environmental, economic and social sustainability continue to drive policy change in Europe. The European Commission's ambition for Europe to be the first climate neutral continent by 2050 under the European Green Deal is paving the way for legislative and non-legislative proposals through the Farm to Fork Strategy, Circular Economy Action Plan and Biodiversity Strategy among others. As a high priority for the fresh produce sector, Freshfel Europe continues to actively participate in EU sustainability policy developments in coordination with members to ensure that the sector's interests and efforts are well represented.

Sustainability has been at the forefront of European policy for some time, however there is now a higher level of focus on the sustainability of actions set within policy. 2022 marks the beginning of the second mandate of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste, to which Freshfel Europe is a member. The Association will work alongside Platform members over the next five years to establish EU food waste targets as specified under the Farm to Fork Strategy. This year Freshfel Europe has also successfully applied for a seat on the new EU Biodiversity Platform run by the European Commission to put Europe's biodiversity on the path to recovery by 2030.

The 2021-2022 period has seen a spotlight on the enhancement of circularity of products used in the agri-food sector, specifically for the fresh



produce sector in terms of packaging materials. Freshfel Europe has been highly active in this area, working in close collaboration with members to ensure regional, Member State and EU legislation reflects the functionality needs of the sector and the latest material innovations. Freshfel Europe has continued engagement with the European Commission on the revision of Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste and national implementation of Directive (EU) 2019/904 on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment.

All sustainability matters are discussed at the Freshfel Europe Sustainability Working Group, involving experts from across the supply chain. Over the past year to continue to adapt to COVID-19 restrictions, Freshfel Europe has substituted its Sustainability Working Group meetings with topical webinars on sustainability matters.



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## LEADING FOOD CRISIS MANAGEMENT

The COVID-19 crisis urged the fresh produce sector to adapt to quickly changing production and trading environments. The COVID-19 crisis also urged the European Commission to establish a platform with stakeholders and EU Member States for coordination and cooperation on any food security related incident as well as to build tools to cope with any future challenges to which the food sector might be confronted.

fresh produce industry is at risk of encountering oversupply in the EU due to re-routing of volumes to the EU, initially planned to be shipped to Ukraine and other countries involved in the war. The sector is also confronted with energy price increase as well as price increases for other production inputs.

Freshfel Europe is in a close contact with its

Freshfel Europe became a member of European Commission's Expert Group on the European Food Security Crisis Preparedness and Response Mechanism (EFSCM)



In December 2021 the European Commission announced the establishment of an Expert Group on the European Food Security Crisis Preparedness and Response Mechanism (EFSCM). Freshfel Europe submitted a joint application with the European Sprouted Seeds Association and together were granted full membership status. The EFSCM covers all agricultural sectors from food security and safety perspectives.

In the context of the current geopolitical situation the European Commission convoked its first two meetings on the functioning rules of the expert group and to discuss the ongoing aggression in Ukraine. While Ukraine and Russia are key suppliers of agricultural products, the European

members and the services of the European Commission to address all the issues related to supply of fresh produce, the current geopolitical instability and war in Ukraine and any other issues that the sector is challenged with.

Freshfel Europe is eager to continue its alliance with the European Commission to support the functioning of the Expert Group to provide advice and expertise to the European Commission services, exchange experiences and good practices, discuss contingency plans, assist the European Commission in the preparation of policy initiatives, and develop recommendations relevant to Union preparedness for crises on a case-by-case basis.



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## CONFIDENCE IN FOOD SAFETY POLICY

Securing consumer confidence in regard to food safety is essential in the fresh fruit and vegetable sector. Monitoring of existing and changing legislative requirements on active substances and maximum residue levels, microbiological risks, food additives, biocidal products, fertilizers, sanitizers and contaminants is crucial in the daily work of the Freshfel Europe Secretariat and its members.

Freshfel Europe aims for full compliance with European legislation on food quality and safety, while minimising the use of chemical plant protection products (PPPs) and moving towards better agricultural practices. Freshfel Europe supports the European Commission's Farm to Fork Strategy and other initiatives to set out relevant ambitions and actions to stimulate sustainable food production and to create new business models for food producers to thrive in a sustainable food system.

In response to the goals set in the Farm to Fork Strategy and the 'mirror clause' introduced by the French Presidency, the European Commission launched a consultation on application of EU health and environmental standards for imported agricultural and agri-food products. In collaboration with its members, Freshfel Europe responded to the consultation by presenting its views on the principle of 'mirror clause' and sustainability targets overall as well as on imports of fresh produce from non-EU countries where different production conditions might affect crops.

The industry also welcomed the European Commission's initiative to assess the extent to which the Sustainable Use Directive (SUD) is implemented and applied across all Member States and to evaluate

to what extent the SUD is relevant, bearing in mind changes that have taken place in the agricultural and agri-food context over the past few years. The proposal on the revision of the rules on the sustainable use of pesticides should be adopted in June 2022 by the European Commission.

In recent years Freshfel Europe has substituted its biannual Food Quality Working Group meetings with monthly topical webinar sessions on food safety and quality matters. Webinars bring together experts from different layers of the supply chain to discuss horizontal issues related to food safety and quality, as well as ad hoc emerging matters.

Freshfel Europe is additionally actively involved in the activities of the Agri-food Chain Roundtable for Plant Protection. The Agri-food Chain Roundtable for Plant Protection brings together more than 20 Brussels-based associations and allows them to take positions on common issues such as minor uses and speciality crops.





# LIFE IS BETTER

with Fruit & Vegetables

MARCH 2022 - FEBRUARY 2025

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## ORGANIC IN THE SPOTLIGHT

A sustainable food system is at the heart of the European Green Deal. Under the European Green Deal's Farm to Fork Strategy, the European Commission has set a target of at least 25% of the EU's agricultural land under organic farming and a significant increase in organic aquaculture by 2030.

To achieve the European Green Deal's target, it will be crucial for the organic sector to be able to rely on a solid legal basis. The new modernised legal framework for organic production has entered into force as of 1 January 2022. Although the fresh fruit and vegetable sector still encounters challenges in interpretation and implementation of the new organic rules, the good coordination that lies between the European Commission and Freshfel Europe provides a strong basis to assist the sector. Over the last few years Freshfel Europe organised a number of webinars for its members to clarify specific regulatory provisions included in the legislative acts.

To achieve the target of 25% and to help the organic sector reach its full potential, the



European Commission has put forward an action plan for organic production in the EU. The action plan aims to stimulate demand and ensure consumer trust, stimulate conversion and reinforce the entire value chain as well as to improve the contribution of organic farming in environmental sustainability.

Freshfel Europe will continue monitoring the organic fresh produce market to guarantee that the ambition set by the European Commission maintains a balance between stimulated supply and demand by European consumers. The transition to a higher offer of organic fresh produce, especially in the context of changing economic factors which affect consumers' behaviour, must guarantee market stability.





## Social Media campaign

# #FRUITVEG4YOU

**Treat yourself everyday and join us in boosting the consumption of fruits and vegetables across the EU!**



## FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

Over the last few years there has been an **increasing focus on sustainability accountability and transparency within the fresh produce sector**. This has been due to higher demand for product sustainability data reporting throughout the supply chain, but also from changing consumer preferences towards products with high sustainability attributes.

Freshfel Europe has been closely following developments in the area of environmental footprint, both from a market and legislative perspective. At the start of 2021 **Freshfel Europe initiated a dedicated Environmental Footprint Working Group** to focus specifically on this technical topic.

Throughout 2021 and into 2022 the

Environmental Footprint Working Group has acted as a platform for exchange and forum for knowledge building in the fresh produce sector to better understand the current availability of product data, identify gaps in environmental footprint methodologies and digital solutions, as well as to share experiences across the sector.

The Environmental Footprint Working Group identified short and long-term priorities as focus activity areas. **This included to develop a common sector environmental footprint methodology, database and digital tool**. Currently there is a highly fragmented approach to environmental footprint within the sector and efforts are often duplicated without any means of standardisation for higher data accuracy, transparency and benchmark comparison.

The Association, in collaboration with members, has therefore embarked on a Freshfel Environmental Footprint Initiative to have a sector approach to this challenge and deliver a science-based, objective and standardised methodology for the fresh fruit and vegetable sector, that is broadly accepted by all operators, other stakeholders, institutional bodies as well as consumers. A practical digital tool based on accurate data, which eventually can be widely used throughout the fresh produce sector, is also seen as an essential deliverable as part of the Initiative.

This new Initiative will be vital in preparing the sector for upcoming legislative requirements mandated at EU level. This includes the European Commission's proposals for substantiating green claims due for adoption mid-2022 and for a sustainability labelling framework for the food sector due at the end of 2023 under the Farm to Fork Strategy. The Association is also monitoring the use of Product Environmental Footprint methodology in this legislation.





# NEW PLANT-BREEDING TECHNIQUES

Freshfel Europe has been closely following the developments of new genomic techniques (NGTs) and the debate as to how these techniques should be regulated. In November 2019, the European Council requested that the European Commission submit a study on this debate in light of the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union, which had initially clarified that organisms from new mutagenesis techniques should fall within the scope of the EU GMO legislation. The European Commission's study concluded that current legislation for GMOs, to which NGTs are subject, is not fit for purpose and that it should be adapted to scientific and technological progress to be durable and uniformly applied.

The regulatory deficiencies regarding the detection, traceability, and authorization of

NGT products, which are already on the market outside of the EU, could result in potential disputes between the EU and its trade partners, in addition to putting EU operators at a competitive disadvantage. The study also concluded that several plant NGT products could contribute to the objectives of the European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies, and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals thanks to the benefits of NGTs, such as increased resistance to diseases and environmental conditions and reduced use of plant protection products. Freshfel Europe provided its input during the feedback period of the proposal for a new regulation corroborating that the underlying issue of the current legislative framework is its obsolete nature, which is consequently not designed to promote sustainability in the agri-food sector – now a key objective.

Freshfel Europe's main priorities with regard to NGTs are maintaining a high level of protection of human and animal health and of the environment, enabling safe plants to provide benefits and contribute to innovation and sustainability objectives, enhancing the competitiveness of the EU agri-food sector and ensuring a level-playing field for its operators, and ensuring the effective functioning of the internal market by providing legally certain, enforceable, and uniformly applicable legislation. A public consultation on the proposal for a regulation is planned for the second quarter of 2022, with the adoption of the regulation planned for 2023.



# PROMOTION OPPORTUNITIES



Freshfel Europe is strongly engaging in the European promotion policy initiatives. Freshfel Europe holds the Chair of the European Commission's Civil Dialogue Group on Promotion and Quality with Simona Rubbi (Freshfel Europe Board member and CSO Italy) as Chairwoman and contributes each year to the setting of promotion priorities in the Annual Work Programme.

Freshfel Europe directly promotes fruit and vegetables through EU-funded programmes. After the successful end of the Follow me to be Healthy with Europe campaign, Freshfel Europe will continue to promote fruit and

vegetables among young Europeans by joining the project Life is Better with Fruit and Vegetables. The campaign is an EU-funded programme that targets Millennials and aims at increasing their level of knowledge regarding the nutritional benefits, versatility, sustainability, and practicality of fruit and vegetables. Young Europeans aged 25 to 35 represent a key demographics of consumers, as they are still shaping their purchasing and eating habits. The campaign, which kicked off in March 2022 and will run until February 2025, will take place in France and Ireland, in addition to having a pan-European dimension.

In addition to EU-funded promotion projects, Freshfel Europe supports the EU school fruit, vegetables, and milk scheme, which has the objective of increasing the consumption of fruit and vegetables among school children by providing them with fruit and vegetables as well as educational activities to reconnect them with agriculture and teach them about healthy eating habits. This activity is particularly important as the average EU fruit and vegetable consumption among schoolchildren is estimated to be as low as 200g per capita per day, well below the 400g recommended by the WHO, making them amongst the lowest fruit and vegetable consumers. Freshfel Europe has been playing an active role in the support of the EU school, fruit, vegetables, and milk scheme, attending all European Commission Joint Member State and Stakeholder meetings and providing feedback through the Civil Dialogue Group on Promotion and Quality and public consultations on the topic.



# BECOME A FRESHFEL EUROPE MEMBER

Become a member of Freshfel Europe, the European Fresh Produce Association! Freshfel Europe is the leading EU and global association for the fresh fruit and vegetable industry.

Be part of this unique EU-wide and global network to:

- ✓ Increase your business potential
- ✓ Get your voice heard at EU and international levels on key on-the-ground and policy issues.

## THINKING OF BECOMING A MEMBER?

More information about membership is available via the Freshfel Europe website at: [www.freshfel.org](http://www.freshfel.org) or contact the Freshfel Europe Secretariat.



All Freshfel Europe members have access to a large array of resources as part of their membership:

- ✓ Tailored regulatory and non-regulatory information provision
- ✓ Platforms for policy and topical exchange
- ✓ Sector news
- ✓ Networking opportunities



# FRESHFEL EUROPE MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Freshfel Europe members are at the forefront of fresh produce sector developments.

## Continually gain knowledge

- ✓ Timely updates on European and global fresh produce policy-making.
- ✓ Bespoke personal advice on technical EU legislation and legislative developments from Freshfel Europe's team of policy experts.
- ✓ Exchange with players right across the supply chain from across Europe and beyond providing you with invaluable knowledge and insights.
- ✓ In-depth information on European legislative proposals, implementation, implications and procedures.

## Increase your business potential

- ✓ Increase your business potential through intelligence gathering on current legislative processes.
- ✓ Contribute to common positions on European legislation to achieve harmonization across Europe.

## Get your voice heard

- ✓ Have direct and face-to-face exchanges with European Commission officials in charge of legislative developments.
- ✓ Contribute to Freshfel Europe's activities and make a difference to the future of your business.
- ✓ Enhance the visibility of your business within the supply chain at EU level.



## Exclusive data access

- ✓ Exclusive and free access to European and global production, trade and consumption statistical data online to inform your business decisions.
- ✓ Free access to the annual Freshfel Europe Consumption Monitor.

## Network and connect with leading stakeholders

- ✓ Network with the sector's leading players at Association events
- ✓ Connect with like-minded business professionals through knowledge sharing in Association meetings and discussions.

## Be a sector leader

- ✓ Stand out and get noticed as an active member of the EU and global fresh produce community.
- ✓ Preferential and free access to Freshfel Europe's exclusive working groups, topical events and Annual Event.



# FRESHFEL EUROPE MEMBERS







## ASSOCIATED MEMBERS



## INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS







[www.freshfel.org](http://www.freshfel.org)



[info@freshfel.org](mailto:info@freshfel.org)



+32 (0)2 777 15 80



Rue de Trèves 49-51, Box 8,  
Brussels, 1040, Belgium

@freshfel