

## EU Harmonization of Fruit & Vegetable Packaging

**safeguarding free circulation of food on the Single Market**



**Fresh fruit & vegetable packaging is functional & used to:**

- Extend shelf life
- Prevent spoilage & food waste
- Safeguard quality & freshness
- Prevent microbiological contamination
- Show consumer messages e.g. 'ready to eat', 'washed'
- Display product quality information, e.g. organic, PGI/PDO, origin, brand, variety, colour.
- Mark traceability information, PLU codes & barcodes
- Convenience for consumers' changing lifestyle needs



**EU Member State fresh produce packaging legislation is NOT harmonized:**

- Fresh produce packaging must be compliant with the destination country's regulations.
- Packaging regulations for fresh produce vary greatly from one Member State to the next in terms of material, type & labelling rules.
- The destination country of a product is often not known at packing, resulting in extensive operational complexities, logistics hurdles & extra cost to ensure compliance.

**50+ MILLION TONNES** 

**of fruit & vegetables move across borders in the Single Market annually**

**Lack of harmonized EU packaging legislation is environmentally unsustainable:**

- The unnecessary need for repackaging upon entry into different countries means increased volumes of different packaging in storage & used, multiplication of product references, & high amounts of packaging waste.
- The sector's food waste levels have increased since more divergent national & regional packaging legislation has come into force.
- No impact assessments have been completed at national level to demonstrate the added environmental value of differing legislation.



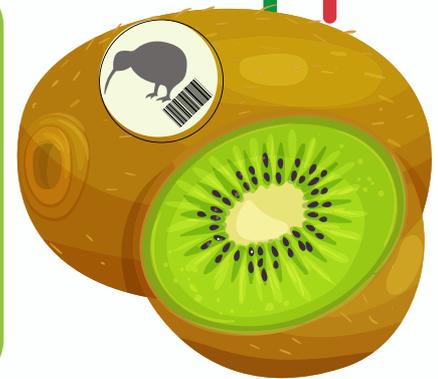
## Lack of harmonized EU packaging legislation is economically unsustainable:

- Packaging management for many regulations is extremely costly due to higher resource, infrastructure & logistics investments needed.
- Operators are also burdened with extra costs from high operational complexities.
- The economic cost is not delivering sustainability results.
- Food security is at risk due to wasted products & supply chain inefficiency.



## Without EU harmonization the functioning of the Single Market is at risk:

- Unharmonized packaging legislation is leading to Technical Barriers to Trade (TBTs), forcing some operators out of market countries.
- Differing national packaging rules contradict EU objectives for higher environmental & economic sustainability under the EU Green Deal.
- Due to short transition time compared to other agri-food sectors, the fresh produce sector is facing discrimination in national legislation.



## The fruit & vegetable sector is committed to sustainable packaging solutions:

- Harmonized EU fresh produce packaging legislation should be based on in-depth impact assessments for the most sustainable packaging solutions.
- Holistic packaging solutions should be environmentally efficient & incorporate relevant reuse, recycling and composting aspects.
- All packaging types should be explored, considering requirements on labelling, traceability, safety & freshness.
- Appropriate transition times are necessary for planned resource, infrastructure, logistics planning & R&D investments in the move to alternative packaging solutions.

**EU harmonization of fresh produce packaging legislation will facilitate the move towards sustainable packaging solutions for the planet, businesses & consumers.**

