



ASSEMBLY OF EUROPEAN REGIONS PRODUCING FRUITS, VEGETABLES AND ORNAMENTAL PLANTS

ASSEMBLÉE DES RÉGIONS EUROPÉENNES FRUITIÈRES, LEGUMIÈRES ET HORTICOLES

ASSEMBLEA DELLE REGIONI EUROPEE FRUTTICOLE ORTICOLE E FLORICOLE

ASAMBLEA DE LAS REGIONES EUROPEAS HORTOFRUTÍCOLAS

**27<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

## **AREFLH's General Assembly 2019**

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of March, the annual meeting of AREFLH, the association of European fruit and vegetable regions and producers, was held in Bordeaux, at the headquarters of the Nouvelle Aquitaine region. This year's meeting, coinciding with the end of the mandate of the Regional Minister of the Emilia Romagna Region, which began in 2016, had the objective of renewing all mandates, from the Presidency to the Board of Directors, for a new three-year term.

The outgoing president Simona Caselli was unanimously reconfirmed as the head of the association. She will be assisted by Jean-Louis Moulon, President of the Producers' Council, also reconfirmed, and by an Administrative Board composed of representatives of the regions and associations of producer organisations.

The meeting provided an opportunity to review the mandate of President Simona Caselli. "I am very happy to be able to renew my mandate at the head of AREFLH. This means that the work accomplished has been appreciated by both the Regions and producers - said the regional minister.

"During these three years, we have achieved the objectives we set ourselves at the beginning of the mandate: The social and geographical base of the association has been broadened, with the entry of 8 APOs and 5 new regions, the latest being the Lazio region; we have renewed the organisational structure, with a new secretariat and the opening of an office in Brussels, to bring us closer to the European institutions; we have encouraged research in this sector by establishing networks at European level with initiatives and conferences and by participating in projects that have obtained significant funding under the European Research Programme Horizon 2020; we have worked on the promotion and awareness of fruit and vegetable consumption with specific publications presented at the main fruit and vegetable fairs in Europe; but above all we have strengthened our role as the European Commission's privileged interlocutor, achieving results that we could never have achieved alone, as regions or as APOs - she continued."

"I am thinking, for example, of the increase in withdrawals quotas for peaches and nectarines during the 2017 price crisis. Or the measure that enabled horticultural POs to recognise, in their operational programmes, support for integrated land production and not only for crops included in the CMO.

"All this has been accompanied by constant monitoring and recognition of regulatory developments concerning the common organisation of the market in fruit and vegetables, which has also resulted in the formulation of summary documents and amendment proposals, often

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adopted by the European legislator. This is the case with contributions to mutual funds, unfair commercial practices and, finally, the proposals for regulations for the 2021-2027 CAP, which led us to draft amendments to protect and strengthen the CMO regime for fruit and vegetables.

This year, AREFLH's General Assembly welcomed the Deputy Director General of DG AGRI, Rudolf Moegele, who discussed the current state of CAP reform and highlighted the success of the CMO as a model regime for European agriculture after 2020. The Vice-Presidents of Agriculture of the Nouvelle-Aquitaine (Jean-Pierre Raynaud) and Bretagne (Olivier Allain) regions also intervened to analyze the impact of certain provisions of this reform within their respective regions. The meeting ended with presentations by Sabine Brun-Rageul, Deputy Regional Director of DRAAF New Aquitaine and Elisabeth Dirlewanger, Research Director at INRA, who discussed the main environmental and climate challenges that the fruit and vegetable sector is currently facing.

In her closing speech, Simona Caselli concluded the work of this assembly by stating that "the CAP is the only true common European policy, as its name suggests. Decisions concerning our farmers are taken at European level and that is a good thing because they put everyone on an equal footing, without distorting competition. However, we must ensure that the diversity and needs of the different territories, which are also the wealth of our country and the EU, are taken into account. My experience over the past three years shows that by networking, demonstrating competence, making well-founded proposals, you are listened to and get results. Europe is a long way away for those who do not know how to build relationships or who do not want to get closer".

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AREFLH's (Assembly of European Horticultural Regions) main missions are:

- to represent its 19 member regions and 25 APOs, from 7 countries in Europe;
- to defend the economic and social interests of the fruit, vegetable and horticultural sectors in Europe;
- to foster exchanges of best practices, partnerships and joint projects between regions and professional organisations;
- to actively seek new solutions for the main issues affecting the future of the fruit and vegetables production in Europe.

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