



### SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK: AREFLH CONTRIBUTION TO STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

#### NEED FOR A HOLISTIC LEGAL DEFINITION OF SUSTAINABILITY

A sustainable food system can only be defined as such if it approaches sustainability in environmental, economic and social terms.

The continuity of Europe's agriculture, including its fruit and vegetable sector is in serious danger due to the ongoing ageing of the continent's agricultural labour force (with the median age for farm managers at 57) as well as abandonment of agricultural lands stemming from rural depopulation and farmers leaving the profession with no successor in place.

Therefore, the legislative framework must take into consideration what is necessary to sustain the continent's agriculture in the long term and guarantee the viability of agriculture as a profession.

#### ALL OBJECTIVES MUST BE BACKED BY SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

As this regulatory framework will aim to shape the development of the European food system in the long term, its objectives must be based on extensive research and consultation with stakeholders to ensure their viability.

To this effect, any proposal for a legislative framework must be accompanied by an in-depth impact assessment that realistically identifies strategies for achieving a sustainable food system as well as addressing the main obstacles currently present.

#### VALUE CHAINS MUST BE EVALUATED IN THEIR ENTIRETY

For the sustainable food system legislative framework to be effective, the regulation must aim for maximising sustainability throughout the food value chain rather than focusing only on specific stages of it.