



PRESS RELEASE

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AREFLH Associations of Producers Organisations reaffirm their commitment to the Fruit and Vegetable CMO

The Associations of Producers' Organizations of the AREFLH met during a seminar organized in Brussels on the 5th and 6th of December 2016.

Invited by Mr. Jean Louis MOULON, President of the AREFLH Producers' College, more than 20 representatives of APO members debated the main challenges the European fruit and vegetable sector is currently facing:

- The need to strengthen the producers' organizations to counterbalance the supremacy of organized retail;
- Falling consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables in Europe and the need to develop strong promotion and communication campaigns;
- The competitiveness challenge, in order to compete with third country competition and technical and technological innovation

The APOs reaffirmed their commitment to the Common Organization of the Fruit and Vegetable Market (CMO), recognizing it is a factor of technical advancement, environmental preservation, quality improvement, food safety and commercial concentration.

At the same time, this tool must be retained and revitalized by strengthening Producers' Organizations, which have a significant economic impact and which integrate all the functions of production marketing. It is equally important to allow, in particular, transnational organizations to develop. The CMO must be both more flexible and more secure.

Consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables fell by 18% in 8 years. This is very worrying! Every effort must be made to regain consumption shares. Strong and permanent promotional campaigns must be supported by the European Union on the internal market. The fruit school education program at school is an excellent example. It is no longer necessary to demonstrate the beneficial effect of fruits and vegetables consumption on health and on the fight against obesity.

But the sector must also adapt to new consumers' expectations on the European market and on international markets.

Producers have great expectations from research and innovation to provide them with more environmentally friendly production techniques, storage methods that allow optimal quality maintenance, new packaging and more. Mrs. Simona Caselli, President of AREFLH, stressed the crucial role of fruit and vegetables in many rural areas in terms of economic activity and employment. "We must support everything that can make the consumption of fruits and vegetables easier. Promotion campaigns must be developed in the internal market. In this respect, the regions are often inventive. AREFLH must be a platform for the exchange of experiences and projects".

As part of the seminar, an AREFLH delegation led by Ms. Caselli was received by Ms. Elisabetta Siracusa, Deputy Head of Cabinet of Agriculture's Commissioner Phil Hogan. AREFLH particularly emphasized the need for a strong promotion policy and the need to rebalance the value chain in a market that is particularly volatile and which faces frequent crises.

The main mission of the **AREFLH (Assembly of the European Regions producing fruits, vegetables and plants)** is:

- to represent its 21 member regions from 6 countries in Europe;
- to defend the economic and social interests of the fruit, vegetable and horticultural sectors with the European authorities;
- to promote the exchanges of experiences, partnerships and joint projects between regions and professional organizations;

- to actively seek new solutions for the main issues which affect the future of the fruit and vegetable production in Europe.

Contact : Laetitia Forget - communication@areflh.org - +33 6 68 71 76 56 www.areflh.org
