



PRESS RELEASE

AREFLH focuses on the draft regulation on packaging and the new CAP

Within the framework of its General Assembly, AREFLH organised on 23 March a public conference on the new CAP and the European regulation on packaging, in Lleida, in Catalan region.

This event was an opportunity to detail the sensitive issues and dossiers that accompany the implementation of the new CAP and the Green Deal.

Climate change was the first topic addressed during the public conference. This is a sensitive and topical subject, the consequences of which are increasingly being felt in European agricultural production. This issue of strong concern for AREFLH's members led to the creation of a new working group on water. Thus, representatives of the regions and member producers will exchange on the consequences of the lack of water in their territories and on the short- and medium-term solutions to guarantee agricultural production.

Another major challenge that was discussed was that of new diseases and pests, the occurrence of which is increasing with climate change. However, with the new draft regulation of the European Commission, which calls for a 50% reduction in the use of pesticides, farmers lack adequate tools to fight said threats. Despite their strong commitment to sustainable agriculture, their concern is that a decrease in production would lead to compromising food sovereignty in Europe.

The second topical issue developed during the public conference was the **draft EU regulation on packaging**. This regulation proposes the elimination of packaging for fruit and vegetable confections weighing less than 1.5kg, with insufficient exemptions to guarantee optimum transport, export and the best possible quality at the point of sale. Given the sensitivity of the dossier, AREFLH is in regular contact with the European Commission (DG AGRI, DG ENV) and the European Parliament. President Simona Caselli concluded the session on this theme with the following message: *"This dossier is crucial and particular attention from AREFLH is required in the coming months. We must continue our work with the institutions to guarantee a harmonisation of the legislations on packaging. We also need to make end consumers aware of the efforts made by the sector and of the innovations in this field."*

The other round table dealt with the new CAP programming. The interventions focused on the new legislative framework, the elements of continuity and divergence with the old regulation, as well as opportunities for exchanges between stakeholders.

The event was co-organised by Afrucat, the Catalan association of fruit companies and the Catalonia regional administration.

Simona Caselli closed the day by announcing that the next General Assembly will be held in Central Macedonia (Greece) in 2024.

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The AREFLH, Assembly of European Horticultural Regions, has the following missions :

- Representing its members : 16 regions, 32 POs/APOs, 8 associated members (experts) from 10 countries in Europe,
- Defending the economic and social interests of the fruit, vegetable and horticultural sectors to the European authorities,
- Promoting exchanges of experience, partnerships and joint projects between regions and professional organisations,
- Proposing solutions on the main issues affecting the future of fruit and vegetable production in Europe.

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