



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Freshfel Europe welcomes EU measures to enhance global food security but concerns remain for fruit & vegetable market stability

Freshfel Europe welcomes the announcement from the European Commission on 23 March of short and medium-term actions to enhance global security and support European farmers and consumers in response to the current food supply chain crisis. However, the EU fresh produce sector remains concerned about market stability and the coherency of adopted measures. Besides the support package of €500 million granted to producers most affected by the consequences of the war in Ukraine as well as price hikes, Freshfel Europe considers that in light of the Farm to Fork Strategy and its plant-based diet ambitions the European Commission should also advocate for an increased plant diet focused on fruit and vegetables to help substitute food shortages in other categories.

Short and medium-term actions to enhance global food security announced by the European Commission on 23 March 2022 have been welcomed by Freshfel Europe and its members from across the European fresh produce sector. The measures include €500 million to support producers most affected by the war, advancement of direct payments, exceptional and temporary derogation on greening to allow production of any crop in ecological focus areas, a temporary crisis framework facilitating state aid to farmers and monthly reporting of private stocks. Freshfel Europe General Delegate Philippe Binard affirmed that, *“This wide range of exceptional measures will aid the European fresh produce sector in staying resilient in the face of the current tumultuous geopolitical situation as a result of the war in Ukraine, the Belarussian embargo and the price hikes for energy, and ensure not only EU, but also global food security. The scheme will allow to redirect through producer’s organizations the market imbalance to innovative and emerging needs such as support to refugees or biogas”*. Freshfel Europe nevertheless laments the European Commission’s approach for national rather than EU-wide measures, which could weaken the coherence and efficiency of the response.

Despite these new measures, the fresh produce sector remains concerned for market stability as attention at EU level has been focused on crops and fertilizer availability. Mr Binard explained, *“Freshfel Europe considers that while fresh produce consumption is under pressure and there is a need to alleviate shortages in other food categories, the European Commission should seize this opportunity to take advantage of the high availability and affordability of fruit and vegetables to advocate for an increased plant-based diet focused on fresh produce consumption”*. Mr Binard noted that, *“No additional measures for promotion of fresh fruit and vegetables have been proposed although a reserve budget of €10 million is available under the EU’s promotion budget”*. Freshfel Europe is also analysing further opportunities for more flexibility of CAP tools for producers to better cope with production inputs price hikes and is additionally further engaging in market diversification possibilities.

With the European Commission still set on continuing to follow the Farm to Fork Strategy agenda, Freshfel Europe is closely following market conditions with the support of its members during these unprecedented business conditions. This includes analysis of the effects of the war in Ukraine in conjunction with the

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sector's recovery from strained business conditions during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic over the last two years. More information on Freshfel Europe's close monitoring of the situation is available [here](#).

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Note to the Editors:

Freshfel Europe is the European Fresh Produce Association, representing the interests of the fresh fruit and vegetables supply chain in Europe and beyond. Freshfel Europe currently has over 200 members, including both companies and associations. For more information, contact the association at info@freshfel.org or visit the association website www.freshfel.org.



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