

2026 EU PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA



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NUTRITION & HEALTH

POSITION

IFPA advocates for an enabling policy and regulatory environment in the European Union that supports fresh produce sector's operations and increases the consumption of fruits and vegetables—the most effective lever to improve public health, strengthen sustainability outcomes, and support a resilient agri-food system.

Positioning the fresh produce sector at the heart of the EU's prevention strategy, IFPA calls for EU and Member State policies that make fresh produce more visible, more accessible and more affordable for all citizens, including vulnerable groups.

EU PERSPECTIVE

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in Europe, responsible for more than 1.8 million deaths annually and a substantial share of preventable healthcare costs. Poor diets, particularly low consumption of fruits and vegetables, with only 60% of adults consuming them daily, and high intake of salt, sugar, and saturated fats are among the main modifiable risk factors.

As a global organisation representing the entire fresh fruit and vegetable value chain, IFPA has been engaging with the European Commission, in the context of its Safe Hearts Plan, to strengthen the recognition of nutrition and fresh produce as core pillars for reducing cardiovascular disease (CVD).

We are actively engaging with the European Commission and the European Parliament to translate this recognition into medium-term concrete EU policies that:

- Improve consumer information and empower healthier choices through labelling frameworks.
- Increase the accessibility and affordability of fresh produce by unlocking financial incentives.
- Mobilise Member States to invest in fruits and vegetables through public procurement and fiscal measures.

EU PRIORITIES & PUBLIC AFFAIRS ACTIONS

1. Recognition of the role of fresh produce in CVD prevention

IFPA has been conducting on-the-ground advocacy with the European Commission and Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to:

- Ensure the EU's Safe Hearts Plan and the Parliament's Own-Initiative report on CVD clearly recognise low fruit and vegetable consumption as a key risk factor.
- Highlight the evidence that increased intake of fruits and vegetables can reduce CVD risk by up to 30% and generate significant health-system savings.
- Secure political support for fresh produce as a solution to the EU's prevention strategy.



As a result, the European Commission's Safe Hearts Plan called on Member States to develop national cardiovascular health plans by 2027, underlining as a priority healthy dietary habits, including promoting daily fruit and vegetable intake, and reduced consumption of ultra processed foods, as well as national reformulation initiatives to reduce levels of saturated fats, sugar and salt.

The nutrition pillar of the EU's action plan to reduce the risk of CVD has also focused on advancing research in Europe on the role of sustainable and healthy diets for cardiovascular disease prevention with the support of digital tools, including the link between nutrition, the gut microbiome and CVD.

2. Improved consumer information: Front-of-Pack nutrition labelling

Clear, simple labelling is essential to steer citizens towards making healthier dietary choices. IFPA is actively advocating in the EU for:

- A mandatory, harmonised EU front-of-pack (FOP) nutrition labelling system, grounded in robust nutritional science.
- A scheme that is easy to understand, comparable across food categories and fair to fresh and minimally processed foods.
- Labelling rules that help consumers identify healthier options quickly and consistently across all Member States, supporting higher selection of fresh produce.



Through direct engagement with the Commission and MEPs, IFPA is advocating that the Parliament's work on CVD explicitly backs an ambitious, EU-wide FOP framework that supports healthier, produce-rich diets.

3. Public Procurement: Making fresh produce the norm

Publicly funded food environments are a powerful lever to increase fruit and vegetable intake, particularly among children, patients and low-income groups. IFPA is working with EU institutions towards public procurement policies that drive higher fresh produce consumption across Europe, through:

- Mandatory, nutrition-based criteria in EU-level guidance and rules on public food procurement that include explicit minimum shares of fresh fruits and vegetables in all public meals (schools, hospitals, care institutions, public canteens).
- Stronger alignment between health, sustainability and procurement policies.



4. Affordability: Fiscal measures to lower the price barrier

We work to ensure that VAT policy reflects the unique health value of fruits and vegetables, challenging the fact that they are often taxed on an equal footing with ultra-processed foods and thus miss a key opportunity to steer consumers toward higher fresh produce consumption.

IFPA supports:

- EU-level and national fiscal measures that enable reduced VAT rates for fresh fruits and vegetables through greater flexibility in EU VAT rules.
- Recognition of fiscal incentives for fresh produce as tools to improve health outcomes, reduce inequalities, and support the transition to healthier diets, ensuring equitable access to fruits and vegetables for all population groups.

IFPA is engaging with policymakers to ensure that affordability and fiscal incentives for fresh fruits and vegetables are fully integrated into EU discussions on prevention, health equity and sustainable food systems.



OUR COMMITMENT IN EUROPE

IFPA is committed to working with EU Institutions, Member States, and stakeholders to bring together the global produce and floral sector behind a clear, consistent voice to:

- Secure strong recognition of fresh produce in cardiovascular and non-communicable disease prevention policies.
- Champion evidence-based measures that increase fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Create a predictable, enabling policy framework for the fresh produce and floral sector, supporting innovation, investment and long-term resilience.
- By aligning health, nutrition, horticulture, agriculture and market policies, Europe can unlock the full potential of fresh fruits and vegetables to reduce CVDs, lower healthcare costs and build a vibrant future for all.



TRADE & MARKET ACCESS

POSITION

IFPA advocates for an open and science-based EU trade policy that reduces tariff and nontariff barriers for fresh fruits, vegetables and florals and prevents the sector from being used as leverage in unrelated trade disputes.

We work to ensure that EU trade measures recognise the strategic importance of fresh produce in delivering nutritious, affordable food to consumers and supporting a competitive, resilient supply chain, from farm to retail, in Europe and globally.

EU PERSPECTIVE

Global trade in fresh produce and florals is extensive and mutually beneficial. It underpins year-round availability, diversity and affordability of fresh produce for European consumers, while supporting thousands of jobs across the entire value chain.

As fruits, vegetables, and floral are highly perishable, open and efficient trade is particularly critical: any additional tariffs, unjustified restrictions or delays at the border can quickly lead to higher prices, reduced availability, quality losses and food waste. This directly undermines EU objectives on food security, nutrition, sustainability and public health.

In the context of ongoing and emerging trade volatility, such as the EU-US tariffs dispute and the debates surrounding the EU-Mercosur agreement, IFPA has consistently underlined that fresh produce should be recognised as a sector of strategic importance and kept out of retaliatory measures.

EU PRIORITIES & PUBLIC AFFAIRS ACTIONS

1. Preserving fresh produce and floral in the EU-US trade dispute

IFPA has provided data-driven input to the European Commission in the context of U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum and related EU countermeasures, to:

- Argue against the inclusion of fresh produce and floral on EU retaliation lists, given their critical role in food security, public health and affordability.
- Demonstrate the socioeconomic importance of transatlantic fresh produce trade, including its socioeconomic contribution to value creation across the supply chain.
- Highlight the risks that additional tariffs would pose for European consumers in terms of higher prices, reduced availability and lower diversity and quality of fresh produce and floral.



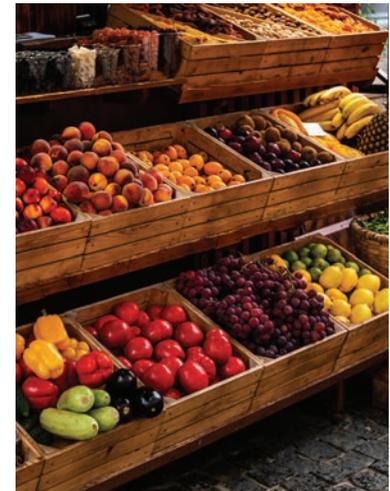
We have called on the European Commission and the U.S. administration to find cooperative, constructive solutions to trade disputes that preserve the integrity of the fresh produce and floral supply chain and protect consumers' access to nutritious food on both sides of the Atlantic.

2. Promoting open, rules- and science-based trade

IFPA supports EU trade policies that:

- Reduce tariff and nontariff barriers for fresh fruits, vegetables and florals including through bilateral and multilateral agreements.
- Ensure that sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, market access conditions and border controls are firmly grounded in science and risk assessment.
- Avoid disproportionate or politically driven measures that disrupt fresh trade flows and compromise product quality, safety and freshness.

In this context, IFPA advocates for open, science-based trade – not only within the transatlantic relationship, but also across other negotiations and agreements, including EU–Mercosur and the recent EU–India agreement – while insisting that the supply, accessibility, and affordability of fresh produce remain central considerations.



3. Ensuring stable supply, accessibility and affordability

Across its trade policy and policy communications work, IFPA emphasises that:

- Fresh produce is fundamental to healthy diets and transatlantic food security and should not be treated as a bargaining chip in trade disputes.
- Stable, diversified import and export flows are essential to secure a continuous, affordable supply of fresh fruits, vegetables, and florals to European consumers.
- Trade policy must be coherent with EU objectives on nutrition, prevention of noncommunicable diseases, sustainability and social inclusion.

Through policy communications and engagement with EU institutions, IFPA has consistently highlighted the need to keep the fresh produce and floral sector out of collateral damage in trade conflicts and to ensure that trade decisions do not undermine access to healthy food.



OUR COMMITMENT IN EUROPE

IFPA is committed to working with EU Institutions, Member States, and stakeholders to bring together the global produce and floral sector behind a clear, consistent voice to:

- Keep fresh fruits, vegetables and florals out of retaliatory measures and prevent their use as leverage in trade disputes.
- Promote open, science-based and predictable trade rules that facilitate the movement of fresh produce and reduce unnecessary tariff and nontariff barriers.
- Support a resilient, competitive and sustainable fresh produce and floral sector that can guarantee sufficient, diverse and affordable supply for European consumers.

By aligning trade policy with health, food security and sustainability objectives, Europe can protect its citizens' access to fresh fruits, vegetables and florals while supporting jobs, innovation and long-term resilience across the fresh produce supply chain.



SUSTAINABILITY, FOOD SAFETY & PLANT PROTECTION

POSITION

IFPA advocates for EU policies that recognise fresh fruits and vegetables as central to sustainable and healthy diets—as among the most effective, accessible and affordable solutions to improve human health and environmental sustainability—while keeping food safety rules science-based, risk-appropriate, and workable in practice.

We work to ensure that sustainability and food safety measures – grounded in sustainable and regenerative agriculture and supply-chain approaches – for fresh produce protect consumer health, support climate and circularity goals and preserve availability, quality and affordability for all.

EU PERSPECTIVE

Diets rich in fruits and vegetables have a proven lower environmental footprint than more resource-intensive food patterns, while delivering essential nutrients and supporting EU goals on health and prevention of noncommunicable diseases. Across Europe, the fresh produce sector is already driving sustainable systems on the ground, from resource efficient production to food loss reduction and more circular packaging solutions.

At the same time, the sector operates under evolving EU frameworks on packaging, food and feed law and Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs). If these are not carefully calibrated, they can create unintended consequences: higher food waste, reduced product safety, supply disruptions and additional costs that ultimately affect consumers. IFPA therefore engages with EU institutions to keep sustainability and food safety policies firmly anchored in data, risk assessment and practical feasibility.



EU PRIORITIES & PUBLIC AFFAIRS ACTIONS

1. Showcasing fresh produce as a driver of sustainable diets

Through proactive policy communications, IFPA:

- Highlights the leadership of the fresh produce sector in implementing sustainable practices along the value chain.
- Promotes evidence that produce-rich diets are key to lowering the environmental footprint of Europe's food system.



2. Packaging & Packaging Waste Regulation Implementation: combining circularity with safety and food waste prevention

As the EU is gearing up towards the implementation of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR), IFPA has provided data-driven input to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in view of their ongoing work to support the development of EU guidelines providing exemptions to the phase-out of single-use plastic packaging for fresh fruits and vegetables under the PPWR. IFPA's input:

- Demonstrated where packaging is necessary for food safety, preventing cross-contamination and ensuring hygiene and shelf life, especially for highly perishable or sensitive products.
- Underlined that an indiscriminate phaseout of certain types of single-use or single-use plastic packaging can increase food waste, reduce product quality and ultimately undermine environmental objectives.
- Called for clear, science-based and product-specific exemption criteria that balance packaging reduction with food safety, food waste prevention and affordability for consumers.

3. Food & Feed Omnibus and Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs): keeping rules science-based and workable

In its submissions to the European Commission's public consultation on the Food and Feed Omnibus proposal, IFPA provided evidence-based input on Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) to:

- Support MRL frameworks that remain risk-proportionate and science-based, transparent and harmonised with international standards such as those set by Codex Alimentarius.
- Highlight that plant protection is not a one-size-fits-all, and a uniform approach will not accurately reflect the realities faced by producers worldwide, from climatic specificities to prevalence of specific pests and diseases.
- Avoid abrupt or disproportionate changes that would disrupt supply chains, reduce sourcing options and threaten the continuity and diversity of fresh produce supply.
- Call for regulatory clarity and streamlined approval processes for biologicals in order to improve accessibility for farmers and allow for an enabling innovation environment.
- Increase awareness, as part of EU's regulatory simplification agenda, for the need for an enabling and harmonised regulatory framework for new breeding techniques as a key response to enhancing resilience in production and ensuring food security in the EU and globally.



OUR COMMITMENT IN EUROPE

IFPA is committed to working with EU Institutions, Member States, and stakeholders to bring together the global produce and floral sector behind a clear, consistent voice to:

- Promote recognition of fresh fruits and vegetables as essential to sustainable, healthy diets.
- Support practical, science-based policies on packaging, plant protection and food safety that reduce environmental impacts without compromising consumer protection or access.
- Advocate for accelerated investments in packaging alternatives as well as expanding the production toolbox through biocontrol and IPM solutions, as well as a harmonised and enabling framework for new breeding techniques towards resilient production.
- Maintain a predictable, enabling regulatory environment that allows the fresh produce sector to innovate, lower its footprint and continue supplying safe, high-quality products at affordable prices.

