



For immediate release

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## TIME TO PUT FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PRICES IN PERSPECTIVE

Although consumers are spending a limited amount of their total and food expenditure on fresh fruit and vegetables, price is among the top purchase criteria. However, market observations show that fruit and vegetables are not expensive or becoming more expensive over time in comparison to other food products, but rather are perceived to have a high price. The price debate must be seen in perspective to other food products and the various values and benefits which come along with purchasing fresh fruit and vegetables.

According to various consumer surveys around Europe (e.g. Amárach Research (IRL), CREDOC (F)) the price of fresh fruit and vegetables is ranked as a top purchase criterion. However, the expenditure of households for fruit and vegetables is small compared to other food items and the total consumer expenditure. Reports from various European Countries (e.g. UK Office for National Statistics, French "Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques", Spanish "Boletín Mensual de Estadística del Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Medio Rural y Marino") on the living costs show that of the average weekly household expenditure around 15% (e.g. UK: 11.5%, GER: 12-15%, ESP: 14.4%, F: 19.8%) was spent on food and non-alcoholic drinks, with just around 1.5% (F: 1.37%, UK: 1.5%, ESP: 2.3%) of the total weekly expenditure being spent on fresh fruit and vegetables. Luc Clerx, chairman of Freshfel's Promotion, Communication and Image Committee, commented: *"Fruit and vegetables account for just around 1.5% of total household and 15% of food expenditure. This clearly demonstrates that fresh produce is not at all a category which should be in the spotlight if shoppers look out for saving their money. They offer on the contrary a lot of benefits in someone's daily diet with regard to nutrition and health, the environment, sustainability, etc. and should be valued in this perspective."*

Price observations at a European level by Eurostat (Statistical Office of the European Union) for a period of 10 years (1996-2006) have shown that on average within the EU the relative price of fruit declined by 3.3% and that of vegetables by 1.6% in relation to price increases observed for all-items. These figures also show that differences exist among Member States, with more than average price increases in some countries and sharp price decreases in others. Ramon Rey, President of Freshfel Europe, stated: *"It is obvious that due to various circumstances, e.g. the supply situation, market conditions and mechanisms, prices within the EU are not evolving with the same patterns everywhere. However, looking on all food items over a couple of years, market observations show that prices are all in all rather stable, with certain fruit and vegetables being even sold at the same price for the last couple of years, despite inflation. The price debate around fruit and vegetables is simply irrelevant if it is put in perspective."*

In overall terms, 1 kg of fruit and vegetables could cost between 1-2 €, while the prices for meat could be around 9-10 € or for fish around 11-12 €. Depending on the fruit and vegetable category,

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eating the recommended '5 a day' (around 600 gr) could cost just between 0.5 € and 2 € per day. Luc Clerx summarised: *"If you can get several pineapples for the price of a pack of cigarettes or at least two apples for the price of a chocolate snack, it is up to everyone to decide whether price should be a reason not to choose fruit and vegetables. The statistics prove that it is a wrong debate to argue that the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables is hindered by their expensive price and their status in household expenditure. Fresh fruit and vegetables are one of the cheapest and also healthiest food categories, which fit perfectly into breakfast, lunch, dinner or as a snack. Given their health and environmental assets, the economics behind their price and consumer budgets, shoppers should in any case consider including more fresh fruit and vegetables into their diets."*

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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](mailto:info@freshfel.org) or visit the association website [www.freshfel.org](http://www.freshfel.org).



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