



**PRESS RELEASE**

## AREFLH public conference on the future of sectoral aids and the digital revolution

As part of its General Assembly, AREFLH (Assembly of European Horticultural Regions) is organising a hybrid public conference on 17 March 2026 at 3pm, in Almería (Andalusia, Spain) and online.

### **Discussing the future of the sector**

Organised in partnership with the *Junta de Andalucía*, the public conference will bring together representatives of the European institutions (Parliament and Commission) and professionals from the sector. The event is open to all, and will be translated into French, English, Spanish and Italian. The discussions will focus on two main themes:

- **The future of sectoral aids in the next CAP**

This session will bring together European institutional representatives, regional officials and experts to discuss a concerning subject: the introduction of national co-financing for sectoral interventions for fruit and vegetables, the risk of distortions between Member States in the next CAP and the lack of predictability regarding the operational programmes for fruits and vegetables producers organisations from 2028.

- **Artificial intelligence and digitisation:** faced with climatic, economic and social challenges, the fruit and vegetable sector is entering a new era in which artificial intelligence and digitisation are becoming strategic levers. This session will explore how these innovations are transforming farming practices and boosting the competitiveness and sustainability of local areas.

### **Andalusia, the "Garden of Europe"**

The choice of venue for AREFLH General Assembly was an obvious one, as it is marking the end of the first year of the presidency of Ramón Fernández-Pacheco, Andalusia's Regional Minister for Agriculture. As he declared, "Andalusia's fruit and vegetable sector is one of the most dynamic agricultural drivers in Europe.

The region is nicknamed the 'Garden of Europe' because of the extent of its production, particularly in the province of Almería". Indeed the region's produce offer is vast: peppers, strawberries, tomatoes, cucumbers, berries and citruses. In 2025, Andalusian exports reached €40,4 billion, the second highest figure since comparable data became available (1995).

Almería ranks fourth in Andalusian exports, with €5.9 billion (14.7%) and a 4.6% increase in sales, enabling it to achieve record figures and enjoy the best year in its history. In addition, the province has a positive trade balance of €2 billion, boosted by its position as national leader.

### **Take part in this not-to-be-missed event**

The programme for the AREFLH public conference is available at [www.areflh.org](http://www.areflh.org). The event is free and open to all, but [registration is compulsory](#).

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The mission of AREFLH, the Assembly of European Horticultural Regions, is to :

- Represent its members: regions, APOs, POs and expert members from 15 European countries,
- Defend the economic and social interests of the fruit, vegetable and plant sectors in dealings with European institutions,

- Encourage exchanges of experience, partnerships and joint projects between regions and professional organisations,
- Be a driving force behind proposals on the main issues affecting the future of the sector's production in Europe.

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