

EU CODE OF CONDUCT ON RESPONSIBLE FOOD BUSINESS AND MARKETING PRACTICES

*A common aspirational path
towards achieving sustainable food systems*

- Annual Report – Check list for EU associations -

When signing the code, one of the commitments of EU associations is to provide “*on an annual basis, a report of their activities in support of this Code, which will be published on an open dedicated website*”.

In order to help EU associations to provide their annual report of activities, this document aims at providing a check list to guide associations.

- **General information**

| | |
|---|--|
| Name in full + acronym | Assomela – The Italian Association of Apple producers |
| Contact person with contact details | Anna Eriksson: anna.eriksson@assomela.it |
| N° in the transparency register* | 572089747088-13 |
| Date of signature of the Code | 24/02/2022 |
| Step of the food chain represented (ex: primary production, production, processing, trade, retail, ...) | Primary production, production, processing, trade |
| Who do you represent? (e.g. number of members, companies, SMEs) | 12 Producer Organizations (PO) and 1 Association of Producer Organizations (APO): 75% of the Italian apple producers |

* if available

European Associations pledge to:

- *endorse the aspirational objectives set out in this Code (where applicable)*

Yes, Assomela; the Italian Association of Apple Producers, confirms to endorse the aspirational objectives set out in this Code.

- *promote and disseminate this Code with(in) their constituency/ies;*

Assomela has promoted and disseminated the Code over the year 2022 through:

- internal member meetings, e.g., Sustainability working groups, monthly market meetings and board of director meetings,
 - national and European press releases upon signature
 - workshops targeting the Association's stakeholders, such as the European network for POs, other national and European F&V associations (e.g., Freshfel Europe, which also is a signatory of the Code) and the European Commission
 - Organization of the Interpoma trade fair conference "Fruit and vegetables beyond sustainability" in November 2022
 - Co-organization of "Gruppo di Contatto mela", with the Italian Ministry of Agriculture and with participation of the Embassies of Spain and France in November 2022
 - Hosting the Annual Assembly of European Horticulture Regions of AREFLH in June 2022
- *encourage their members to align their sustainability actions and/or business practices to the aspirational objectives and targets of the Code and invite them, on a voluntary basis, to adhere to this Code, as appropriate;*

Assomela encouraged its' members to align their sustainability actions to the aspirational objectives and targets of the Code. The signature of Assomela was widely communicated through national press with the aim to invite other Italian association and companies to participate.

- *explore the possibility of developing sector-specific tools and resources in support of this Code;*

Assomela joined in 2022 the Freshfel Environmental Footprint Initiative, specific for the fresh produce sector, a project which highly supports the objectives of the Code. The Initiative aims to develop an objective and standardized methodology and a digital tool, for the European fresh fruit and vegetables sector, based on a Product Environmental Footprint Methodology (PEF). This initiative contributes therefore to the Aspirational **Target 3** of the Code to achieve a climate neutral food chain in Europe by 2050.

Moreover, regarding the Aspirational Target 3, Assomela renewed the environmental product declaration (EPD) for the twelfth consecutive year. The declaration qualifies the environmental impact in terms of energy, water and soil consumption in the production of one kilogram of Italian apples. Furthermore, Assomela performed an in-depth analysis of the life cycle of apple production related to the EPD, studying the individual components of the carbon footprint, with the aim to improve the data collection for the EPD and to define the impact calculation more precisely.

Another relation to Target 3 of the Code, is the scientific cooperation agreement with the University of Bozen, signed in 2022, through financial support from the members VOG, VIP and APOT. The agreement involves a three-year project called "Transapple", which aims to propose strategies to reduce emissions and increase the capacity of apple orchards to store carbon. The project will be able to help identify strategies that will maintain the competitiveness of the sector with positive results in environmental, territorial and economic

terms, given the project's direct link to the European Commission's future legislative initiative on carbon farming. The experimental activities in 2022 of the Transapple project focused on green manure as a possible agronomic practice to increase the capacity of the apple orchard to store carbon.

Assomela wishes also to share a selection of activities aligned with the 7 targets of the Code performed by some of Association's members in 2022:

- **Target 1 - Healthy, balanced and sustainable diets for all European consumers:**
All members of Assomela contribute to Target 1 by promoting consumption of apples as part of a healthy sustainable diet based on fruits and vegetables. Furthermore, VOG Products, which is one of Europe's largest PO for processed apples, reports on the extended quality controls in 2022, including targeted training of employees on food safety measures, improvements in traceability through codification, and daily exchanges of information with the cooperative agronomists.
- **Target 2 - Prevention and reduction of food loss and waste:**
VOG Products and the recently formed Melinda Lab play a key role in prevention of food loss and waste, since their activities make sure that no apple gets wasted but rather transformed for other purposes such as apple juice. Through a recent research study performed in collaboration with the Free University of Bozen, VOG Products showed on a significant contribution to reducing waste from harvest and post-harvest in the Italian apple supply chain from the usual international share of about 20% of the cultivation volume to a 6-10% (depending on the year).
- **Target 3 - A climate neutral food chain in Europe by 2050:**
Apart from the above-mentioned activities for this target, our members in Trentino South Tyrol continue to develop the photovoltaic systems and increased in 2022 the proper production of electricity. For example, in Trentino the photovoltaic energy production output amounted to over 5.5 million of KWh, produced by a total of almost 30.000 m² of photovoltaic panels installed on the roofs of conservation facilities.
- **Target 4 - An optimised circular and resource-efficient food chain in Europe:**
The apple sector in the last years has proven commitment on striving for sustainable solutions regarding packaging. For example, the sector has been one of the first to use the 4-6 fruit carton pack and in the last year the investments for new packing machineries for these carton packs have been important: only in Trentino South Tyrol our members have invested more than 1,5 million euros in new machineries.
- **Target 5 - Sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all:**
The members of Assomela in South Tyrol have proven to be excellent when it comes to the social parameter of sustainability. For example, in one of the cooperatives of the Assomela member VOG, the Kindergarden "Villa Panda" has been established for the families of the cooperative and the PO has become an official member of the Family Audit system of the South Tyrol Province. In addition, VOG Products in the last year organized an *Awareness campaign* for its' employees on health and safety at work, including posters and articles and brainstorming sessions where employees made suggestions on how to improve health and safety at work.

Furthermore, regarding all members of Assomela, special care is being taken to provide home for the seasonal workers that work in the orchards, especially during harvest. In addition, when it comes to training and skilled workforce, the Assomela

members provide on annual basis courses in collaboration with the expertise from the local technological transfer centers to assure quality work by the employees.

➤ **Target 6 - Sustainable value creation in the European food supply chain through partnership:**

The Assomela members collaborate both internally for the sustainability performances in the specific regions, e.g., with the project “Sustainapple” among partners related to apple production in South Tyrol, and with external partners, e.g., in the project “Biodiversity Alliance” of APOT through a partnership with the Italian certification body for organic and sustainable agri-food products CCPB.

➤ **Target 7 - Sustainable sourcing in food supply chains:**

To produce for example apple juice in VOG Products and in the Melinda Lab, the raw material (e.g., apples) comes from the associated cooperatives, situated at short distances from the establishments, monitored by third party audits and followed by rigid protocols for organic or integrated production. Traceability is particularly important in the agri-food sector, not the least in the apple sector and we are proud to have several varieties protected by PGI and PDO among our members. This target has no specific activity related to 2022 but will continue to be applied daily in all years to come.

- *continue to engage in dialogue with other food chain/systems actors and EU and international policy-makers to forge (new) relationships, exchange good practices and discuss challenges encountered, learn from each other (studies, projects) and create better mutual understanding, and identify opportunities for collaboration and potential partnership.*

Whenever possible, Assomela participates actively in dialogue with other stakeholders within the sector, both at national and European level, especially in collaboration with associations such as Freshfel Europe and AREFLH to reach decision-makers at international level. The objective of Assomela in for example the Freshfel Environmental Footprint Initiative is not only to develop new methodologies for calculating the carbon footprint of the European F&V industry, but also to identify new opportunities of dialogue, collaboration and potential new partnership along the fresh supply chain.