



Brussels, 10 April 2020

*For immediate release*

## PRESS RELEASE

### JOINT CALL FOR EXTRAORDINARY AND URGENT SUPPORT TO THE EUROPEAN FLOWER & LIVE PLANTS SECTOR TO SURVIVE THE COVID-19 CRISIS

In an unprecedented move, a united coalition of 9 European -based organizations, representing all segments and sub-sectors of the flower & live plants sector in the EU and altogether a very significant voice for the thousands of companies across the EU sustaining a total estimated market value of 48 billion EUR and employing 760.000 people, have joined forces to urge the European Commission to activate as soon as possible extraordinary and temporary support measures that are urgently needed across the EU to help the sector survive the brutal impact of the COVID-19 crisis. Preliminary estimations suggest that the overall demand for flower & live plants has decreased by 80% across the EU with the introduction of lockdown measures and the immediate closure of non-essential specialised retail shops in most European countries. These unfortunate circumstances and the massive domino effect that has ensued have placed all businesses, segments and sub-sectors of the flower & live plants sector in an extremely vulnerable position as it was just entering its peak season during which 50 to 80% of its yearly turnover is realised.

In a joint letter addressed on 10 April to the European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Janusz Wojciechowski, the signatory organisations call for:

- **Urgent and temporary extraordinary EU tailor-made support measures to help producers and all operators from the sector across the EU simply survive the crisis until activity can re-start;**
- **A strong and concrete signal from the European Commission that flower & live plants do matter and are a major contributor to the well-being and quality of life of European citizens and to the climate change mitigation efforts and biodiversity protection;**
- **And a clear recognition at EU level that investing now in this sector to help it stay afloat will avoid further long-lasting and irremediable effects on the economic and employment activity remarkably created and sustained by the wide range of operators in this sector for decades without any intervention or support from the EU.**

*“Extraordinary circumstances do require extraordinary measures. This sector is a remarkably healthy and high-performing economic sector that brings joy, colour, hope, nature and well-being to all citizens across the EU and beyond. Failing to support it now as it faces a dramatic collapse across the EU would be a major and irremediable failure from the EU. We call on the European Commission to do its utmost to act swiftly and pragmatically and help this sector survive until the adequate conditions are there again for it to re-start its essential activities. “* urged the signatories to this letter in a united voice.

The signatories to the letter are: UNION FLEURS (International Flower Trade Association), ENA (European Nurserystock Association), ARELFH (Assembly of European Horticultural Regions), VBN (Association of Dutch Flower auctions), VAL’HOR – French inter-branch organisation for ornamental horticulture (growers, nurseries, seeds companies, garden centres, wholesalers, florists, agro-shops, landscape contractors and landscape architects), ANTHOS (Royal Trade Association for Flower Bulbs), CIOPORA (International Association of Breeders of Asexually Reproduced Horticultural Varieties), FLEUROSELECT (International Association of breeders, producers and distributors of propagation material of ornamental plants) and ELCA (European Landscape Contractors Association)

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**Note to the editors:**

About the signatories to this letter:

**Union Fleurs – International Flower Trade Association** is the umbrella organisation for national associations and companies active in the floricultural trade. The general mission of Union Fleurs is to represent, promote and defend the interests of traders and wholesalers in cut flowers, cut foliage and potted plants. Union Fleurs was founded in 1959 in Brussels and has nowadays members in 20 countries. Within its membership, Union Fleurs gathers over 3.000 companies, of which more than 1,500 floricultural traders and wholesalers in the EU (Italy, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium). Members account for more than 80% of the total value of the worldwide trade of cut flowers and pot plants.

Email: [info@unionfleurs.org](mailto:info@unionfleurs.org) - Website: [www.unionfleurs.org](http://www.unionfleurs.org) - EU Transparency Register N° 14864192565-82

**ENA - European Nurserystock Association** represents nursery stock growers’ organisations all over Europe. The nurseries, where live plants are propagated, grown and traded, are members of regional or national nursery organisations that are members of the ENA. Sixteen EU countries currently constitute the membership of ENA: Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

Email: [ena@enaplants.eu](mailto:ena@enaplants.eu) - Website: [www.enaplants.eu](http://www.enaplants.eu) - EU Transparency Register N° 248993414712-40

**ARELFH** (the Assembly of European Horticultural Regions) represents 20 member regions and 28 AOPs from 9 European countries. Its main missions are to defend the economic and social interests of the fruit, vegetable and horticultural sectors in Europe; to foster exchanges of best practices, partnerships and joint projects between regions and professional organisations; and to actively seek new solutions for the main issues affecting the future of the fruit, vegetables and horticultural production in Europe.

Email: [europe@areflh.org](mailto:europe@areflh.org) - Website: [www.areflh.org](http://www.areflh.org) - EU Transparency Register N° 729014411618-96

**VAL'HOR** is the inter-branch organisation for ornamental horticulture in France. It is officially acknowledged since 1998 by the French Ministries of Agriculture and Trade as representing the entire sector. VAL'HOR in figures: **53 000** companies represented; **3** branches: production, trade and retail, landscape; **10** trade associations: growers, nurseries, seeds companies, garden centres, wholesalers, florists, agro-shops, landscape contractors and landscape architects.

Email: [valhor@valhor.fr](mailto:valhor@valhor.fr) - Website: [www.valhor.fr](http://www.valhor.fr)

**VBN** is the Association of Dutch Flower Auctions, cooperatives that organize the international ornamental marketplace for 4.100 producers and 2.500 buyers. With daily over 100.000 transactions regarding more than 30.000 varieties of cut flowers and plants, the flower auction is a key player in the worldwide ornamental chain.

Email: [e.herben@vbn.nl](mailto:e.herben@vbn.nl) - Website: [www.vbn.nl](http://www.vbn.nl) - EU Transparency Register N° 60862364841-67

**CIOPORA** is the International Association of Breeders of Asexually Reproduced Horticultural Varieties. Breeders of such varieties account for two-thirds of all Plant Variety Rights (PVR) titles in the world. For more than 50 years, CIOPORA has represented these breeders in all matters of Intellectual Property (IP) protection and aims to foster an environment in which the innovation of these breeders can flourish. CIOPORA is a member-based, non-profit organization.

Email: [info@ciopora.org](mailto:info@ciopora.org) - Website: [www.ciopora.org](http://www.ciopora.org) - EU Transparency Register N° 834378913628-15

**ANTHOS** is the Royal Trade Association for Nursery Stock and Flower Bulbs. It fulfills a supervisory role in the development of (inter) national policies for market access (e.g. United States, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Russia) and offering assistance in the event of trade barriers in countries all over the world. Besides, the organisation and its members are financing, advising and implementing the product promotion of flower bulbs and nursery stock.

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**FLEUROSELECT** is the international organisation of breeders, producers and distributors of propagation material of ornamental plants. Fleuroselect's mission is to promote the development of indoor and outdoor plants and flowers and breeding in general. The organisation is also a platform for networking by offering informal meeting possibilities during events and information sharing.

Email: [info@fleuroselect.com](mailto:info@fleuroselect.com) - Website: [www.fleuroselect.com](http://www.fleuroselect.com)

**ELCA** is the European association of landscape professionals. Together they work on the design, construction and maintenance of gardens, public green and green buildings. 24 countries are affiliated to ELCA, together representing 13. 000 companies and 125. 000 employees. On behalf of this large group, ELCA wants to be the discussion partner and to strengthen the social movement towards greening and sustainability. ELCA calls on the importance of greenery with societal benefits in Europe and is the voice of the green professionals who take care of this important work.

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