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FLOURISHING EUROPE

Plant life!

PRESS KIT.

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FLOURISHING EUROPE

Spanish associations of producers and marketers of live flowers and plants joined together in the Spanish Federation of Associations of Producers and Exporters of Fruits, Vegetables, Flowers and Live Plants, or FEPEX, have launched the promotional, information-based campaign "Flourishing Europe: a flower is worth a thousand words". The program, aimed at European consumers with the objective of informing Europeans about the benefits that plants and flowers can have on our lives and promoting their consumption, has a total investment of €498,644, is financed with the help of the European Union, will last 12 months (April 2021 to April 2022) and will take place in Spain and Germany.

The focus of the campaign is to disseminate content through a variety of different channels, with a key focus on digital media, including the creation of a website and dynamic social media profiles, digital advertising on social media and TV and video platforms. There will also be a press office to generate and disseminate press releases, and promotional material will be produced for distribution in nurseries and garden centres.

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CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

At the beginning of 2020, the ornamental plants and cut flowers sector found itself in the middle of a major crisis. Measures imposed to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the closure of many sales channels for several months, caused a sharp drop in sales on a national level and plants were left unsold in nurseries, generating large losses and resulting in job cuts.

Given the situation, a joint and planned action on the part of the ornamental plants and cut flowers sector in Spain became more necessary than ever to promote their products and generate positive impacts on consumers, with the aim of regaining their confidence, reawakening their interest and increase sales.

The main objective of the campaign is to make consumers aware of the fact that plants and flowers are much more than mere decorative elements, since, as shown by several scientific

studies, they provide us with a wide range of benefits, both physical and emotional, that make them, by their own merit, an essential part of our lives.

In fact, in most European countries, although unfortunately not yet in Spain, live plants and flowers are officially recognised as basic necessities.

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PLANTS LOOK AFTER YOU

There is a large body of literature and many scientific studies that conclude that the presence of plants and flowers in our living environment, whether in the domestic, professional or recreational sphere, provide numerous physical and emotional advantages.

Among the many physical benefits that plants provide, there are two kinds that stand out: those derived from photosynthesis, an essential biological function for plants involving the production of oxygen and the uptake of carbon dioxide, as well as the ability of many plants to filter out harmful substances dispersed in the atmosphere. The result: cleaner air in our living environments. Additionally, the colour and aroma of the flowers provides a subtly pleasant and clean addition to our environment. At the same time, due to the perspiration of their leaves, plants contribute to maintaining adequate humidity and temperature conditions, making our lives more comfortable.

Furthermore, the presence of plants clearly influences our mood in a direct way. Environments with more oxygen, higher humidity levels, less CO₂ and volatile harmful substances, make us feel more relaxed, less stressed and anxious, and leaves us with a clearer and calmer mind. Meanwhile, the symphony of colours created by the flowers, the green leaves and their attractive shapes and textures, induce feelings of joy and optimism.

Another very relevant aspect of plants and flowers is their ability to embody and be excellent conveyors of our best wishes. In fact, it's not a coincidence that flowers and plants are always present for the most important milestones in our lives. Sharing and giving flowers and plants is a powerful act of communication that fosters empathy and good relationships with those we love the most and with all those around us.

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LOOK AFTER YOUR PLANTS

To enjoy plants and benefit from all that they provide, you have to learn to take care of them by attending to their vital needs: light, temperature, water, humidity, type of substrate, fertiliser, pruning, defence against pests and fungi, protection against extreme temperatures etc. Some plants, such as cacti and succulents, sansevierias, zamioculcas etc. hardly need any care or maintenance and are ideal for beginners or for people who cannot dedicate much time to them. Others are more demanding. Each species has its own demands, which must be met to ensure a long and healthy life. Additionally, looking after plants has many positive benefits: it's entertaining, it requires being active, teaches us to be patient, reconnects us with nature and reveals an inexhaustible universe for us to discover and explore.

Entering and exploring this universe is a truly exciting challenge. "Listening" to them, looking after them and providing them with the best conditions for their development is infinitely satisfying. Plants, in response to our care and affection, will not hesitate to share with us their best flowers, their most irresistible aromas and their unbeatable energy at every moment in our lives.

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FLOWERS AND PLANTS OF SPAIN

Ornamental horticulture products make up 3.2% of total plant production in Spain, with an area of cultivated land that amounts to approximately 5,300 hectares and whose national production has a value of 1 billion euros in Spain. The main regions of production include: Andalusia, the Valencian Community, Catalonia, the Canary Islands, Aragon, Galicia and Murcia.

The social profitability of the production of live plants and flowers is very high, given the extent of labour involved. The ornamental horticulture industry creates around 40,000 jobs concentrated in areas where dependence on this sector is very high, with no crops or alternative economic opportunities.

Spanish production mainly focuses on live and ornamental plants, which accounts for 78% of Spanish surface area and more than half of the total production.

Regarding foreign trade, Spain is one of the EU's main exporters and it has had a positive and constant growth in the last five years. From 2016 to 2020, Spanish sales abroad grew by 35%, reaching €442 million according to data from the Customs and Excise Department, processed by FEPEX.

Of the four categories in which Spanish exports are structured, live plants are the most important export. €358 million was exported in 2020, 31% more than five years ago, and within the category of live plants, outdoor and indoor plants, trees, shrubs and cuttings are the most exported types of plants.

After live plants, cut flowers are the second most exported category with €58 million in exports last year, then foliage with €19 million and bulbs with €6 million.

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Andalusia, the Valencian Community and Catalonia account for the bulk of sales abroad. Andalusia exported €136 million worth of flowers and live plants in 2020, 18% more than in 2019, the Valencian Community exported €111 million worth, 6% more than in 2019, and Catalonia's exports rose to €69 million.

The regions of Castile and León, Murcia, Navarra, Galicia and the Canary Islands are also noteworthy as even though they have lower values in terms of exports, they hold a prominent position in the foreign market. Sales in Castile and León rose to €50 million in 2020, those of Murcia to €22 million, those of Navarra to €13 million, and Galicia and the Canary Islands stood at €11 million each.

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THE ORNAMENTAL PLANTS SECTOR: THE PROMOTORS

Flourishing Europe has been driven by FEPEX. The Spanish Federation of Associations of Producers and Exporters of Fruits, Vegetables, Flowers and Live Plants, is a sector-specific, private organisation, that brings together 31 associations of provincial, regional and national scope. It is divided into three sectors or branches of activity: the production and export of fruit and vegetables, including potatoes; the production and marketing of flowers and live plants; and the ready-to-eat vegetables and prepared salads industry.

The campaign has been promoted by FEPEX together with the flower and live plant sector grouped together as part of the Federation. This includes 8 producing and marketing associations

that integrate more than 800 companies and represent more than 76% of the production and 65% of the Spanish marketing of live flowers and plants.

Production associations consist mainly of small family farms, agrarian transformation societies, cooperatives and trading companies, whose shared interests include the production and marketing of their own products. Their structure is highly heterogeneous and depends on the region and the products, with practically all flower and live plant farms associated with the Autonomous Communities of Galicia, Andalusia, Valencia, Murcia, Aragon, the Canary Islands and Catalonia, which represent more than 90% of all production in this sector. Farms in the rest of the Autonomous Communities account for more than 650 participating producing farms.

Trading entities that are part of FEPEX are characterised by being individual entrepreneurs and small, retail trade family businesses, that are associated with the sector's national entity representative that brings together more than 200 companies distributed across all of Spain's Autonomous Communities.

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The list of flower and plant associations that form part of FEPEX and are participating in the programme are:

The Spanish Association of Garden Centres (AECJ). The AECJ represents garden centres and public nurseries across the country. In total, they represent about 200 garden centres of which 60% belong to centralised purchasing or group purchasing organisations, with an estimated global turnover of around €300 million, and they employ about 4,000 people.

The professional Association of Flowers, Plants and Technology of the Valencian Community (ASFPLANT). Established in 1977, ASFPLANT brings together 200 associates who represent more than 90% of production in this autonomous community.

The Andalusian Association of Nurserymen and Flower Growers (ASOCIA FLOR). Established in 1984, ASOCIA FLOR brings together more than 40 companies distributed across all the provinces of Andalusia and has a presence in all branches of activity: Cut Flowers, Ornamental Nurseries, Fruit and Citrus Nurseries, Olive Plant Nurseries, Forest Nurseries and Landscape Restoration.

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The Professional Association of Horticulture of Aragón, Navarra, Rioja and Soria (APHARNS). Established in 1978, the Professional Association of Horticulture of Aragón, Rioja, Navarra and Soria, brings together more than 55 associates which are divided into two large blocks: nurserymen and gardeners on the one hand, and gardens on the other, representing 40% of production in Aragon.

The Association of Growers and Exporters of Flowers and Live Plants of the Canary Islands (ASOCAN). Established in 1977, ASOCAN currently represents more than 85% of the sector's farmers on the islands. The ornamental sector in the Canary Islands covers an area of approximately 500 hectares of cultivation including flowers, live plants and cuttings, it provides more than 1,300 direct jobs, and its production has a value of more than €50 million.

The Northwest Nursery Business Association (ASVINOR). ASVINOR brings together producers of ornamental, forest, fruit and horticultural plants from the Northwest, representing an average of 86% of the total production in Galicia.

The Association of Fruit and Vegetable Producing Organisations of Almería (COEXPHAL). COEXPHAL brings together, in its ornamental plants section, 35 producers and marketers of live

plants and flowers, which cover an area of 350 hectares and employ around 1,000 people. The ornamental plant sector in Almería began in the early 80s and since then it has been growing, both in number of producers but also in terms of the species and varieties of plants that are produced.

The Federation of Nurserymen of Catalonia. Formed by the associations of nurseries of Barcelona, Girona, Lleida and Tarragona, it brings together more than 200 companies producing plants and represents more than 80% of the sector in Catalonia. The types of producers are very diverse and include the production of flowering herbaceous plants, trees, shrubs, perennials, palm trees, citrus trees and fruit trees among many other types of plants. Catalonia has nearly 2,000 hectares of production, employs more than 2,000 workers directly and invoices more than €200 million annually, of which more than 25% come from exports.