

# European Food Market Network in WUWM

The WUWM European food market network spans 21 countries and includes both individual wholesale and retail markets, as well as local or national market associations that can support dozens to hundreds of local retail (mostly public) markets.



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European Food Markets  
WUWM Regional Group

AN OLD STORY... BUT INCREASINGLY TRENDY!



Take the opportunity to learn more about the important role and value of Europe's traditional wholesale and retail food markets...

These markets offer cities increased employment, economic regeneration, fair business competition, food security, price transparency, and environmental protection.

They offer European consumers easy access to quality, safe, fresh and affordable healthy food, also being effective tools to support community cohesion, public health, culture, tourism and minimal food waste...



# Who are we?

As agriculture developed and responded to the growth of cities there was a need to concentrate the offer of food products, filling a gap between farmers and retailers. The wholesale market had then, and still has now, such an objective.

The retail market - selling to the end user, is the logical extension of the wholesale market. In the 1960's supermarkets experienced an extraordinary development, taking a prominent share in the food market trade. Nowadays, with an evolution towards local production, short supply chains, and small inner city shops (as opposed to large out-of-town) giving greater human interaction with the added consumer benefit of saving fuel and time, the wholesale/retail trade is stepping up to the mark yet again.

European Food Markets is a regional group for these wholesale and retail food markets, which belong to the World Union of Wholesale Markets (WUWM), a broader organization supporting and promoting these markets worldwide. The wholesale and retail markets within the WUWM European Regional Group are present in most EU countries, as shown in the map on the back cover of this brochure.



WUWM member **wholesale markets** in Europe are present in 21 different countries, represent 110 different markets having more than 1 000 000 permanent employees. The companies operating on these markets have a combined turnover of around €42 billion annually. The overall volume of marketed produce equates approximately to 40% of the fruit and vegetable supply in Europe, 10% of the fish and fish products and 2% of the meat and meat products.

**Retail markets** in Europe correspond to more than 450,000 market traders operating on some 25,000 sites, including open-air/street and covered markets.

Over one million people are working on these retail markets, with a total turnover surpassing €40 billion.

# The Value of European Food Markets...



## 1. Markets offer real quality/price competitiveness for food products

- Within wholesale and retail markets there is **competition** among traders as a large number of suppliers offer similar products. Thus these remain "real" markets in the true sense of the word. This is why customers / buyers find them good places to engage in price negotiation, because they are not limited to one, or a small number, of suppliers/sellers;
- Wholesale markets play an important role to secure **sustainability in the food sector**, as they gather SME's in clusters with synergy in know-how, marketing, infrastructure and capacity costs thus ensuring variety, high quality and the best price possible for end consumers - fresh produce is often significantly cheaper on the retail market than in the supermarket. Markets support **local food** and **reconnect the supply chain** (grower - market - customer);
- Markets offer an alternative route to market for **producers** from the major national or multinational retailers. This assists them to smooth supply and demand and often offers a better margin than the low price/high volume contracts with major retailers.

## 2. Markets are an effective contribution to food security, food safety and food hygiene

- Wholesale markets comply with different EC Regulations relative to food hygiene. The **WUWM Community Guide to Good Hygiene Practices** has been adopted by the EC specific Committee on the subject (OJEU - 30/07/2010 - C 206/3).

## 3. Markets have an important role in public health, food access and social cohesion

- Retail markets can provide a **point of exchange** between various strata of society. They are often a major **public tool** to support social cohesion activities especially for ethnic minorities, the elderly, and the unemployed - also offering a location for good public information dissemination;
- Wholesale markets provide opportunities for **education** amongst adults, as well as school children. Most European markets actively promote **healthy nutrition** and fresh product consumption e.g. through hosting school trips, retail market promotions, and actively supporting "5 a Day" programmes;
- Many wholesale markets support **food banks**, which not only helps to **limit food waste** on the market but also provides an additional social service.



#### 4. Markets offer substantial employment in cities

- Over 2,000,000 permanent employees work on wholesale and retail markets within the European Union, the majority of them are **SME's**. Markets have stood up to the economic recession better than many sectors of the retail trade, given the low costs of operation and the good value on offer to consumers;

- Wholesale markets, both in terms of their own tenants and also the customers they serve (small scale retailers and restaurants) give entrepreneurs easy access and low cost entry in business start-up. These markets can be considered as essential "**small business incubators**";

- In terms of labour-market policies, the large number of market-sector **jobs** is especially significant because most of these activities are in the low-paid category (e.g. fork-lift truck operators, warehouse workers, packers, etc.) If these people lose their jobs they often have greater difficulty finding new employment.



#### 5. Markets play a significant role in environmental protection

- Very special attention is given by wholesale markets to the **management of the waste** they collect. Every year increasing quantities of waste are **being recycled**, in particular cardboard, wood and organic matter, but also plastics and polystyrenes (fish markets). Wholesale markets also generally allow retailers to bring back their empty crates/boxes so that the recycled total constantly increases, reducing the impact on landfill by creating commercially viable alternatives such as composting and waste to energy;

- Produce bought through the market supply chain tends to have less packaging and is often bought loose, again **reducing waste**;

- Markets help **reduce food miles**, thus vehicle pollution, noise, and fossil fuel use. They encourage more **environmentally friendly** production practices, such as organic or pesticide free. They encourage **farm diversification** and **bio-diversity**;

- The market model creates **minimal food wastage**, however market authorities are effective in even further reducing the wastage of food, by supporting local food banks and other important initiatives.

# Retail Markets and Communities

Retail (traditional) markets have a long-standing place in the towns, cities and villages. Market day still holds a special place in the **hearts** of people from all walks of life. Markets are places not only to shop affordably, but also places where one can socialise, **support local products and initiatives**, and meet up with **community** - from all walks of life.

The "**Love Your Local Market**" campaign was first launched in the UK, and has now extended to markets in various EU countries including France, Holland, Germany, Spain, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Poland, Italy, Sweden, Finland.

Retail markets, particularly where supported by fresh produce wholesale markets and local producers, are effective and vital players in ensuring European consumers have **access to affordable fresh produce with increased choice and diversity**. Markets offer good quality, competitively priced produce, with a personalised service and product knowledge. They also support public health, employment, culture and tourism, community cohesion and urban regeneration.

The '**Love Your Local Market**' (LYLM) public campaign was first launched in the UK in 2011. In 2015 it had been extended, via the WUWM network, to over 2,000 retail and wholesale markets spanning 16 countries. This celebration supports the generation of **new market traders**, increases the profile of markets before local and national authorities, and offers the public an opportunity to promote their local market and the value it offers the community. The message being: **Markets Save, Markets Create!** Visit: [www.loveyourlocalmarket.eu](http://www.loveyourlocalmarket.eu) to learn more.

