

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Brussels, 20 March 2020

COVID-19 OUTBREAK – CALL TO PREVENT FURTHER DAMAGE TO THE GROWING MEDIA SECTOR AND FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

In the current Covid-19 crisis, the European growing media sector is doing its outmost to ensure continuity of movements of goods that are vital to the food supply chain. Growing Media Europe urges political decision makers on European and national level to prevent as far as possible disruptions in the trade and movement of goods that are essential to public food supply.

The covid-19 outbreak has already led to a shortage of trucks, containers and transport workers that hamper the flow of goods mainly due to national border controls and quarantine measures for truck drivers. Growing media are indispensable for big scale production of fresh vegetables, fruits, herbs and edible mushrooms as the majority of these crops start their life cycle as young plants in growing media. Interruptions leading to delays at cross border transport both inside the EU and for third country export are risking to leave vegetable nurseries in Europe and throughout the world unable to produce.

Ensuring timely supply of growing media to professional growers is crucial for providing EU citizens with healthy food throughout the covid-19 crisis. We thus ask the responsible European and national authorities to include the following raw materials for growing media in the highest priority ("essential products") category:

- Peat (HS Code 2703 000)
- Coir (HS Code 53050000)
- Bark (HS Code 14049000)
- Liming products such as chalk (HS Code 25174900)
- Compost (HS Code 0602901000)

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS: Growing Media Europe AISBL is an international non-profit organisation representing the producers of growing media and soil improvers at European level. For more information, please contact Cecilia Luetgebrune, Secretary General - cecilia.luetgebrune@growing-media.eu