EU to launch fruit and vegetable observatory

Move will improve transparency and enable sector to cope more effectively with market volatility

The European Commission is to launch two new market observatories, one for wine, and the other for fruit and vegetables, to bring greater transparency to these sectors and help them to address market volatility. The observatories, which are due to begin operating during the second half of this year, will provide a wide range of market data complemented by market analysis, short-term outlook reports and medium-term prospects. A board of market experts for each sector will also meet regularly to discuss the state of each market.

The Commission said the focus of the fruit and vegetable observatory would be principally on tomatoes, apples, citrus, peaches and nectarines.

"These observatories will bring greater transparency and analysis to two key sectors for European agriculture," the Commission said in a statement.

"Together these sectors represent around 30 per cent of the EU’s agricultural output value – 24.1 per cent for the fruit and vegetable sector and 5.4 per cent for wine."

The Commission already operates similar observatories for crops, sugar, meat and milk.

Ximo Puig, president of the regional government of Valencia, Generalitat Valenciana, said the observatory would benefit the citrus sector, and that the Generalitat "will do everything possible to ensure that it is active before the start of next season".