PRESS RELEASE /

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SONAE ADVOCATES IN BRUSSELS THE NEED FOR INNOVATION IN THE FOOD SECTOR

Sonae's White Paper "The Future of Food" is launched today in the European Parliament and outlines key recommendations on how EU and national policymakers can help foster innovation and cooperation in the food sector.

Europe's capacity to design innovative solutions and technologies is essential for our competitiveness in a globalised world, and is an indispensable pre-requisite for growth, as well as a key factor in ensuring a more sustainable future. This is one of the conclusions of the white paper "The Future of Food" presented today by Sonae at the European Parliament, in Brussels.

The study highlights some of the conditions which are particularly urgent to get right in order for innovative retail to flourish, and containing recommendations on the role of EU as well as national policymakers, building on the discussions in Plovdiv on "Food 2030" held under the Bulgarian Presidency of the EU and feeding into debates on the future EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon Europe.

According to the study, academia, research centers, industry players large and small, food sector associations and other relevant stakeholders all play a role in ensuring the successful development of innovative food solutions, spanning the bridge from research to bringing products to consumers. Individually, they will not be successful – joint undertakings and common objectives between these entities is therefore key to developing a sustainable future of food in Europe.

"The timing of this White Paper could not be more appropriate", comments the event's host, Portuguese MEP Carlos Zorrinho (S&D). "Stakeholder input is crucial in order to make our work relevant, and we will take a careful look at the recommendations put forward on how to foster innovative retail in the EU."

Ultimately, cooperation is not just important for policymakers, or for retailers, but it's an absolute need for the sustainable development of the sector. It is important for all of us as concerned citizens, for the sustainability of our planet and for future generations. And it is only if all

Sonae is a multinational company managing a diversified portfolio of businesses in retail, financial services, technology, shopping centres and telecommunications. Present in about 90 countries, it reached a turnover of 5.5 billion euros by the end of 2017.
Find out more at www.sonae.pt.

For more information, contact:
MARIA JOÃO OLIVEIRA
External Communication / Sonae
T. +351 22 010 4745 // E. mjfoliveira@sonae.pt
DIOGO SIMÃO
Director / BAN Corporate & Media Relations
M. +351 93 652 86 39 // E. ds@ban.pt

stakeholders come together, bringing their diversity of knowledge, experience and vision, that we will be successful.

Retailers play a crucial role in fostering this collaboration, as they are at the heart of a network ranging from farmers and food producers, through technology players, academia, startups, SMEs, and logistics operators, and finally to consumers, reaching out and gathering feedback from all actors of the supply chain.

However, according to the analysis, this role is sometimes overlooked, as decision-makers define the policy and regulatory framework in which retailers operate with a focus on those on either side of their role in the value chain. This oversight can ultimately stifle investment, as the sector depends on an enabling framework to deliver fully on its innovative capacities. Collaboration between actors in the food chain, therefore, needs to start with collaboration between private and public stakeholders. It is crucial that retailers and policymakers engage in an ongoing and sustained dialogue, in a mutually-beneficial process.

For as much as retailers could benefit from a more supportive environment, in which the objectives of R&I programmes, legislative frameworks, and industry initiatives are optimally aligned, so too can policymakers benefit from innovative retail, as successful innovation should be seen by the EU as an opportunity to deliver direct messages to consumers on its contribution to society, in particular growth, competitiveness and skills.

To download the White Paper on the Future of Food, please see here.

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