



**UNION FLEURS**  
INTERNATIONAL FLOWER TRADE ASSOCIATION

**ePhyto:  
a perspective from the cut flower trade**

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**2<sup>nd</sup> IPPC Global Symposium on ePhyto – 9-13 November 2015, Incheon City, Republic of Korea**



## **SETTING THE SCENE:**

Key characteristics of the international flower markets & trade



## **THE 'PAPER CHALLENGE':**

Why a shift to ePhyto would be more than welcome by the flower industry



## **WAY FORWARD:**

Some recommendations on the future implementation of ePhyto



Union Fleurs is the **international umbrella organization representing and promoting the worldwide interests of national associations and companies active in the floricultural trade** (cut flowers, foliage and pot plants).

Founded in 1959, it is based in Brussels and has nowadays members in **20 countries worldwide (in Europe, Africa, Middle-East, South and North America, and Asia)**.

Within its membership, Union Fleurs gathers **over 3.000 companies active in the trade of cut flowers and pot plants worldwide**, of which more than 1,500 floricultural traders and wholesalers in the EU. Members account for more than 80% of the total value of the worldwide trade of cut flowers and pot plants.

[www.unionfleurs.org](http://www.unionfleurs.org)

# Union Fleurs Members



**ITALY**



**SWITZERLAND**



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**BELGIUM**

**AUSTRIA**



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VEREINIGUNG DES SCHWEIZERISCHEN  
BLUMENGROSSHANDELS  
COMMUNAUTÉ SUISSE DU COMMERCE DE  
GROS EN FLEURS



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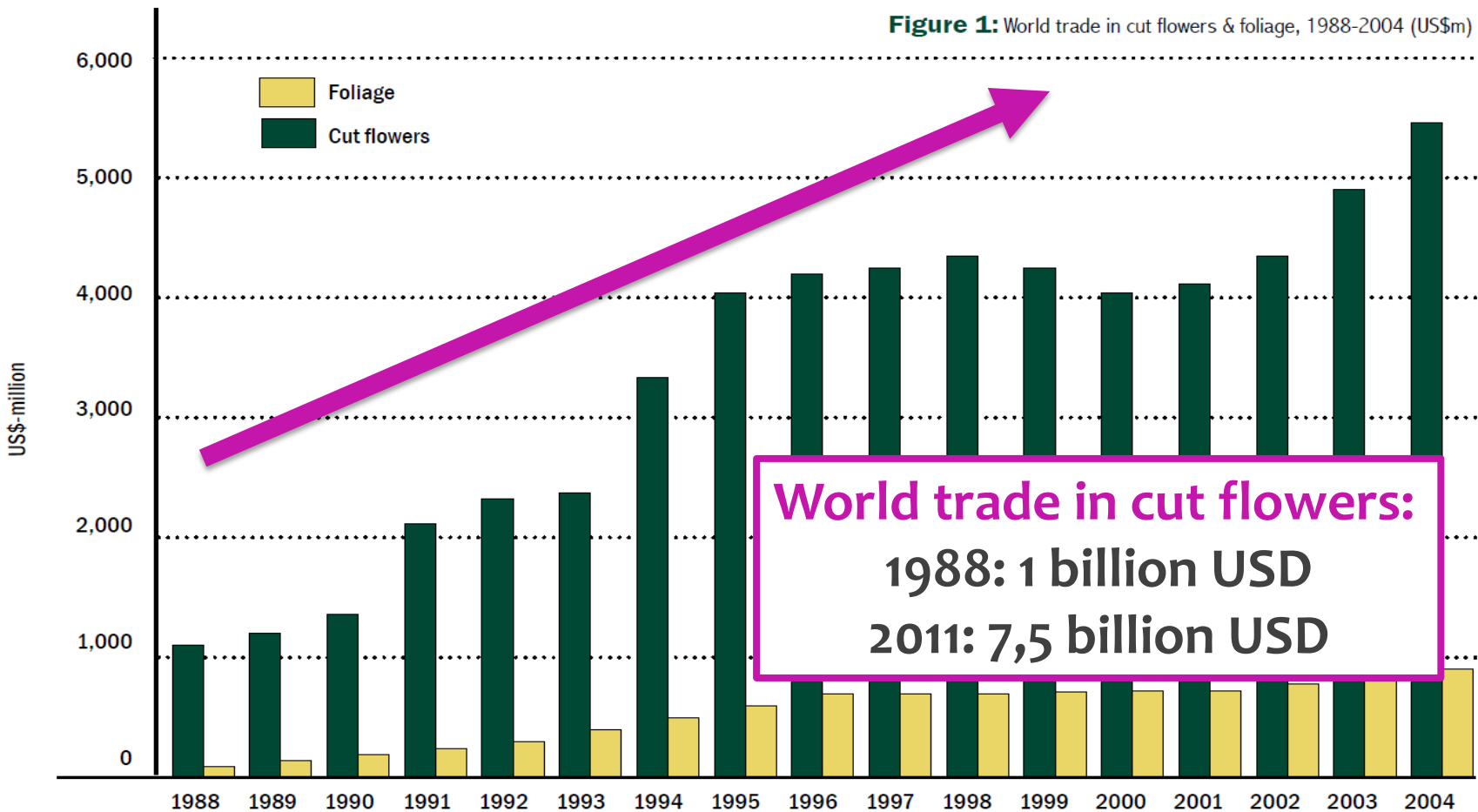
## SETTING THE SCENE:

**Key characteristics of the international  
flower markets & trade**

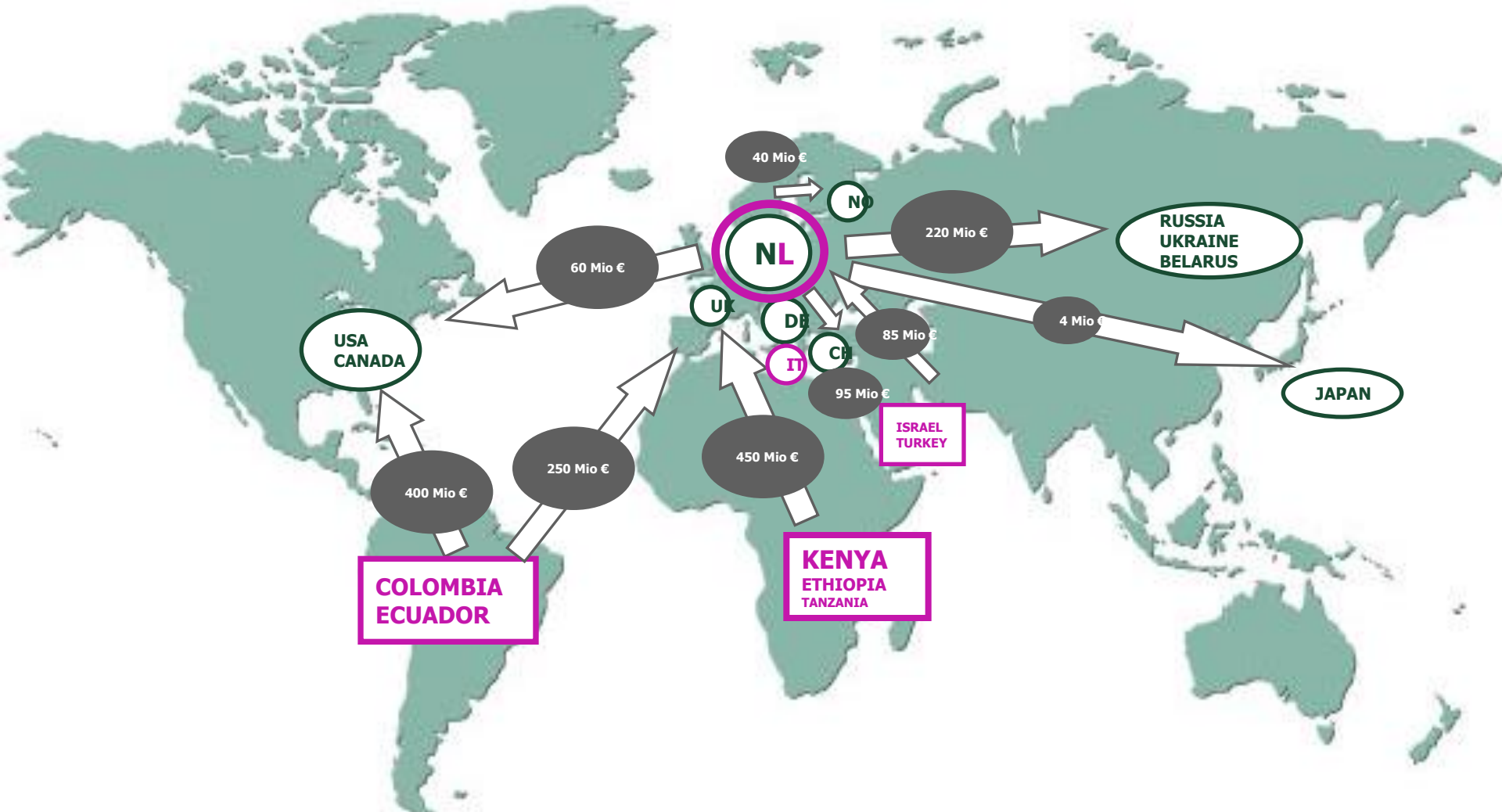
- **A global market with key suppliers around the world :**
  - **The Netherlands :**
    - International trade center (hub) through the flower auctions' system since the 1950s
    - more than 50% of the world trade transit/is re-exported via the Netherlands
  - **Kenya:**
    - supplies 1/3 of the total EU market
    - Exports to more than 50 destinations all over the world
  - **Colombia and Ecuador:**
    - supply together 90% of the US market (Colombia: 65% ; Ecuador: 25%)
    - 90,4% imported through Miami airport

- Major intensification and globalisation of trade since 1980s:

**Figure 1:** World trade in cut flowers & foliage, 1988-2004 (US\$m)



# WORLD TRADE FLOWS - CUT FLOWERS



**TOTAL VALUE OF EXPORTS WORLDWIDE: 6.5 billion EUR**

**EU: 2.86 billion EUR (45%) – incl. intra-EU trade (2.3 billion EUR)**  
 NL: 2.5 billion EUR

**TOTAL VALUE OF IMPORTS WORLDWIDE: 6 billion EUR**

**EU: 3.54 billion EUR (59%) – incl. intra-EU trade (2.37 billion EUR)**  
 NL: 600 Mio EUR / DE: 750 Mio EUR / UK: 700 Mio EUR

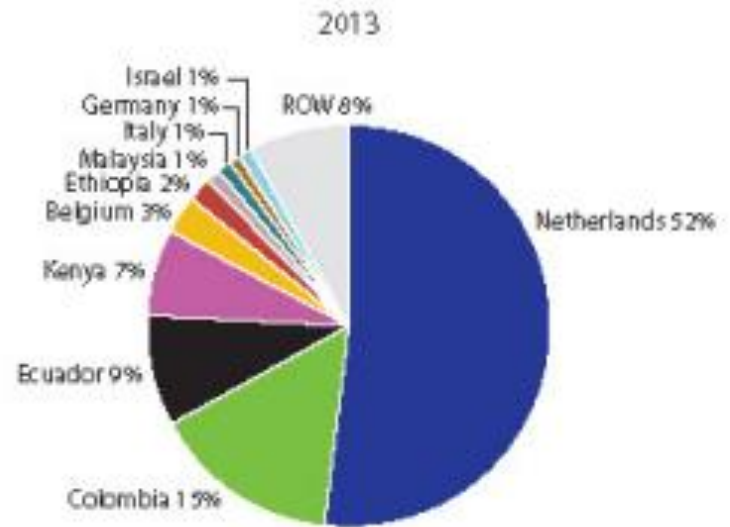
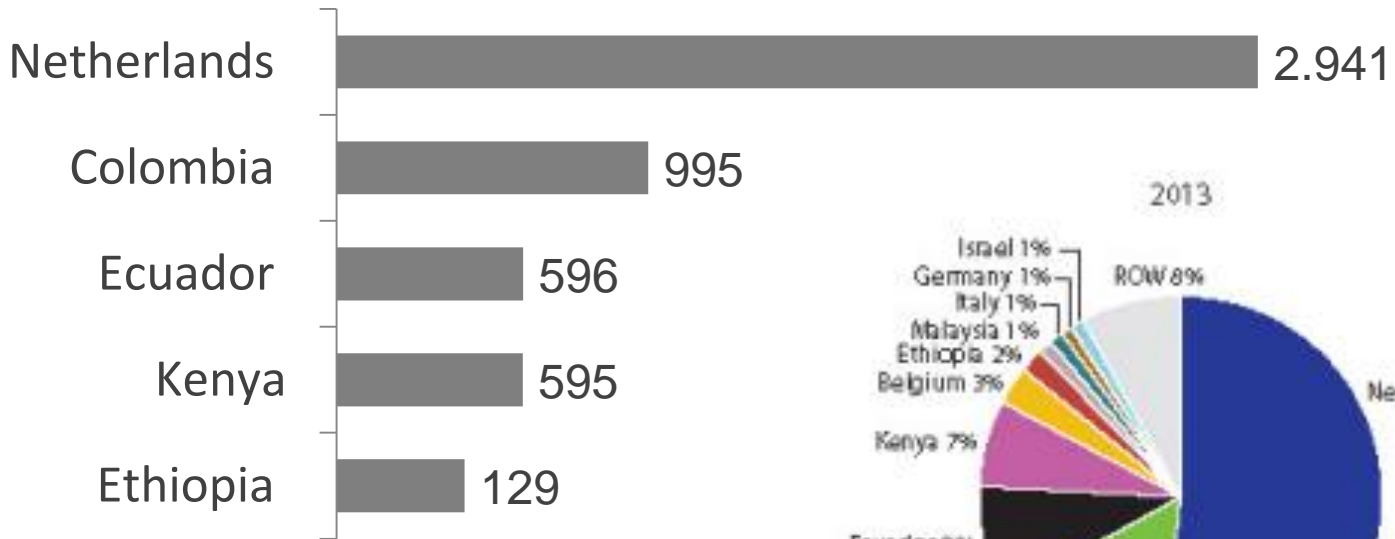




# TOP 5 Flower exporting countries today:

## Exports 2012

(in million Euros )

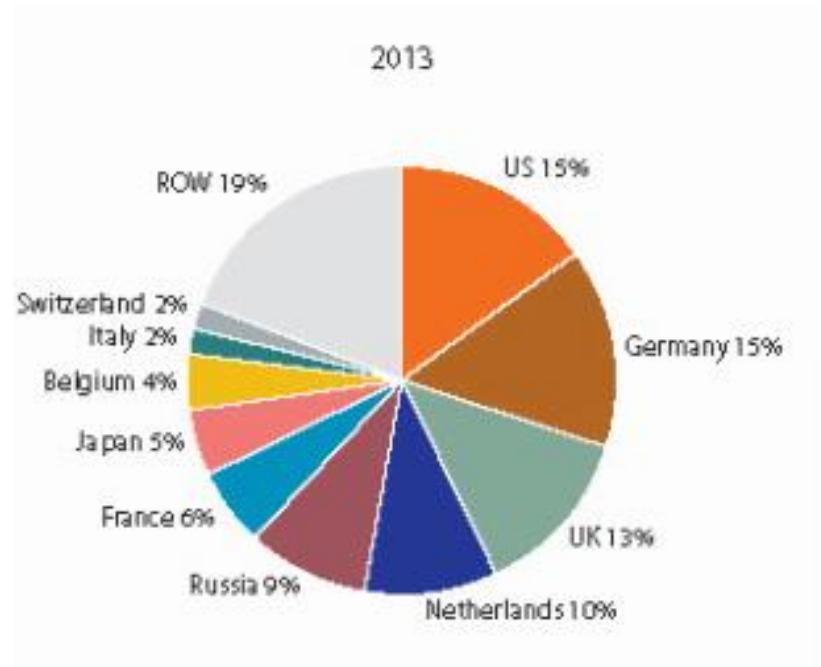
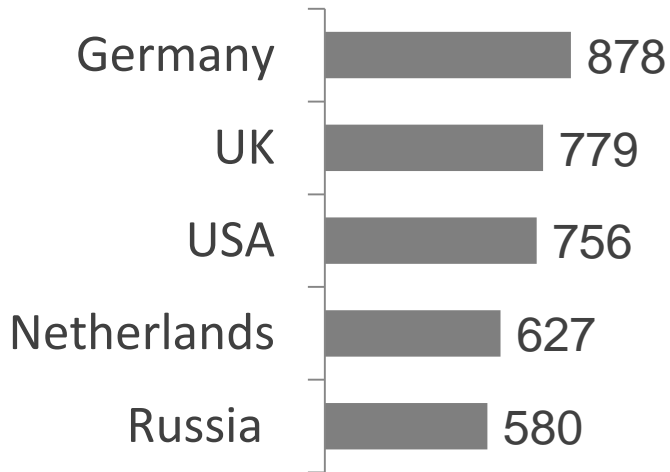




# TOP 5 Flower importing countries today:

## Imports 2012

(in million Euros)



- **Product specificities:**

- **Cut flowers are highly perishable products with a very short life-cycle (vaselife)**
- **Assortment:** a large number of flower varieties & species are being traded all over the world, depending on the season and trends
- **Peak seasons: Valentine's day, Mothers' day**
  - Huge volumes must reach destination markets on time
  - Extreme pressure on the supply-chain and logistics during a few days of the year
  - Any mistake or delays can compromise on-time deliveries

- **Key factors:**

- Efficient logistics and processes along the supply-chain, from origin to destination, to ensure speedy deliveries
- Cold-chain management to preserve quality during transport and ensure vase-life



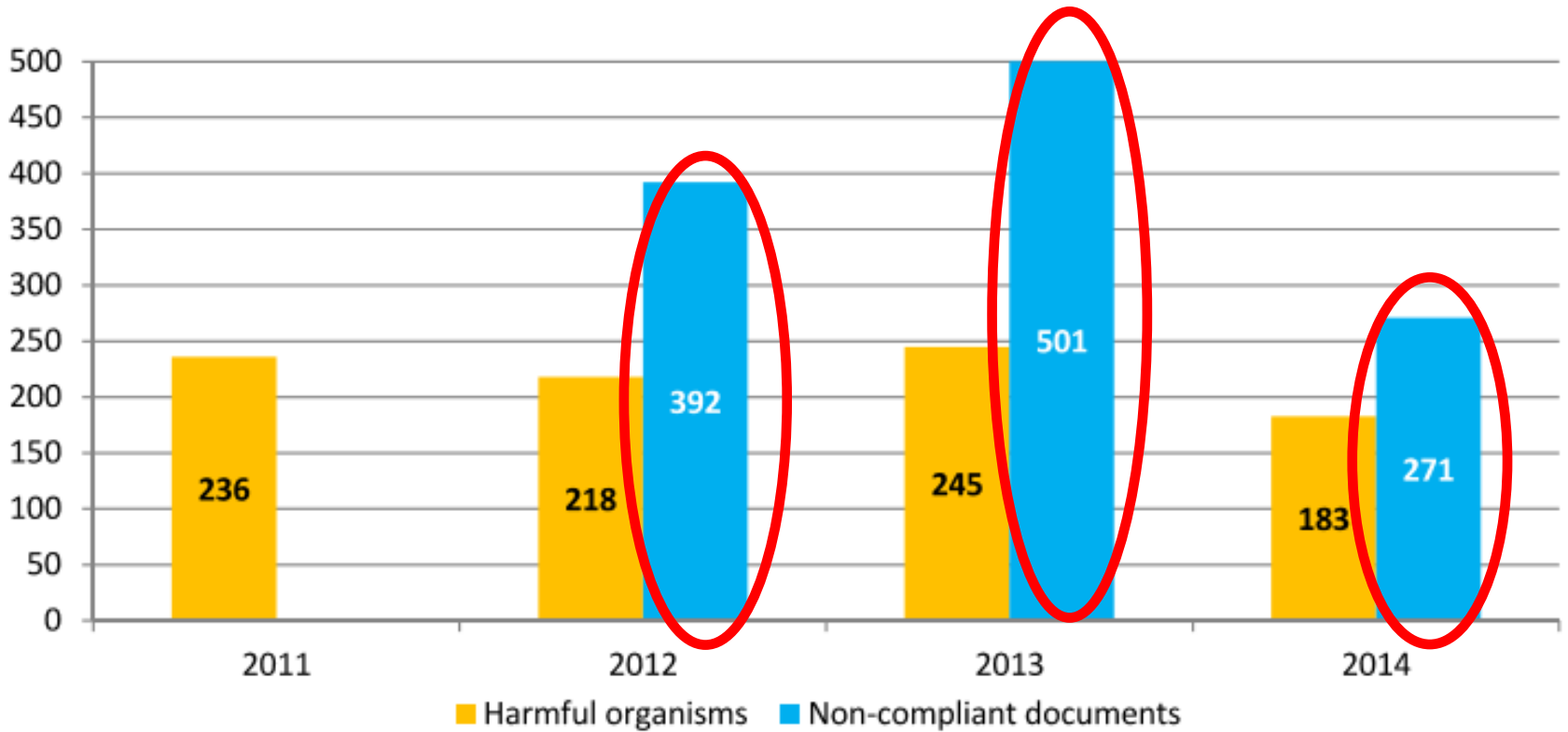
## **THE ‘PAPER CHALLENGE’:**

**Why a shift to ePhyto would be more than welcome by the flower industry**

- **A ‘Paper nightmare’:**
  - **Missing or lost documents at arrival or transit point**
  - **Incomplete or wrong documents:**
    - No official signature or stamp by authority of the origin country
    - Wrong flower name
    - Wrong weight or number of boxes
- **Any re-issuing of phytosanitary certificates has a tremendous cost for the flower business**
  - Time and money
  - Deterioration of flowers waiting for clearance
  - Customer claims for late deliveries or bad quality
- **To prevent any issues: up to 3 phytosanitary certificates for each shipment ! (1 original + 2 certified copies)**
  - waste of paper
  - unnecessary costs

- Non-compliant documents trigger a higher number of import rejections than actual plant health issues (harmful organisms):

Overview of EUROPHYT interceptions of cut flowers and foliage notified in 2011-2014:



Source: EUROPHYT & Union Fleurs databases

## Anticipated benefits of ePhyto for the cut flower trade:

- Overall reduction of costs for the business (losses, time, processes)
- Reduction of lead times and error rates
- Safer system for the exchange of data / lesser risk of forged & fraudulent documents
- More efficient logistics & faster procedures
- Arrival and clearance of flowers could be better planned by phytosanitary authorities and business, in particular during peak seasons
- Official controls could be better targeted on actual phytosanitary risks (harmful organisms) rather than paperwork
- Impact on cold-chain management, quality and vase-life: lesser deterioration of products along the supply-chain



## Way forward:

**Some recommendations on the future  
implementation of ePhyto**



- **Security and back-up systems are key:** extremely costly if anything goes wrong.
- **The greater the number of steps and players in the process, the greater the risks and lead times**

If a global ePhyto hub is being developed:

- Limit it to a simple transmission system
- Don't make it compulsory: export and import countries should be able to communicate directly if more efficient
- Implementation costs?

- **The development & implementation of a digital signature is key:** as long as it will remain necessary to print & stamp certificates, the practical benefits for the trade will remain limited
- **Phytosanitary certificates are only one of the documents accompanying shipments.**
  - Origin certificate
  - CITES
  - Commercial Invoice
  - Airway bill
  - Packing list
  - (Proof of export)

**A real breakthrough in trade facilitation will only come with the digitalisation of ALL these documents**

- **Way forward:**

- Development of international standards for electronic messages (UN/CEFACT) to enable the compatibility and interoperability of digital systems
- Streamlining of legislation and regulations
- Standard code lists to be used by operators
- Support and capacity-building for the technical implementation of digital systems, especially in developing countries (key players in the flower trade)

- **Ultimate objective :**

- **‘Paperless trade’ via a SINGLE WINDOW / one-stop-shop**
- **which works for the mutual benefit of public authorities and private operators**



**Thanks for your attention!**



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