

## **Summary EFFAT Position for the F2F Training 3-4 March**

### **For a Successful EU Farm to Fork Strategy**

Only when workers are respected and decent employment conditions ensured, can the Farm to Fork Strategy get close to a sustainable food system. Workers and their unions must be empowered to input, must be listened to and followed when developing such a system.

It is key that sustainability is translated into environmental and social considerations.

The F2F Strategy must develop a coherent long-term vision for the food chain from agriculture, food production, processing, distribution, retail and consumption, including the hospitality sector.

EFFAT therefore calls for:

#### **A Common Agriculture Policy that is socially conditional**

According to the Commission, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) will be instrumental in delivering on the objectives of the F2F strategy. The Commission proposals for the CAP post 2020 include a commitment for at least 40% of the overall budget to be put toward climate action. EFFAT believes that the ongoing reform process should also be the occasion to make the CAP more social.

EFFAT is calling for a social agricultural policy that distributes European subsidies only to farms that comply with applicable working and employment conditions and/or employer obligations resulting from relevant collective agreements and International, EU and national social and labour law.

#### **Tackling imbalances affecting vulnerable actors throughout the food chain**

For the F2F Strategy to be successful, it must confront the imbalances and distortions in the food chain by providing protection to its most vulnerable actors, namely agricultural, food processing and hospitality workers, as well as small farmers.

Moreover, if the pressure from retailers and food giants goes unchecked, and a viable income is not ensured for agricultural workers, rural areas will continue to be abandoned and farmers will continue to opt for unsustainable farming practices to increase their margins. In some EU Member States, this is already having a relevant impact in terms of soil degradation and air and water pollution.

EFFAT calls for:

- A swift transposition of the Unfair Trading Practices Directive
- The inclusion of mandatory environmental and social criteria within EU competition law

#### **Protection against the use of harmful pesticides and fertilisers**

One of the F2F Strategy's declared ambitions is to reduce significantly the use and risks of chemical pesticides, as well as fertilizers and antibiotics. EFFAT recalls that the use of these products is not only dangerous for the environment and consumers, but also for workers. They must be protected amongst others through comprehensive information about the use and the associated dangers related to the use of pesticides, they must be provided with protective equipment and training.

#### **Tackling shareholder value maximisation along the food chain**

The dynamics resulting from the power of financial investors in the food supply chain is distorting the main function of the agri-food sector, which is to provide nutritious and quality food to as many people as possible in an environmentally and socially sustainable way.

Financial investors should be held liable for the impact of their financial activities on the economy, the society and the environment. Solutions to tackle the impact of short-term financial interests along the whole food chain are urgently needed and should include regulation of financial markets, the strengthening of workers' rights in company law and more stringent anti-trust measures.

### **Aligning EU international trade policies with the objectives of the Green Deal and the F2F Strategy**

Coherence between the different EU policies, here particularly between the EU Green Deal / Farm to Fork Strategy and International Trade must be ensured.

Free Trade Agreements should never expose the EU agriculture, food and hospitality sectors to unfair competition with negative consequences for workers on wages, working conditions and employment. The respect of labour rights should constitute an essential element of all trade and investment agreements and the ratification and implementation of the ILO core Conventions must be a precondition for trade negotiations and agreements.

### **Introducing mandatory human rights due diligence at EU level**

Child labour as well as brutally exploitative working conditions on farms and plantations of coffee, cocoa, tea, sugar cane, fruits and vegetables, fish processing, to name but a few, within the EU and across the world, are recurrent.

EFFAT calls for a European Directive on mandatory human rights due diligence and responsible business conduct, covering companies' activities and their business relationships, including their supply and subcontracting chains as well as franchise systems at European and global level. Companies should be made accountable for the impacts of their operations along the food chain within the EU and across the globe.

### **Digitalisation should leave no-one behind**

EFFAT believes that the F2F strategy must also deal with the digital revolution along the food chain. EFFAT demands that new technology should be used to make workplaces safe and to improve working conditions. Technology should be for the benefit of all workers, not merely as tools for increased profits.

As current technologies and processes become obsolete, new skills will be required. It will therefore be imperative to invest substantial resources into education and reskilling programmes for workers, as well as new green technologies and the circular economy, in order to deliver new, sustainable jobs in the EFFAT sectors. In this respect, a major increase in EU and national funding for training and lifelong learning is needed.

### **Enhancing responsible food consumption to challenge workers exploitation**

There is a crying need to raise consumers' awareness about the damaging effects on human and workers' rights of excessively low food prices; to explain that quality and ethics also have a price. Raising consumers' awareness can also limit the pressure to keep food prices low, today even exacerbated by the competition of low-cost discounters.

EFFAT demands that the EU legal framework on food labelling must integrate the social dimension of sustainability. The process from cultivation, harvest, processing, and delivery to the consumer is long and has costs throughout the chain. Transparency must therefore be ensured for consumers concerning the costs and benefits related to each stage of the food chain. This is the only way to achieve truly sustainable food consumption.

**Don't forget about the "Fork" - Workers in the hospitality sector matter**

EFFAT believes that the F2F Strategy should be an opportunity to improve the working and employment conditions of workers in the hospitality sector, including platform workers such as food delivery riders and workers employed in short-term accommodation rental. The sector is affected by major challenges such as precarious work, and the progressive expansion of the platform economy.

**To be "Just", the transition needs proper funding**

The allocated budget to achieve the ambitious goals of the EU Green Deal is insufficient. The same goes for the Just Transition Mechanism: the sums put forward will prove vastly insufficient to deal in a socially sustainable manner with the consequences of the expected transformation.