

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

One of the declared objectives of the F2F Strategy is to stimulate sustainable food consumption and promote affordable healthy food for all. Imported food that does not comply with relevant EU environmental standards is not allowed on EU markets. The Commission will propose actions to help consumers choose healthy and sustainable diets and reduce food waste. One of those being the proposal for a sustainable food labelling framework to empower consumers to make sustainable food choices.

Those consumers in Europe who can afford it start to make choices taking quality, environmental and fair-trade considerations into account. Consumers are much less aware of what working in all different stages of the food chain means. Most consumers are unaware of the working conditions, salaries, exploitative situations and human rights violations in the food chain.

EFFAT believes that this commitment lacks ambition. The F2F Strategy cannot exclusively aim at the promotion of affordable healthy food produced in respect of environmental standards, but needs to take social considerations into account.

Experience shows that affordable food often goes hand in hand with workers' exploitation. Food consumption, to be truly sustainable, must be conscious.

Food supply chains generate millions of jobs worldwide and deliver customers a vast array of food products, all year round, at ever-lower prices. But all too often low food prices hide many factors including the deplorable working and employment conditions of those producing our food. There are wide-ranging human and labour rights violations in food supply chains. It is a brutal irony that those producing our food are themselves among the most likely to be unable to adequately feed their own families.

EFFAT believes that 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, decent working conditions 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 F2F Strategy provides for the revision of EU law on food information to consumers (food labelling) and in particular Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011.

The EU legal framework on food labelling must integrate the social dimension of sustainability. It must take into considerations working conditions, salary levels, health and safety, collective bargaining and information and consultation.

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.