

## From a trade union vision to trade union actions

### Trade Union Workshop – The Farm to Fork Strategy

#### 03-04 March 2021

EFFAT, together with ETUI, organised a trade union workshop on the Farm to Fork (F2F) Strategy on 3 and 4 March 2021. The workshop's goal was to introduce the participants to the F2F Strategy and discuss the trade union vision of a sustainable food system. A mix of panel presentations and workshops allowed for an active understanding of the F2F Strategy. Excellent speakers from trade unions, NGO's, academics, and the European Commission made those two days a real learning experience.

Kristjan Bragason, EFFAT General Secretary, opened the meeting recalling that the agri-food sector has a big impact on the climate crisis while also being very much impacted by the crisis. He stressed that the continuous strive for cheap food is not sustainable. The F2F Strategy will play a crucial role for the years to come. EFFAT supports the F2F Strategy while working on its shortcomings. Trade unions must make sure that this strategy leaves no one behind (a common denominator throughout the workshop) and delivers for the food chain workers.

Following the workshop's opening, Claire Bury, DG SANTE Deputy Director-General, explained the European Commission's view on the EU Green Deal and the F2F Strategy. The strategy is about an integrated food system with three dimensions: economic, environmental, and social. A shift in diets will be necessary and a sustainable diet should become the consumer's easiest choice. Success will only be possible through a collective approach from all actors without leaving anyone behind.

Three more panellists spoke about their vision of a food system. Peter Schmidt, NGG, expressed his concern that the F2F strategy does not address the inequalities in the food chain, as it is not a real shift of the system. Voluntary legislative approaches to move companies to a certain behaviour do not work, clear rules are needed. Next, Enrico Somaglia, EFFAT Deputy General-Secretary, made EFFAT's commitment to the F2F strategy clear and before going through the EFFAT demands, urged for a just transition ensuring decent work. Prof. Dr Timothy Lang made a plea for the planet, demanding a huge dietary change as well as a multi-criteria approach to food systems, showing where and how trade unions can use his arguments.

Afterwards, Yael Pantzer, Slow Food, showed why current labelling does not tell the full story. Sustainability, labour rights, animal welfare, etc. are not reflected on these labels. Giulia Laganà, OSEPI, discussed how to raise consumer awareness on social issues as well as possible actions to take (e.g. more strategic media engagement).

In the afternoon, Tony Musu, ETUI Health and Safety, explained what pesticides are and the harm they do to the environment and human health. Eka Widayati, IUF Asia/Pacific, explored this topic even more by giving it an international scope and explaining how Asian/Pacific trade unions tackle the dangers of pesticide use. Thereafter, Nick Jacobs, IPES-Food, opened to the global perspective on the food system, explaining the common food policy blueprint.

Two working groups were organised on the first day. With the help of pictures, the participants discussed their trade union vision of a sustainable food system. Topics such as food processing, local/organic food, urban areas, automation/robotics, food waste, working conditions, etc. emerged.

The second day looked at lobbying strategies, alliances, synergies, and how to use the hooks in the F2F strategy for our trade union actions.

Sergi Corbalán, Fair Trade Advocacy Office (FTAO), discussed EFFAT and FTAO's synergies on the F2F actions and made some very concrete proposals for joint work. Next, Dirk Jacobs and Jonas Lazaro-Mojica, FoodDrinkEurope, reflected on how to collaborate as much as possible, strengthening the joint advocacy work. Bruno Menne, COPA-COGECA policy advisor, took the EU Promotion Policy angle to address the trade union audience. Lastly, Wiebke Warneck, EFFAT Political Secretary, and Maddalena Colombi, EFFAT Communication and Campaign Manager, presented the F2F Strategy timeline. What does this timeline mean for the trade union work and what possible communication strategies could look like.

This was followed by a final working group discussion on how to monitor, shape and influence the F2F Strategy (on a European, national, regional, sectoral, and company level). The participants reflected on trade union objectives (e.g. pesticides, labelling), the actions to be taken in the mid- and long-term (e.g. offer training), which actors (internal and external) to involve (e.g. EFFAT, NGO's, MEPs), and what resources to rely on (e.g. research, political parties).

The closing remarks by Wiebke Warneck reminded participants of what had been learned and discussed throughout the training. Without joint trade union actions, there will be no real shift in the food system (i.e. the system's inequalities remain and "social" will just be a word). Joint actions on all levels need to continue in order to fight the food chain workers' harsh realities. EFFAT and affiliates will push the policy makers to make changes which really impact the workers' lives!