

20
25

LEAFLET

SOLIDARITY BEYOND BORDERS

The Value of EFFAT Membership



WHAT IS EFFAT?

EFFAT is the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions, and also represents domestic workers. It was established on 11 December 2000 through the merger of two European trade union federations: the ECF-IUF and the EFA.

EFFAT is an organisation of independent and democratic trade unions representing workers in the food, agriculture, tourism, domestic work, and related sectors, services, and activities across Europe.



EFFAT is a member of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and serves as a regional organisation of the International Union of Food,

Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF).





INTERNAL ORGANIZATION



EFFAT'S DECISION-MAKING BODIES are

- The **Congress**, which is held every five years;
- The **Executive Committee**, which usually meets twice a year.



EFFAT'S EXECUTIVE BODIES are:

- The **Coordination Group**: this group consists of the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the sectors and Committees, along with representatives from the larger affiliates. It serves as a consultative body responsible for overseeing the implementation of decisions.
- The **Executive Committee**: its members oversee the implementation of decisions.
- The **Secretariat**: comprising the Secretary General, the Sector Secretaries, the Company Policy Officer, and any additional staff, the Secretariat manages the organisation's day-to-day activities. The Secretary General acts as the Federation's official representative.

- The **Sector General Assemblies**: these are established in each sector – Agriculture, Food, Drink and Tobacco, Tourism, and Domestic Work. Their primary objective is to develop sectoral strategies and implement policies and decisions within their respective areas.



EFFAT ALSO HAS PERMANENT COMMITTEES FOR:

- Women;
- Youth;
- Transnational Companies.

The Executive Committee can set up **Working Groups** to address specific issues, e.g. the last Congress held in 2024 established a *Working Group on Organising and Trade Union Renewal*.



EFFAT'S OBJECTIVES

EFFAT's mission is to build **trans-national solidarity**, ensuring that workers and their unions speak with one voice in the workplace and on common challenges and priorities affecting our sectors.

We are committed to organising, empowering, and amplifying the collective strength of working people across Europe.

EFFAT's 2025–2029 statutes **outline the Federation's main goals:**

- Creating a fairer and more socially oriented Europe;
- Enhancing trade union power;
- Defending and improving individual and collective fundamental rights established at European and international level;
- Improving living and working conditions of workers employed in its sectors;
- Promoting the just transition.

Union building, organising and **cross-border solidarity** lie at the heart of everything EFFAT and its member organisations do.

We put these principles into action by:

- Representing affiliates before **the Central Management of Transnational Companies (TNCs)**;
- Promoting our priorities and political agenda to the **European institutions**;
- Engaging with **EU-level employers' organisations**.



EFFAT'S MAIN ACTIVITIES

EFFAT's focus is on:



SUPPORTING AFFILIATES' STRUGGLES AND CAMPAIGNS

We support our affiliates in their struggles at both company and sectoral levels, offering assistance and solidarity, for example, in cases of restructuring.



PROMOTING A FAIRER EUROPE FOR WORKERS

We launch organising and capacity-building projects.



BUILDING UNION POWER

We tackle social dumping, poor working conditions, and unstable employment. We promote collective bargaining, and we launch

campaigns, and policy demands to create a fairer Europe for working people (see the [EFFAT Manifesto](#) for the 2024 EU elections).

In recent years, we have seen concrete EFFAT demands reflected in EU policies and legislation. Our achievements include:

- The **inclusion of Social Conditionality** in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP);
- The inclusion of franchising in the **Due Diligence Directive**;
- The **Adequate Minimum Wage Directive**, aimed at tackling work poverty in Europe and strengthening collective bargaining;
- The **Platform Work Directive** aimed at tackling bogus self-employment, regulating the platform economy, and ensuring protection for platform workers.



SPEAKING WITH ONE VOICE

Adopting a united position on European and transnational issues, and defining our actions within transnational companies.



NEGOTIATING ON BEHALF OF WORKERS

Engaging in social dialogue and transnational negotiations with companies and European employers' federations.



PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN EU SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE

For many years, EFFAT has been involved in sectoral social dialogue with European employer associations in Agriculture (GEOPA-COPA), Food and Drink (FoodDrinkEurope), Sugar (CEFS), Hotels and Restaurants (HOTREC) and Contract Catering (FoodServiceEurope).

EFFAT has also established constructive cooperation with European employers' organisations in the domestic work sector (EFFE and EFSI).



COORDINATING AND ESTABLISHING EUROPEAN WORKS COUNCILS (EWCs)

EFFAT maintains effective relations with the central management of many transnational companies.

Furthermore, EFFAT plays a key role in setting up and supporting EWCs within its affiliated sectors.

EFFAT has established **more than 135 EWCs** and:

- Provides training and technical support;
- Assists in negotiating high-quality European Works Council (EWC) agreements;
- Ensures the presence of at least one coordinator to support day-to-day operations;
- Helps EWC members speak with one voice;
- Ensures the EWC functions as an effective trade union tool to support affiliates;
- Appoints EFFAT coordinators, designated by the EFFAT Executive Committee.

The Secretariat also provides legal assistance, training and daily support to its network of coordinators who represent EFFAT in EWCs and TNCs. By empowering EWCs, EFFAT ensures that workers have a real voice across borders.



A FOCUS ON HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM

SETTING THE SCENE

From both an economic and social point of view, **tourism is a crucial and strategic sector.**

It has the capacity to stimulate regional development and **contribute to growth** in other sectors of the economy. It represents around **10% of the EU's GDP**, with this figure being even higher in some countries, including Croatia (24.9%), Cyprus (21.9%), Greece (20.6%), Austria (15.4%) and Spain (14.6%).

The tourism sector is also **vital in terms of employment**; it accounts for **9% of all jobs in Europe** and a higher proportion in some countries: 25% in Croatia and Cyprus, and 20% in Greece.

With a significant proportion of the tourism workforce being young people (13%), foreign nationals (15.6%) and women (59%), **tourism plays a key role in integrating young and migrant workers into the labour market and promoting gender equality.**

However, despite its importance, the sector has mainly relied on an **economic model based on short-term financial interests and profit maximisation.**

While the sector showed resilience following the 2008–10 crisis, it was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Between 2019 and 2021, employment in the EU hospitality sector fell by 16.6% (ELA, 2024), due to widespread closures and reduced tourism. Many workers left the sector and did not return. Today, the sector is facing severe labour shortages, which have been exacerbated by:

- poor working conditions and low wages;
- precarious and undeclared work;
- irregular hours and labour law violations.

These conditions make the sector less attractive, particularly for young, migrant and low-skilled workers. As a result, staff turnover is high and job quality remains among the lowest in the EU (Eurostat Labour Force Survey, 2022).

EFFAT calls for urgent action to improve working conditions and restore the sector's appeal.





EFFAT'S INITIATIVES

In the aftermath of the pandemic, EFFAT has played an active role in the hospitality and tourism sector, working alongside European institutions to promote a new, sustainable, and socially responsible model, while advocating for the sector's recover.

The [Orientation Paper](#), issued on 3 July 2020, outlines **EFFAT's vision for the future of the tourism sector**.

This should focus on promoting employment stability and quality, investing in human capital, qualifications, and training, achieving economic sustainability, and ensuring health and safety. It also calls for the reinvestment of profits to ensure sustainable growth, foster visitor loyalty, diversify offerings, reduce seasonality, and drive innovation around a fair digital transition. Additionally, it aims to minimise environmental impact, generate greater added value for society as a whole, and ensure a fairer distribution of benefits among tourism businesses, tourists, destinations, local communities, and workers.

Similar proposals were shared in the [EFFAT's position paper](#) in June 2022 and titled "Fight labour shortages in hospitality and tourism by improving the attractiveness of jobs".

The proposals focus on improving working conditions, such as workplace safety, work-life balance, qualifications and training, as well as levels of pay, by strengthening collective bargaining and unionising workforce segments that are usually difficult to organise, such as migrant, young and seasonal workers.

From June 2023 to May 2025, EFFAT coordinated a European co-funded project called *Stronger Hospitality* (Building Trade Union Capacity in Hospitality and Tourism to Enable Stronger Sectoral Social Dialogue – Project Number 101102331). The project aimed to strengthen social dialogue within the hospitality and tourism sectors, as well as to reinforce the capacity of trade unions in these sectors to address the various challenges they face.

It addresses some of the root causes behind the widespread use of non-standard forms of employment and low pay in the hospitality and tourism sector across Europe — factors that are contributing to severe labour shortages. These causes include the structural characteristics of the sector (such as the seasonal nature of many activities), weak or non-existent sectoral social dialogue and collective bargaining, and low levels of trade union membership.

The project's findings, along with a collection of best practices and recommendations for strengthening social dialogue in the hospitality sector, were shared with affiliates at the EFFAT Congress in Valencia, held from 26 to 28 November 2024.

2024 has also seen collaboration with counterparts at the European level. On 19 March 2024, EFFAT and HOTREC issued a [Joint Declaration](#) proposing solutions to labour and skill shortages in the hospitality sector.

According to EFFAT and HOTREC, strengthening social dialogue and collective bargaining on employment conditions—by implementing recent European directives and recommendations—can help to improve working conditions and en-

hance the sector's image. Furthermore, they maintain that promoting education and training is an effective way to reduce staff turnover and offer meaningful career prospects within the hospitality sector.

Finally, they call for the involvement of social partners in the governance, implementation, and monitoring of a protective framework for labour mobility for migrant workers from third countries, aimed at addressing labour shortages through initiatives such as the EU Talent Pool.



JOINING EFFAT: WHY IT MATTERS

EFFAT is committed to empowering national unions in our sectors

Through position papers, EU-funded projects, new initiatives, capacity-building projects, and coordinated action, EFFAT strengthens unions' capacity and promotes collective bargaining. Our goal is to improve working conditions, create quality jobs, and reduce staff turnover in EFFAT's sectors.

By joining EFFAT, your union will become part of the largest European network of unions in food, agriculture, tourism, domestic work, and related sectors. By joining EFFAT, you add your voice to ours — together, we speak with one strong voice to European institutions and employer organisation.



**UNITED,
WE ARE
STRONGER.**



Note on the Use of Artificial Intelligence

Some of the photographs and illustrations featured in this material were created or enhanced using generative artificial intelligence tools, with the aim of ensuring visual consistency, inclusive representation, and high-quality imagery.

All AI-generated visuals were manually curated and validated to reflect the values of dignity, multiculturalism, and professionalism that are central to EFFAT's identity.

The use of artificial intelligence was strictly limited to visual and communicative purposes and does not imply any reproduction of, or reference to, real individuals.

DO YOU NEED MORE INFORMATION?

If you are interested in joining EFFAT,
you can contact us at:



European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions

REGIONAL ORGANIZATION WITHIN THE IUF
MEMBER OF THE ETUC

AVENUE LOUISE, 130A
1050 BRUSSELS

Ph +32 (0) 2 218 77 30
F +32 (0) 2 218 30 18
EMAIL effat@effat.org
WEB www.effat.org

Follow us:



@EFFAT



[effat_org](https://www.instagram.com/effat_org)



[EFFATPress](https://www.facebook.com/EFFATPress)



[@effat.org](https://twitter.com/effat.org)



Funded by
the European Union