



EFFAT

EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM TRADE UNIONS

European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions

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Brussels, 07 January 2010

Secretariat General

Unit D1

European Commission

B - 1049 Brussels

Re: Public consultation on the future EU 2020 strategy

Dear Madam, dear Sir,

EFFAT welcomes the consultation procedure launched by the European Commission on the future EU 2020 strategy deemed to replace the Lisbon strategy. In a period of uncertainties for the workers and citizens of Europe, EFFAT believes in the need of a comprehensive upgrade of the Community political strategies. The current economic and social developments show that there is an urgent need to really complement its EU policies to make Europe a competitive economy with an ambitious and efficient social agenda.

EFFAT main concerns are the prevalence of exclusion in many forms in the society and therefore EFFAT considers that fighting social exclusion, by setting more and better inclusion, should be the cornerstone of the new strategy.

In 2000 the Member States of the EU resolved to make the Union the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economic zone in the world – an economy with the capacity to achieve sustained economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

Almost 10 years later we can only observe that these targets have not been achieved.

Worse still, due to a dramatic change in employment markets, the EU today is further from this target than ever. Employers' investment in training and development of employees have fallen and the number of poor-quality and insecure low-wage jobs has risen drastically.

Instead of the competitiveness of enterprises being increased by a general improvement in employees' skills, we are seeing more and more outsourcing and deregulation and jobs are becoming increasingly precarious.

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Instead of rewarding the willingness of workers and unions to be more flexible with increased job security, many employers are now concerned with only one thing – extremely cheap and extremely flexible workforces.

The result is discrimination, social dumping, low wages and increasing social inequality.

Temporary and seasonal workers, workers on fixed-term or part-time contracts, migrant and bogus self-employed workers, subcontracted employees and clandestine workers have all become second- or even third-class employees, especially women. Many employees in the agricultural, tourism and food and drink sectors are no longer able, due to starvation wages, to fully earn their own living through their work. They are forced to turn to social security services and government support in order to survive. Paid employment is less than ever a shield against poverty. The situation of these employees is further exacerbated by the privatisation of public infrastructure and increasing charges. Social support as a cornerstone of the European social model to ensure public maintenance is no longer universally guaranteed. For this reason, there is less rather than more social cohesion in the EU today than ten years ago.

Social security does not impoverish, but is rather a basis for economic success. It creates social harmony and increases people's readiness to accept and adapt to change. Should the European Commission really aim at strengthening the inclusiveness of our societies, EFFAT invites it to include the following principles in the post-Lisbon strategy:

1. prevent any further deregulation of labour markets;
2. promote and award fair, sustainable development and competition;
3. give more security to precarious workers and set the fight against discrimination at the centre of the policies;
4. append a social progress protocol to the new EU Treaty, ensuring that basic social rights and the rights of the social partners are not circumvented by the regulations of the common market.

These principles could be implemented by measures aiming at:

- guard against any abuse of the freedom of services or the free movement of labour, as well as bogus-self-employment;
- not include any opting-out provisions in European legislation (such as the Working Time Directive);
- introduce social clauses into the allocation of public contracts and subsidies, ensuring that only those enterprises that comply with all legal and collectively agreed obligations have the benefit of government contracts and subsidies;
- create, following the judgments of the ECJ in the matters of Viking, Laval and Rueffert, the legal conditions for consistent application of the ban on discrimination throughout the world of work;
- pursue the consolidation and promotion of an active labour-market policy;

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- guarantee all employees equal access to all social services;
- promote the establishment of transfer and professional development bodies for the unemployed and employees threatened with unemployment;
- introduce a personal right to qualifications, training and life-long learning;
- introduce binding minimum social standards for all employees at the European level to combat social dumping;
- complement the single European market and the common labour market with a European social policy that forbids and prevents the abuse and circumvention of legal and collective agreement provisions;
- reinforce and strengthen the collective bargaining autonomy of the social partners.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Harald Wiedenhofer', written in a cursive style.

Harald WIEDENHOFER
General Secretary