



Brussels, 15 April 2021

## **Opinion of the European Social Partners in Agriculture on the "Report on Strengthening Social Dialogue in the EU" of February 2021**

The European Social Partners in Agriculture welcome the "Report on Strengthening Social Dialogue in the EU" presented today by Ms Andrea Nahles, Special Adviser on Social Dialogue to Nicolas Schmit, Commissioner for Labour and Social Rights, at the European Social Dialogue Committee for Agriculture (SSDC-AGRI).

The social partners in agriculture discussed in particular:

- The improvement of sectoral social dialogue structures at European and national level;
- Improving transparency in relation to the results of social partner negotiations and their application;
- Improving the visibility of sectoral social dialogue and ensuring that tripartite consultation structures function effectively;
- Increased support for capacity building to improve the representativeness of the social partners;
- Promoting a stronger culture of social dialogue at the national level, especially through training and support for young future leaders of social organisations.
- Raising the profile of social dialogue, increasing awareness and promoting the value of social dialogue.

The European social partners in agriculture agree with Ms Nahles that social dialogue is an essential prerequisite for a balanced social market economy and for the functioning of the internal market. This is true at both national and EU level. Social dialogue plays an even more crucial role in times of economic crisis such as the current one triggered by the COVID 19 pandemic. On 15 May Year 2020, the European social partners in agriculture adopted a joint declaration on the COVID 19 pandemic, ensuring that all interests and experiences were heard and taken into account.

Social dialogue helps to stabilise employment, reduce inequalities and build resilience, thus helping to mitigate the impact of the crisis and support a sustainable recovery. Our common goal is to create the right conditions to mobilise and harness the full potential of social dialogue. All existing legal obstacles that hinder the development and work of the European and national social partners should be identified and abolished.

In particular, the European social partners in agriculture support the proposed instruments to raise the profile of social dialogue within the EU (European Social Dialogue Award and Young Future Leaders Programme of the social partner organisations) and declare their willingness to actively participate in the proposed instruments.

The European social partners in agriculture support the plan to involve the social partners more closely in the European Semester and welcome in particular the involvement of the national social partners in agriculture in the preparatory work on the national recovery and resilience plans. By doing so, the European Social Dialogue will remain a representative forum for discussion and policy benchmarking, while at the same time respecting Member States' competences as defined by the Treaties.

The European agricultural social partners support the project to provide additional and targeted support to the national social partners, based on the needs identified by the national social partners in the Member States concerned. National governments and social partners should discuss how best to use available EU funds to support capacity building. The Commission could support such efforts by doing more to promote a process of mutual learning and exchange of successful practices between EU countries.

#### **About us:**

[EFFAT](#) is the European federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions. As a European Trade Union Federation with 2.6 million members, representing 120 national trade unions from 35 European countries, EFFAT defends the interests of more than 22 million workers. EFFAT is a member of the ETUC and the European regional organisation of the IUF.

[Geopa-Copa](#) is the Employers' Group of Professional Agricultural Organisations in the European Union. GEOPA-COPA represents over 22 million European farmers in the areas of employment and social affairs, supporting COPA-COGECA in a combined effort to promote the best interest of the agricultural sector among the EU institutions and other relevant stakeholders.