

EA(21)4230:1 – MD/rd

Brussels, 15th June 2021

Opinion of the European Social Partners in Agriculture on the European Labour Authority Campaign on Seasonal Work

The European agricultural sector largely depends on the work of mobile and migrant workers, being them EU citizens or third country nationals. Every year, during the harvesting period, hundreds of thousands of mobile workers move from their country of origin to another country to be employed in our sector. To do so, mobile workers exercise their rights of free movement inside the Single Market with the expectation of being employed in full respect of the applicable working and employment conditions. Employers benefit from the contribution of mobile and migrant workers minimising the risk of labour shortages.

Nevertheless, as the European Labour Authority (ELA) acknowledges, “the Covid19 pandemic has amplified the existing risks for these workers, especially in the agricultural sector, in terms of health and safety, precariousness of working and living conditions, and exposure to fraud and abuse. At the same time, employers have faced recruitment difficulties due to health measures impacting on smooth workers' mobility, which risk disrupting the ordinary flow of economic activities”.¹

The recognised EU social partners in agriculture are committed to support good working and employment conditions in agriculture of all workers, including mobile and migrants, as well as the transparency, predictability, and simplicity of the hiring procedures for employers. To that end, GEOPA-COPA, the Employers' Group of Professional Agricultural Organisations in the European Union, and EFFAT, the European Federation of Food, Agriculture, and Tourism Trade Unions, welcome the European Labour Authority Campaign on Seasonal Work, which will take place from June to October 2021.

Given our implication as campaign partners, we commit to support all the announced initiatives of the campaign including through the online and offline dissemination of information to seasonal workers. Moreover, EFFAT and GEOPA-COPA will support the European Platform Tackling Undeclared Work and the EURES Platform in line with ELA's Action Plan. Additionally, we will also contribute to the common initiatives between ELA and the EU-OSHA², ensuring the #Rights4AllSeasons.

¹ ELA Action Plan on Seasonal Workers, European Labour Authority, March 2021, page. 3.

² The European Union Information Agency for Occupational Safety and Health.

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.