



# Social Dialogue in the EU Sugar Industry

Brussels, 12 October 2018

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## Minutes of the working group meeting

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Dominique Braoudé (CEFS) and co-chaired by Ms. Estelle Brentnall (EFFAT).

### 1. Situation on the EU sugar market

Mr. Josh Gartland (CEFS) presented the item (PowerPoint presentation in annex).

The EU sugar sector is experiencing an unprecedented period of difficulty. High production in the current campaign and low world market prices have translated into a challenging market situation.

Discussions: participants highlighted the fact that the sugar market situation is extreme, with prices at lowest level since records began, with potentially drastic consequences for workers, farmers and the industry as a whole. Participants called for vigilance to ensure that all sugar imported into the EU is produced in a way that respects workers' human and social rights.

Action point: CEFS and EFFAT to prepare a joint statement on the EU sugar market crisis, to be disseminated to the EU institutions and the press.

### 2. Trade issues: state of play

Mr. Josh Gartland (CEFS) presented an overview of trade negotiations between the EU and the rest of the world (PowerPoint presentation in annex), with a particular emphasis on India and Pakistan.

Discussions: See above

Action point: Link the issue of trade-distorting support offered by third-countries in the joint statement.

### 3. Policy updates from DG Employment

Mr. Joé Rieff made a presentation (PowerPoint presentation in annex) on the latest state of play of initiatives in the field of employment, social affairs and inclusion:

- European Labour Authority
- Work-life balance
- Social security coordination



- Transparent and predictable working conditions

Discussions: the participants noted the information.

#### **4. Training and career opportunities in the EU sugar sector**

Ms. Estelle Brentnall (EFFAT), Mr. Josh Gartland and Ms. Justine Richelle (CEFS) proposed to the participants to submit an application for EU funding next year, within the scope of the EU social dialogue opportunities offered by the European Commission, to carry out a joint project looking at the future of work in the sugar industry, employment, jobs and skills issues.

Discussions: the participants noted the information.

Action point: EFFAT and CEFS secretariats will elaborate a description of the project that will be presented at the next plenary meeting for discussions and potential approval.

#### **5. Plant protection and new breeding techniques : challenges for the sector**

Ms. Christine Ribera (Director General, CEFS) made a presentation on the above topics (PowerPoint presentation in annex).

With regards to plant protection, Ms. Ribera presented the current status of the neonicotinoids (insecticides) in the EU and the new challenges faced by beet producers to find alternative sustainable active substances to be used in plant protection products to control harmful insects. In May this year, the Commission adopted a set of regulations banning completely the outdoor uses of imidacloprid, clothianidin and thiamethoxam.

Ms. Ribera then presented a recent judgement from the Court of Justice of the European Union on the legal status of food and feed crops derived from certain new genetic modification techniques. The Court gave clear confirmation that organisms from these new gene editing techniques are covered by existing EU GMO regulation. It said that organisms obtained by mutagenesis, otherwise known as 'new breeding techniques', are in fact genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and are subject to the 2001 EU GMO directive.

Discussions: Participants discussed sustainability and ethical issues, as well as practical issues, in particular the importance to build knowledge, develop understanding in these scientific fields to allow agricultural innovation in the EU.

#### **6. The EU sugar sector and the bioeconomy**

Ms. Justine Richelle (CEFS) explained (PowerPoint presentation in annex) how the sugar industry through the bioeconomy could develop new value chains, process new materials, apply new technologies, produce new biobased products and create jobs.

Ms. Richelle then showed a video "Suiker Unie - From sugar factory to biorefinery":  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etM3tfu6CAw>



Ms. Estelle Brentnall (EFFAT) informed the participants of a draft opinion (in annex) of the European Economic and Social Committee on “opportunities for a sustainable EU bio-economy”. The opinion has been adopted at the Consultative Commission on Industrial Change of the EESC and will be presented in plenary for adoption in December.

Ms. Brentnall further informed the participants of an on-going project of EFFAT on “the bioeconomy and a future biobased food industry and agriculture sector: how can workers’ organisations shape the change?” (<http://www.effat.org/en/node/14785>)

Discussions: the participants noted the information.

## **7. AOB and conclusions**

Mr. Josh Gartland (EFFAT) and Ms. Estelle Brentnall (EFFAT) presented a revamped code of conduct that can be found here: <https://cefs.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/18.07-CEFS-EFFAT-code-of-conduct-reformatted.pdf>

Mr. Dominique Braoudé thanked all the participants and the interpreters and closed the meeting.

## **Annexes**

**Annex 1:** PowerPoint presentation on the EU sugar market

**Annex 2:** PowerPoint Presentation on trade issues

**Annex 3:** PowerPoint presentation DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

**Annex 4:** PowerPoint presentation on plant protection and new breeding techniques

**Annex 5:** PowerPoint presentation on the bioeconomy

**Annex 6:** EESC draft opinion “opportunities for a sustainable EU bio-economy”

## **Final list of participants-Sugar social dialogue committee working plenary meeting**

### **EMPLOYERS**

BRAOUDÉ Dominique (FR)

GARTLAND Josh –CEFS

GAWRYSZCZAK Michal (PL)

RIBERA Marie-Christine – CEFS



RICHELLE Justine- CEFS

PAGANI Patrick (IT)

GARCIA GONZALES Ana Belen (ES)

PIREE Wijnand (NL)

### **WORKERS**

BRENTNALL Estelle – EFFAT

BUDER Thomas – PRO-GE (AT)

CORNU Tangui- FGTB-HORVAL (BE)

DOMBRET Pascal Yvan – FGTB-HORVAL (BE)

MAES Vinnie- FGTB- HORVAL (BE)

MARIEN Silvie- FGTB-HORVAL (BE)

LEFEBVRE Philippe- FGTB-HORVAL (BE)

PLATEAU Grégory – FGTB-HORVAL (BE)

DARLEY Sylvain – FGA-CFDT (FR)

LUBAŚ Stanisław – NSZZ Solidarnosc (PL)

DEBOWIAK Adrian – NSZZ Solidarnosc (PL) (Interpreter)

PETERA Piotr- NSZZ Solidarnosc (PL)

### **EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

RIEFF Joé - DG EMPL

BEYLEMANS Gilberte- DG EMPL