



EFFAT-FoodServiceEurope Social Dialogue Committee for the European Contract Catering Sector

Steering Committee Virtual Meeting (WebEx)

10 June 2020

2 pm – 4 pm

Minutes

1. Adoption of the agenda and adoption of the minutes of the Steering Committee of June 2019

- The agenda and minutes were adopted as proposed.

2. COVID-19 and the contract catering sector

- The contract catering sector has been severely impacted by COVID-19. While operations in healthcare have been able to continue, due to the closure of production sites and offices, schools and universities, the business and industry (B&I) and education sectors have been unable to operate.
- It was noted that although countries are now beginning to reopen, this is not the case for the contract catering sector. Work from home remains the norm, and many schools are not reopening until September. For those that have reopened, some canteens have not been permitted to operate due to social distancing and hygiene concerns. FoodServiceEurope noted that some companies are trying to leverage their experience of operating in the healthcare sector throughout the lockdown to assure clients that safety can be respected, and social distancing measures can be implemented. Ensuring that canteens can reopen within schools is of critical importance to FoodServiceEurope's members, and their national associations are working with governments to ensure that this will be the case.
- It was agreed by all that both national governments and the EU have recognised the need to support the economy and have reacted accordingly with various support measures since the crisis began. FoodServiceEurope flagged however, that some of their members had highlighted that in practice, the economic measures were not operating correctly, and many were still awaiting payments. In Finland, the system was not able to cope with the number of people applying for governmental support and some had not yet received their payments.
- EFFAT highlighted the potential skills shortage for the sector caused by the COVID-19 crisis. It was noted that many companies are already looking at restructuring programmes, and for those workers who leave the sector, they are unlikely to return. In the UK, they face the additional challenge of Brexit and new immigration laws which will further squeeze the availability of workers for the sector. This shortage may only become apparent in Autumn or next year, once government supports for temporarily laid-off workers have ended and the full extent of the social impact of the crisis is apparent. The UK however, gave an example of how during the crisis, Compass increased the hourly rate for their workers in the health sector as a means of securing the workforce and have committed to maintaining this higher pay-level after the crisis is over.
- The COVID-19 crisis has also provided many opportunities for good engagement between governments, companies, trade unions, employers and employees. EFFAT noted that they have seen this in particular in Spain. In the UK, the government task force for the safe return

to work included a broad range of stakeholders. In Finland, it was also noted that there has been good engagement between government, employers and employees through task groups and discussions and that the demands of the trade unions and employers have been taken into account. This engagement should be continued as countries enter the recovery stage.

- It was agreed that the Social Dialogue would not work on COVID-19 related joint initiative at this time, other than exchanging useful information. EFFAT, FoodServiceEurope and HOTREC had already issued a joint statement on supporting the hospitality/tourism sector during COVID-19 on 12 May 2020. Given that there are so many differences between countries, it was not deemed useful to develop European level guidance on returning safely to the workplace.

Action: FoodServiceEurope to share guidance developed by AHRESP in Portugal on safe return to activity and joint EBSA statements on the COVID-19 crisis.

2. EFFAT-FoodServiceEurope Guide “Choosing best value in contracting food services - A guide for private and public client organisations”

- The COVID-19 crisis has delayed efforts to disseminate the Guide, but this will be the focus going forward. EFFAT have physical copies and copies on USB sticks that they will share once they are able to return to their offices to access them.
- Austria was due to hold an event in June to launch the Guide, but this had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 crisis and a date has not yet been chosen to reschedule it. In the meantime, they have published the Guide on their website and will look at social partners to see how they can leverage the Guide. They also intend to engage with Sodexo Austria to see how they might be able to use the Guide. Spain is also considering organising an event once things have returned to normal.
- FoodServiceEurope noted that they are planning to engage with the Commission on the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Circular Economy Strategy, as the Commission has indicated that they intend to use public procurement rules to try and promote sustainable choices. FoodServiceEurope sees this as an opportunity to advocate for the Guide to be used as a basis for public authorities to make more sustainable procurement choices that take quality into consideration. EFFAT agreed that this was a good approach and noted that it had referenced the Guide in its reaction to the Farm to Fork Strategy.

3. Plenary meeting 2020

- It was agreed that the original date of 25 September 2020 will be kept for the plenary and that it will be held in virtual format. Joé Rieff is to ascertain whether there will be availability to host the plenary using InterActio, the Commission's new system for virtual meetings that facilitates interpretation in four languages and allows for limited attendance of people in the room, as well as a virtual attendance. If this is not available, the Commission's external interpretation providers will be used.

Action: Joé Rieff to confirm what are the logistic options for the virtual meeting.

- It was agreed that if the plenary is in virtual format, the agenda should be more focused, and the meeting should be shorter (2 hours). To that end, the agenda will focus on:
 - F2F strategy and procurement: opportunity to further promote our Best Value Guide.
 - This could include a presentation from the Commission on the relevant initiatives in the Farm to Fork Strategy and how the Best Value Guide could be leveraged.



Action: Cristina Freitas and Joé Rieff to work bilaterally to identify the correct person in the Commission to invite.

- EFFAT report on sexual harassment and violence in the workplace.
 - EFFAT could present on the outcome of the project, and national organisations could present their experiences with implementing the IUF-Sodexo agreement on the prevention of sexual harassment, e.g. Italy and Finland.
- The need for increased apprenticeships in the sector to address the potential future skills shortage.
 - Potential presentation from the example in France where leading companies created a joint venture to establish a common school for apprenticeships for the contract catering and hospitality sector.
- EFFAT-FoodServiceEurope Work Programme 2021

Action: EFFAT and FoodServiceEurope Secretariats will liaise to draft the agenda for the plenary and the proposed work programme for 2021

<i>Steering Committee meeting – Participants</i>

Employers

Cristina Freitas de Costa (FoodServiceEurope Secretariat)
Alison Ryan (FoodServiceEurope Secretariat)

Workers

Andreas Gollner (EFFAT/VIDA)
Dave Turnbull (EFFAT/UNITE)
Jens-Petter Hagen (EFFAT/Nordic Unions)
Kerstin Howald (EFFAT Secretariat)

European Commission

Joé Rieff (DG EMPL)