

# Social Dialogue in the EU Sugar Industry

Brussels, 4 September 2019

---

## Draft report of the working group meeting

The meeting was chaired by Ms. Dorte Nørtoft-Andersen (CEFS) and co-chaired by Mr. Raffaele Ferrone and Ms. Estelle Brentnall (EFFAT).

### 1. Approval of the 30 January 2019 report and of the agenda

The participants approved the report and adopted the agenda.

### 2. CEFS and EFFAT application for funding: update

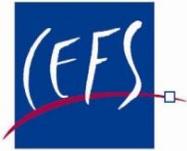
A project proposal “A transforming European sugar industry. New and better jobs in a competitive, innovative and sustainable industry” has been submitted in June to the European Commission. Responses as to whether the proposal is approved or not will likely be given in October/November. CEFS and EFFAT will inform members accordingly.

The objectives of the project would be to:

1. Map the social partners’ relationship across the EU from a qualitative perspective, collect good practices and assess the state of employment in the industry;
2. Discuss the future of the sector, including:
  - i. efforts to further increase sustainability and to re-orient beet sugar production facilities to the production of other beet-derived products;
  - ii. the potential for future jobs in the sector and the skills required of the workers in a new, integrated approach to biorefinery.
3. Explore how to increase the sector’s attractiveness to young workers in a modernised labour market.
4. How to facilitate intra-EU skills mobility.

The project would help the social partners EFFAT and CEFS to further develop a competitive, innovative and sustainable vision of the sector, leading the transition towards a post-petroleum society while decoupling economic growth from resource depletion and negative environmental and social impacts.

The participants noted the information.



### **3. EU sugar policy and market measures within the EU**

Mr Garcia Navarro (DG Agri) made a presentation (attached) regarding the High-Level Group on Sugar and presenting the main results of the report of the Group.

By way of background, on 19 November 2018, the Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development announced the establishment of a High-Level Expert Group on Sugar (HLG) at the AGRI-FISH Council meeting. The mandate of the HLG was twofold:

1. to discuss the current market situation as well as EU countries' and stakeholders' concerns about the EU sugar market.
2. to explore and evaluate possible solutions and policy measures as regards their effectiveness and suitability to tackle the problems identified.

The HLG held three meetings between January and June 2019. A report (that can be found [HERE](#)) summarises the work carried out by the HLG; The final report was discussed in the AGRI-FISH Council of 15 July 2019.

Discussions ensued with the participants reiterating their grave concern regarding the sugar market decline and unfair trading practices worldwide.

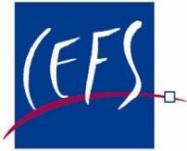
Representatives from both the employees and the employers' associations raised questions about the absence of concrete actions from the Commission. Price reporting is below the threshold since January 2018 and the Commission does not propose any solution. Members moreover highlighted the lack of consistency between Commission policies and decisions, using the example of the Mercosur trade agreement, which will allow sugar produced with products banned in the EU to be imported on the European market.

Action: the participants agreed to a common declaration (attached) denouncing again the inaction of the European Commission to stabilise the EU sugar market.

### **4. Policy updates from DG Employment**

Mr Joé Rieff (DG Employment) gave an overview (presentation attached) of the European Pillar of Social Rights proclaimed in 2017 and the different concrete legislative and non-legislative initiatives taken by the European Commission to promote equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions and social protection and inclusion.

A few examples of initiatives at European level which can improve the social situation of millions of Europeans significantly: Directive on Work-life balance, Directive on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions, Posting of Workers Directive, European Labour Authority, etc.



The participants noted the information.

## **5. Developments in collective bargaining in France**

Mr. Dominique Braoudé (SNFS) gave an overview (presentation attached) of the industrial relations and collective bargaining in the sugar sector in France in the wake of the recent reforms of decentralisation for collective bargaining.

Discussions ensued with the participants on social dialogue and the role of employee representatives, and on how to strengthen the function and efficiency of social partners.

The participants noted the information. For the next meeting, a joint presentation on developments in collective bargaining in another country should be prepared by members. CEFS and EFFAT to inform members accordingly.

## **6. Trade and sustainable development**

Mr. Tangui Cornu and Ms. Silvie Marien (FGTB ABVV Horval) made a presentation (attached) on the linkages between globalisation and solidarity, highlighting labour rights violations in Central America.

Discussions ensued with the participants on cheap sugar, violations of trade union rights in Latin America where employees are denied the right to organise and there are so many restrictions on the right to strike that it is practically impossible to exercise it.

Action: the participants noted the presentation. Together with FGTB ABV Horval and where appropriate, increase the EU institutions' awareness of their unsustainable free trade policies. Although this presentation focused on Central America, CEFS and EFFAT are also concerned with the situation in Brazil, especially in light of the Mercosur trade agreement. CEFS and EFFAT will therefore discuss the organisation of a meeting with MEPs and Permanent Representations officials to discuss social rights violations in the Mercosur trade agreement. EFFAT and CEFS will also invite DG Trade at the next plenary meeting.

## **7. AOB and conclusions**

Ms. Justine Richelle informed the participants that a CSR questionnaire will be circulated in due course to collect good practices on human rights, education and training, health and safety, industrial relations, fair pay, working conditions, restructuring, business relations and choice of suppliers. This year, particular attention will be paid to sustainability in various aspects: social and environmental. Participants are invited to share related developments (e.g. impact of bioeconomy on social aspects) in the questionnaire. Ms. Richelle thanked in advance the participants for their cooperation.

Ms. Dorte Nørtoft-Andersen thanked all participants, guests and interpreters and closed the meeting.



## **Annexes**

**Annex 1:** PowerPoint Presentation, DG Agriculture and Rural Development

**Annex 2:** PowerPoint Presentation, DG Employment, Social affairs and Inclusion

**Annex 3:** PowerPoint presentation, collective bargaining in France

**Annex 4:** PowerPoint presentation, global solidarity, FGTB ABVV Horval

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

### **EMPLOYERS**

RIBERA Marie-Christine – CEFS

RICHELLE Justine- CEFS

BRAOUDÉ Dominique (FR)

GARCIA GONZALEZ Ana Belen (ES)

GAWRYSZCZAK Michal (PL)

HIRMANN Sonja (AT)

NORTOFT ANDERSEN Dorte (DK)

PAGANI Patrick (IT)

### **WORKERS**

BRENTNALL Estelle (EFFAT)

MARTENS Oona (EFFAT)

BUDER Thomas (AT)

PETROV Slavcho (BG)

LUBAŚ Stanisław (PL)

DEBOWIAK Adrian (PL)

SZCZESZEK Tomasz (PL)

SANTOS RODRIGUEZ Miguel (ES)



FERNÁNDEZ GONZÁLEZ Francisco Javier (ES)



LAMBERG Francis (BE)

MAES Vinnie (BE)

MARIEN Silvie (BE)

CORNU Tangui (BE)

DOMBRET Pascal (BE)

DARLEY Sylvain (FR)

FERRONE Raffaele (IT)

RUFFOLO Pietro (IT)

SAVIGNANO Armando (IT)

ALVITI Gianni (IT)

GOK Isa (TR)

YAZIR Suleyman (TR)

PLUMB Mark (UK)

DAHLBERG Morten (DK)

LUND-LARSEN Jesper (DK)

### **EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

RIEFF Joe - DG EMPL

BEYLEMANS Gilberte- DG EMPL

GARCIA NAVARRO Miguel- DG AGRI