



Joint statement: Agri-food employers and workers on the war in Ukraine

The following statement has been prepared jointly by the European trade union Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT), the Employers' Group of Professional Agricultural Organisations (GEOPA) and the food manufacturers FoodDrinkEurope. Together these organisations, as sectoral social partners, represent the employers and workers that work in the agri-food sector.

We strongly condemn the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, express solidarity with the victims and join in the call for peace and dialogue at the earliest opportunity.

Our highest priority is to ensure the safety and protection of Ukrainian people and workers. Safe humanitarian corridors have to be established to allow civilians to leave the country and we thank all those ready to offer shelter and comfort to the victims of war.

We are also proud of the activities undertaken by our members so far. These include:

- Farmers and companies working with humanitarian groups and charities, providing food, medical supplies and cash donations and supporting aid efforts to help affected communities.
- EFFAT affiliates providing financial and material aid to workers in Ukraine, as well as helping in welcoming refugees and all people fleeing Ukraine, particularly in the neighbouring countries, but not only
- Solidarity funds being established by many trade union organisations, including by IUF, the global trade union organisation in the agri-food sector.
- Farmers welcoming refugees onto their farms and offering them accommodation and job opportunities.
- GEOPA affiliates collaborating with the European Labour Authority to ensure the availability of translated documents into Ukrainian to facilitate the integration of misplaced people.
- Companies ensuring that Ukrainian workers and their families in the areas under attack are as safe as possible, while continuing to receive their wages.

This war has important European and global consequences for the agri-food sector. The interruption of Ukrainian agricultural production and exports, as well as the legitimate sanctions imposed on Russia, will severely affect global markets and food supplies.

Ukraine is the EU's fourth biggest external food supplier and provides the EU with a quarter of its cereal and vegetable oil imports, including nearly half of its maize.

While primarily focusing on the ongoing conflict resolution, EU decisionmakers must also consider the impact on the agri-food sector and its workforce, an essential sector providing food all across the world.

Specifically, we ask the European Commission to:

- Implement emergency measures to minimise the impact of the war on workers and businesses in the agri-food sector. Such measures should include the continuation of measures successfully used by the EU to tackle the Covid-19 fallout, such as SURE. These measures can be refinanced and refocused to address the consequences of the war on the economy and employment, with a focus on intra-EU labour mobility and the need to ensure full equal treatment
- Put in place concrete measures to tackle high energy and food prices that may endanger access to food, particularly for the most vulnerable households
- Provide a detailed assessment of the actual and potential impact of the war on jobs in the EU agri-food sector
- Deliver an action plan to ensure fully functioning, sustainable and resilient food supply chains and food security in Europe and globally.

Finally, we welcome the activation of the Temporary Protection Directive by the European Council, where displaced people who left Ukraine can have access to the EU labour market and enjoy equal treatment with EU nationals. In this respect we also welcome the activation of the operational guidelines on border management by the Commission.

We call on Member States to guarantee the full range of rights provided by the Directive, which include access to the labour market, housing, health care, education and welfare support to all people in Ukraine fleeing the war.

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***EFFAT** is the European federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions representing 116 national trade unions from 37 European countries, EFFAT defends the interests of more than 25 million workers employed long the food chain. EFFAT is a member of the ETUC and the European regional organisation of the IUF.*

***FoodDrinkEurope** represents the food manufacturing industry. Made up of 294,000 businesses and 4.7 million workers, the food and drink industry buys 70% of all EU agricultural produce and is Europe's largest manufacturing industry.*

***GEOPA** is the Employers' Group of Professional Agricultural Organisations in the European Union. GEOPA represents over 20 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.*

EFFAT and FoodDrinkEurope are social partners in the Sectoral 'Social Dialogue' Food and Drink which includes discussions, consultations, negotiations and joint actions undertaken by our organisations representing employers and workers.

EFFAT and GEOPA are social partners in the Sectoral Social Dialogue in Agriculture which includes discussions, consultations, negotiations and joint actions undertaken by our organisations representing employers and workers.