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# Guidelines

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**The E.A.T.S. project aims to strengthen the European agri-food value chain, social dialogue and industrial relations in this sector.**

It does so by identifying and encouraging the best practices already in place in partner countries and, above all, by creating common guidelines for bargaining and social dialogue to be promoted at European level and in all member countries.

**Social dialogue is a consultation method that engages social parties (employers' associations and workers' organisations) and national and European public authorities on themes of macroeconomic dialogue and strategies to foster employment and social protection.**

Fundamental in the European Union's historical journey and decision-making processes, social dialogue is of particular importance in the agri-food sector, an outpost of the major social and economic transformations of our time (such as migrant work, inflation, resource dispersion and the problem of representation), with which they are closely intertwined.



Development of future social dialogue in the European agri-food sector is linked to some key themes: transition and ecological sustainability, as well as conservation of the land, biodiversity and rural areas.

**In order to face these challenges, E.A.T.S. has identified 4 areas of intervention for trade unions, employers' associations and institutions.**





## Participation of workers

**EATS promotes participative organisational models that companies can test, which also take the form worker representation.** The 'changing of the times' that we are experiencing requires workers to have a new leading role as they usher in an era of participation as a consolidated method of labour organisation, in order to juggle challenges and opportunities.

Worker participation in company life offers significant areas of possible application.  
**Participation can be:**

**Managerial**, which includes forms of co-management in the Supervisory Boards and the Board of Directors. One way in which this could be made possible is by integrating at least one worker representative from the company into the Boards.

**Financial**, which is dedicated to governing the distribution of profits to workers through the regulation of employees' contractual access to employee share schemes, together with the possibility for employee shareholders to entrust their voting rights to specific trusts, in order to collectively manage their rights arising from financial participation.

**Organisational**, which engages workers in innovative projects that improve the efficiency of the production processes in which the workers themselves are involved.

**Consultative**, which is developed in accordance with trade union representatives' right to be consulted in advance and on a compulsory basis.



This is a key element in reconciling work and capital, solidarity and competitiveness, as well as the company with the territory. Worker participation not only contributes to improving the organisational climate and internal cohesion, but can also lead to an improvement in business performance and competitiveness on the market. Workers who feel involved and valued tend to be more motivated, committed and productive, which can have a positive impact on financial results and the company's reputation. Furthermore, worker participation can help foster a better sense of belonging and responsibility towards the company and the local community.

Industrial relations based on worker participation must be founded on the principles of freedom, equity and reciprocity. They must be able to **generate value for both parties involved** by nurturing a climate of trust and collaboration that facilitates innovation, growth and **sustainable development**.

In order to achieve this goal, **investments must be made into training workers** involved along the company's entire production chain. Workers must be given the necessary tools to study, understand and even drive changes that ripple along the company's entire production change.




## Integration of foreign workers



**EATS encourages the implementation of an incentive system for employment in the agri-food sector, which facilitates integration of foreign workers and reconciles the need for seasonal labour in a constantly struggling sector with the goal of ensuring free and dignified employment for all the workers employed.** Only a safe and fair workplace can be a vehicle for emancipation and a means for integration, contributing to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers.

National and European trade unions play a key role in managing this process of change in the labour market. On the one hand, they must **renew their efforts to combat illicit labour brokering** and oppose exploitation of foreign workers. On the other, they must invest courageously in integration processes, facilitating the meeting, listening and dialogue between workers and developing appropriate tools for preventing the creation of ghettos, both formal and informal, within national bargaining.



Furthermore, the importance of international cooperation and solidarity amongst member states of the European Union in handling this common challenge must be emphasised. Sharing of responsibility and resources can contribute towards ensuring an efficient and humanitarian response to the phenomenon of migration, simultaneously fostering cohesion and integration inside the European Union.

**It is imperative that the European Union adopts inclusive policies founded on human rights principles in order to face the migration phenomenon.** It is crucial to recognise the positive contribution that migrants can bring to our societies and our economies, both in terms of cultural diversity and social enrichment, as well as in terms of contribution to the labour market and economic growth. **Only through an integrated and solidarity-based approach can we hope to overcome the challenges posed by migration.**

This requires a joint effort, at European and international level, to tackle the underlying causes of migration, including poverty, conflicts, climate change and violation of human rights in migrants' home countries. At the same time, it is essential that the protection and integration of migrants who reach European soil is guaranteed, by ensuring their access to essential services, fundamental rights and opportunities to actively participate in the social and economic life of the host communities.



## Aggregation of companies and organisations in the supply chain



**EATS promotes interventions at a local level to counter the fragmentation and heterogeneity of the agricultural sector, and coordination actions at a global level to face the complex and interconnected challenges of economic globalisation.**

'Global Value Chains' arise predominantly in the form of business coordination in an increasingly interconnected landscape. This model not only influences the practical organisation of production, but also the nature of collective representation of workers itself.

The spread of this new frontier of production has generated inequality and unbalance in supply chain relations, with significant repercussions in the agri-food sector especially. The often disadvantageous competition and reduced free enterprise in certain contexts highlights the need for coordinated and strategic action.

In this regard, trade unions must adopt innovative approaches which navigate within and along Global Value Chains with agility.

The main goal is to ensure effective representation of workers, even in contexts characterised by long and complex supply chains. This implies:

- **The need for synergistic action amongst trade unions.** Trade unions must actively collaborate to develop strategies and tools that allow significant representation of workers along the entire value chain. This could include the creation of transnational trade union networks and the promotion of sectoral agreements that establish minimum working standards and dignified conditions along the global supply chain.

- **Greater consumer awareness.** Consumers play an important role in fostering greater corporate responsibility. Consumer awareness concerns the ethical and sustainable production practices that may influence purchase decisions and push companies towards more responsible behaviour towards workers along supply chains.

- **Robust support from European and national institutions** to facilitate the trade unions' ability to effectively represent workers who are currently spread along fragmented and dispersive value chains.



# Increased social dialogue by institutions, companies and organisations in the supply chain



It is imperative that Social Dialogue focusses on the big ecological and social questions, in which the involvement and support of the public sector are crucial, both for developing effective regulations and acting as primary actors in decision making.

These topics of vital importance include **ecological transition; environmental sustainability; food sovereignty**, understood as preservation of the territory; biodiversity; and rural areas; as well as **health** and **safety** as a response to the climate crisis and territorial changes. Facing these challenges requires a coordinated joint effort from all those engaged in Social Dialogue.

Constructing an effective Social Dialogue also requires investment into creating spaces and mechanisms that facilitate active participation and transparency.

**It is important to ensure that information is accessible to all parties concerned and that there is a real opportunity to significantly contribute to the decision-making process.**



Each social organisation must invest significant resources and effort into actively promoting Social Dialogue as a fundamental method of communication, collaboration and negotiation between different social and institutional actors.

It is essential to understand that Social Dialogue is not simply an opportunity to facilitate European integration, but also a powerful tool for constructive comparison between the world of production and the world of work.

**Moreover, it is crucial that Social Dialogue relies on careful consideration of the interests and needs of all parties involved, trying to find balanced and sustainable solutions through an inclusive and fair approach that allows all voices to be heard and taken into consideration in the decision-making process. This requires continuous dedication to searching for solutions which can balance different perspectives and ensure fair and sustainable results.**



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# E.A.T.S

Empowering Agri-Food Chain  
Through Social Dialogue



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