

CEFS and EFFAT joint project:

“A transforming European sugar industry - New and better jobs in a competitive, innovative and sustainable industry”

The 1st workshop of the joint sugar project brought together around 60 experts discussing the key role of the sugar industry for jobs, innovation and sustainability.

Today, beet sugar factories offer skilled, remunerative industrial employment at the heart of the rural communities. In some of the EU's most vulnerable rural areas, the factories support almost 362,000 between direct and indirect jobs: **1 job generates 14 jobs along the chain.**

Urgent challenges lie ahead for the sector: mitigating and adapting to climate change, reaching carbon neutrality, untapping the potential for bio-based products, making a greener economy happen; this goes hand in hand with social sustainability and the need to adapt to change such as digitalisation. Participants discussed all the above, trying to project the needs for future jobs.

Opening the meeting **Marie-Christine Ribera**, CEFS Director General stressed the crucial role of the social partners, EFFAT and CEFS and said: *“There are no simple and straightforward solutions to the current crisis and further challenges, but we are mutually committed to creating the leadership and collaboration needed to ensure the continued competitiveness and sustainability of our industry.”*

The meeting was an opportunity to share current best practices, such as **COPROB Italia Zuccheri and Nordic Sugar**: here trade unions and management worked together to safeguard competences until the retirement age, ensuring physical and mental health and enhance the transfer of skills between age groups. Those concrete work floor examples, allowed for a fruitful exchange.

The meeting shed light on the capacity of innovation of the sugar sector: The example of **Cosun Beet Company** where their 1kg sugar bags can be produced out of sugar beet pulp was presented. Another example of a sector where a use is found for every part of the beet.

The support of public authorities for a sector like sugar being deeply implemented in rural areas is key. This needs to go hand in hand with social responsibility and ensuring coherence between the different EU policies that push for and environmental and climate ambition, including trade.

Focus was put on the partnership in production but as well between the social partners through social dialogue and collective bargaining.

The meeting also addressed the importance of workers' upskilling for the optimisation of the sugar industry as well as the need to ensure the employability of an ageing workforce.

Kristjan Bragason, EFFAT General Secretary stressed: *“As social partners we must focus on minimising the impact on our members and shape the future of this industry through strong social dialogue and collective bargaining. Only then we're ready to create a truly innovative, competitive and sustainable European Sugar Industry that provides quality jobs.”*



Founded in 1953, **CEFS** represents **European beet sugar manufacturers**, cane sugar producers and refiners covering sugar production in 18 EU countries (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden) plus the United Kingdom and Switzerland

EFFAT is the **European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions**. As a European Trade Union Federation representing 120 national trade unions from 35 European countries, EFFAT defends the interests of more than 22 million workers employed along the food chain. EFFAT is a member of the ETUC and the European regional organisation of the IUF.