



PRESS RELEASE

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European Social Partners EFFAT and FoodDrinkEurope launch European Social Dialogue in the Food and Drink Industry

(23 January 2012) At their first plenary meeting, the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT) and FoodDrinkEurope signed today a joint agreement to start social dialogue in the European food and drink industry, under the auspices of the European Commission.

The setting up of the Committee stems from Recommendation 18 adopted in 2009 by the “High Level Group for the Competitiveness of the Agro Food Industry”, a multi-stakeholder forum which regroups EU Institutions as well as business and civil society actors along the EU food supply chain.

The food and drink sector is the largest industrial manufacturing sector of the EU27 representing 4.2 million employees and a turnover of nearly 1 trillion Euros. The start of a social dialogue process at a European level is therefore a major achievement.

Speaking after the signature of the agreement, Mella Frewen, Director General of FoodDrinkEurope recalled that “in 2009, we did not have the mandate for social issues and therefore could not endorse this Recommendation. We are really pleased that today this is no longer an obstacle, and we look forward to a fruitful partnership with our partner EFFAT. We have now our agreed Terms of Reference and Work Programme and I am sure that we will achieve a lot together”.

For Harald Wiedenhofer, EFFAT General Secretary “the launch of Social Dialogue in the EU Food and Drink Industry is an even greater accomplishment as this was the last large industrial sector of the European Union where there was no formal cooperation between European social partners. With today’s signature EFFAT and Food Drink Europe fill in that gap and open up to a large number of options and possibilities for joint work to make the EU Food and Drink Industry – which makes the pride of the EU – both more competitive and socially sustainable. This joint objective becomes particularly important in the context the socio-economic crisis the EU is currently facing and calls on the Food and Drink Industry social partners to do their part”.

EFFAT and FoodDrinkEurope look forward to develop the actions laid out in their ambitious work programme for 2012 which sets the basis for a constructive future collaboration.

Finally, for Michael Andritzky from the German Food and Drink Industry and newly elected chair Social Dialogue Committee “we will start cooperating by looking at ways to enhance skills and employability in the sector with a view to grant better access to young workers to industry jobs and by taking up the challenge of managing an increasingly aging workforce.” At the close of



their first Social Dialogue Plenary meeting, social partners emphasized their willingness to build a solid and constructive cooperation.

EFFAT: EFFAT is the European Trade Union Confederation representing 2,6 million workers through 120 national trade unions from 35 European countries employed in the food processing, agriculture, tobacco, hotel, catering and tourism industries across the EU.

FoodDrinkEurope: FoodDrinkEurope's membership is made up of 25 national federations, including 3 observers, 26 European sector associations and 18 major food and drink companies.

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