

1st SafeHabitus Webinar

“Views from the fields: case-studies of migrant workers experiences in the European Agriculture.”



Setting the Scene: Industrial Agriculture & Migrant Work in Europe

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1. From the peasant-family model to Fordism in agriculture
2. Migrations and agriculture
3. Some general features

1. From the peasant-family model to Fordism in agriculture

According to Eurostat, about 94,8% of Eu's farms are family farms **but** there is a decline of 1,4 million farms between 2005-2020

Although 2/3 of farms are still small (>5ha) **82,4% of EU's utilised agricultural area** is in the hands of cooperative and companies holding farms over 20ha



1. From the peasant-family model to Fordism in agriculture

There is a constant transfer from smallest to biggest farms, in fact the core of EU's fresh food production relies on **industrial agriculture**

Main Features of industrial agriculture – Californian Model:

- From petty commodity production to capitalist production
- Wage labour
- Increased capital investment
- Creation of Agricultural Enclaves (from the seed to the truck)
- Agrochemicals
- Machinery, digitalization...
- Proliferation of Greenhouses

According to Eurostat Spain & Italy produce about **45% of the total production** of fresh fruits and vegetables thanks to their industrial sector



Province of Almeria (Spain)
1960-2020

2. Migrations and agriculture

While more workforce as demanded, ageing and depopulation of rural areas threatened the sustainability of the sector

The unattractiveness of working in industrial agriculture:

- Low salaries
- Strenuous work
- Spatial and social isolation

Rising migrations in countries where industrial agriculture was rising solved the equation



3. Some general features

Complex migration itineraries: Intra-EU, Seasonal/Circular migration, Permanent stay

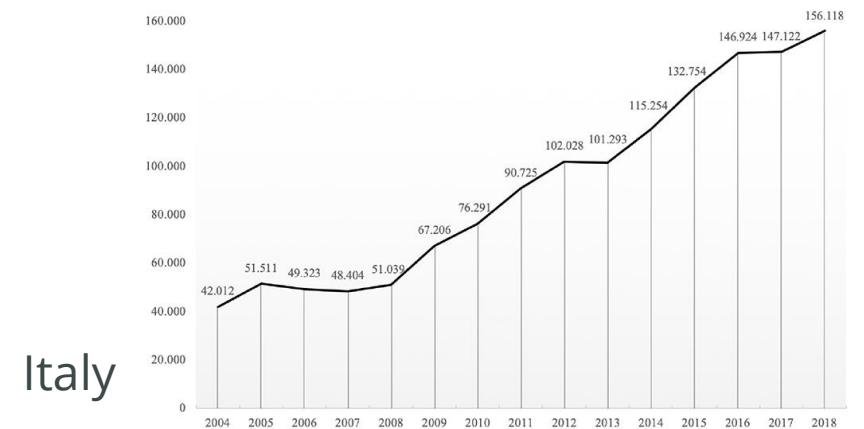
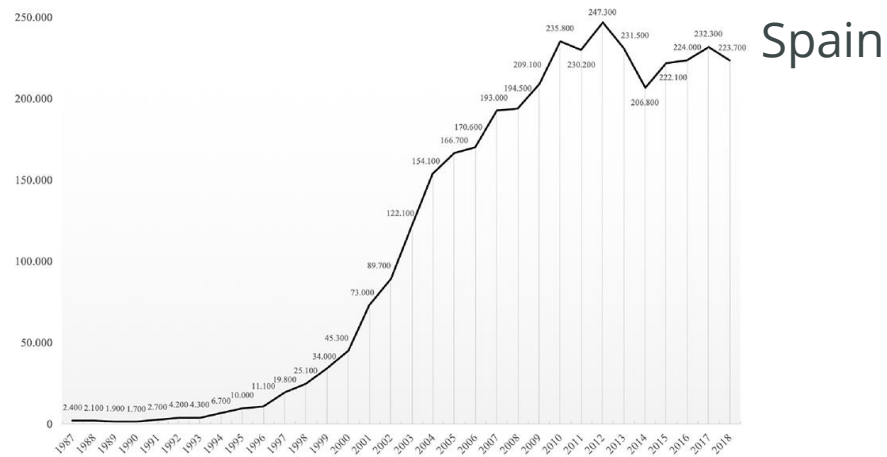
Legal status: Residence permits, Irregular, Posted Workers

Housing: Farm Facilities, Slums, Vagrancy

Working Conditions: Exploitation, Piece Work, Blacklisting

Spain “In Huelva, I met with workers living in a migrant settlement in conditions that rival the worst I have seen anywhere in the world” Philip Alston, **United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights**, on his visit to Spain, 27 January – 7 February 2020

Italy “In my visit to a ghetto in Apulia, I witnessed the terrible working and living conditions for agricultural migrant workers where some lived in overcrowded accommodation with scarce access to water and without access to electricity, sanitation or basic needs” Ms. Hilal Elver, **United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food**, on her visit to Italy, 20-31 January 2020



4. Conclusions

Migrants are **essential** and they were declared as this during the pandemic by the vast majority of countries, including the EU

Although extreme situations do not represent the whole sector, the **social problem is huge**

Some contexts as Southern Italy, this is the **predominant situation**

EU Parliament was concerned about this and promoted **Social Conditionality** in the CAP

Migrants have organized themselves in different Trade Unions and Associations: ASNUCI (Huelva- Spain), ALAFA (Murcia-Spain), USB (Italy), CODETRAS (Bouches du Rhône, France)...

Strikes, demonstrations... but temporality and deportability make this workforce mobile thus weak

Thank you

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