

## Europe needs a clear strategy on the issue of migrant and seasonal workers on farms

*SafeHabitus Policy Seminar*

[Brussels, 10 April 2024] —Policymakers and stakeholders working on labour and migrant issues gathered today at The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in the framework of the Horizon Europe funded SafeHabitus Project to discuss policies impacting the lives of migrant and seasonal workers on European farms.

The depopulation of rural areas in Europe combined with shortages of labour across multiple economic sectors has led to growing demand for seasonal and migrant workers from EU member states and third countries. In addition to the challenging working conditions faced by all who work in farming, such workers may find themselves vulnerable to abuse or inadequate living conditions or limited access to basic services. This event provided a forum for policymakers and stakeholders from the public sector and civil society to exchange on ways to address these challenges and drive positive change with the aim of sharing the outcomes of the seminar with the agri-food Strategic Dialogue.

Peter Schmidt, President of the EESC Sustainable Development (NAT) Section highlighted the importance of starting the dialogue on this topic: "Seasonal and migrant workers are often overlooked in agri-food chains. Advancing sustainable food systems means ensuring fair prices for everyone involved. This seminar is a crucial step towards meaningful policy proposals.,,"

Yoan Molinero and Juan Castillo from the University Institute for Studies on Migration (IUEM) of the Comillas University in Madrid, called for changes in the current approach to migrant workers: "Migrant farmwork and labour exploitation are too often synonymous in European agriculture. It is time to change this."

According to Alun Jones (CJHEAM Zaragoza) who is Policy Lead for SafeHabitus: "We have heard many experiences today from successful practice and policy cases which show us that we can achieve better working conditions for migrant workers in agriculture but still much more needs to be done. Recommendations from this Seminar will focus on those improvements necessary to achieve the goals of the EU Social Pillar in agriculture.,,"

Speaking at the end of the seminar, leader of the SafeHabitus project Dr David Meredith stated: "[Improving working conditions for migrant and seasonal workers demands collaboration from all actors in the value chain and support from policy makers and stakeholders. We were privileged to jointly host this seminar with the European Economic and Social Committee. The commitment and passion of the speakers and participants highlights the opportunity to build on this knowledge and expertise to inform future policy development at both EU and National levels. The SafeHabitus team look forward to working with policymakers and stakeholders to develop recommendations that support improved working conditions for all those who produce the food that we all depend on.,,"

The policy seminar was part of a series of policy seminars designed to foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing among policy makers, stakeholders, practitioners, and researchers. It has been organised by SafeHabitus consortium members [IAMZ CIHEAM](#), [TEAGASC](#), [GEOPA](#), [CEJA](#) and [AEIDL](#).

**More information:** <https://www.safehabitus.eu/event/safehabitus-policy-seminar-seasonal-and-migrant-workers-in-agri-food-value-chains/>

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