



FOR SECTORAL SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES IN AGRICULTURE  
EUROPEAN PROJECT VS/2013/0407



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
EFFECTIVE SECTORAL SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES IN  
AGRICULTURE THROUGH  
SOCIAL PARTNERS' CONCERTED ACTION

**TRANSNATIONAL BROCHURE**



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Effective Sectoral Social Security Schemes in  
Agriculture through  
Social Partners' Concerted Action

Sofia,  
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The purpose of this Brochure is to provide an overview and analysis of social security systems with a focus on the good practices of supplementary and dedicated social security schemes in agriculture. It aims to foster dialogue among sectoral social partners, encourage proactive steps on their part in order to solve the problems of agricultural workers in situations of crises, structural changes and financial instability, and promote their commitment in shaping social reality.

This publication is the result of partners and experts' collective work and a contribution to the development of effective social dialogue in the sector and to the discussion on improving agricultural workers' social security.

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**This transnational brochure was developed within the framework of the European project** entitled *Promoting social dialogue in the sector of Agriculture in the new member states toward developing Sectoral Social Schemes as a tool for combating precarious work places, poverty and social exclusion of the agricultural workers* implemented by the Partnership with the financial support of the European Union for a period of one year. The brochure was developed as a continuation of the work done in the context of the situational analysis of social security in agriculture in the nine project partner countries and on the basis of shared experience and practices between partners during the regional workshops as part of the project cycle; it reflects the results of the discussions and in-depth efforts put forth by the project partners for the purpose of proposing concerted action by the social partners for improving social security for agricultural workers in Europe. The good examples of useful practices discussed in this publication were presented in detail to the participants in the regional workshops and served as a starting point for the development of the National Action Plans summarized further on in this brochure.

The purpose of the brochure is to present summarized information about the good practices in the field of additional/dedicated sectoral social security schemes which should encourage social partners in the sector to have a proactive approach and maintain dialogue in solving problems in agriculture in situations of crisis, structural changes and financial insecurity. The place and importance of social dialogue in this process is presented in great depth, including its two aspects: the national and the European level, and its purpose is to promote social partners' active participation and engagement in the shaping of social reality.

Knowledge of the experience of the nine countries where specific sectoral schemes are available to workers in agriculture can be a very good and useful foundation for making socially responsible decisions and initiating legislative action at least on the national level, especially in new Member States and candidate countries participating in this project, as well as for proposing a common document to the partners concerning the improvement of the access to and coverage of social security in this extremely important economic sector through efforts to build adequate social security constructions based on the interaction between all key partners, i.e. social partners and the government.

This Brochure together with the Analytical Study which depicts the existing situation, the issues and possible solutions for the improvement of social protection for persons working in the agricultural sector will be presented broadly to the general public and the European institutions which are relevant to the subject matter and participate actively in the process of the European sectoral social dialogue and decision-making.

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude for the dedication of all partners: experts and participants who were involved in the discussions and provided the necessary information, their own contribution and suggestions in the development of the two documents, i.e. the Brochure and the Analytical Study which were the result of our joint work under the project.

## 1. THE TOPIC

### **Social Security and Social Dialogue in Agriculture. The Role of Social Dialogue in the Social Protection System**

In today's Europe, social dialogue and industrial relations in agriculture are the only toolkit for the development of the European social model in modern democracy. Furthermore, they are the adequate mechanisms to ensure balance and synergy between competition, the market environment, economic accomplishments and social protection, security and fairness in situations of economic crises, negative demographic trends and the global economy. Social dialogue is an integral part of the *acquis communautaire*. European social dialogue on all levels and in all shapes is an important tool to achieve balance between economic success and the social project (the Maastricht Treaty) and is seen as a new method of governance at the European level and of active involvement of social partners in the decision-making process and in governance.

Social security is among the key topics in the discussions between social partners, which have formulated clearly defined priorities: the rights of seasonal workers, the consequences of the restructuring of the sector in the last 20 years, the free movement of workers, the access to and the guarantee of better working conditions and social security.

Guaranteed social protection is of key importance for the successful development of society.

European countries have different systems for social protection which have been shaped by history, demographics, the standard of living, and the different socio-economic and institutional arrangements in different nations. It is a fact that the single market and the Treaties create and will continue to determine the need of a higher level of coordination of social affairs in the European Union.

#### **A historical review is important**

Social security systems, including pension, unemployment, occupational accident and health insurance, emerged as a result of the large-scale social changes at the end of the 18th century. Fast industrialization processes gave rise to the working class, which managed to organize itself and gained important social rights. While those processes occurred mostly in urban areas, most rural areas continue to live by the old feudal arrangements. The backward alliance between the aristocracy, farmers and reactionary conservative (and not only conservative) forces, which persisted for a long period of time, hindered the harmonization of the situation of industrial workers and the situation of dependent workers in agriculture. In this way, land owners and mostly squires of aristocratic descent who owned large plots of land managed to preserve their privileges obtained over the centuries even until the present day.

A significant aspect of this development is the ever continuing denial on the part of those in power to involve workers in the decision-making process in enterprises. This lack of democracy can also be seen in a purely economic sense. At present, agricultural workers in many regions cannot participate in the distribution of accumulating public wealth. The harmonization of living standards and working conditions in agriculture with the overall



economic standard is a process that occurred in only but a few European regions.

Nowadays, all political levels continue to talk openly about **poverty** in rural areas and the problem with poverty is expected to be exacerbated in the future. Often poverty in agriculture is the effect of poverty of the respective rural region.

Within the framework of this particular European project, our task was not to describe and rethink the history of social processes in European agriculture. (Such a description would take a lot of efforts and may be the subject of future actions.) However, we will not be able to infer and highlight the significance of social dialogue for social security systems unless we took into account and discussed the major historical milestones and the development of agriculture in the context of general developments in society.

Although it seems insufficient to start with the establishment of the European Economic Community, we will present a brief overview of the development of the European Union and the significance of social security in the context of social dialogue. Wherever it is possible and important, we will highlight the specific situation in agriculture. We need to point out, however, that very little work has been done on this topic.

For those reasons, the overview is rather sketchy and leaves room for further discussion.

The process of Europe's unification cannot be understood without an account of Europe's post war development. In 1945, when the whole of Europe was in ashes and ruins, broad political circles reaching as far as the conservatives insisted on the democratization of society and the unbundling of the State mostly from the big coal, steel and chemical concerns.

And here it goes...

### **1952 The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)**

With the reconciliation of the two primordial enemies France and Germany whose feud lasted for centuries, far-seeing Europeans thought that this was their chance to unite Europe. An important step in that direction is the Treaty of Paris establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) signed on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1951 and entering into force on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1952.

### **1958 The establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC)**

The above-mentioned aspirations to democratization of the economy were soon dominated by the conservative forces and it was therefore logical that the process of unification of Europe did not continue along the path of social development and democratization but resulted instead in the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) and economic rapprochement. With the signing of the **Treaty of Rome** on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1957, the EEC was established as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1958 between six countries: Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.

In the years to follow, through its regulations for the coal and steel industry and agricultural policy, this union had a decisive impact on the living and working conditions of people who worked in those sectors. Due to the lessons of the war and the fast economic boom in Western European countries, many trade union members supported the processes of unification of Europe. However, as a result of the emerging Cold War the trade union movement

was split in two: the World Federation of Trade Unions was more affiliated with Communism, while the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions established in 1948 was mostly about social democratic and Christian values.

As a result of this entire process, the Treaty establishing the **European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)** envisaged wide-ranging rights for workers. **An advisory committee** was set up under the supreme body of the ECSC where workers, manufacturers and consumers had one third of the seats each and to which the Supreme body should report on a regular basis about the general thrust of its work.

However, this was not what trade unions called for, i.e. to have a body where the seats will be equally divided between **workers and employers** and which should have the power to act on its own initiative on all matters related to social policy<sup>1</sup>. Yet the rights to participate in the decision-making and policy-making processes acquired in the ECSC are an example that trade unions would follow in their further steps in the development of European integration. In this context, it is interesting to note that a European network of trade unions and representatives of political parties was created. Under the presidency of Jean Monnet, on October 13<sup>th</sup>, 1955 the core of this network was consolidated into an Action Committee for the United States of Europe whose purpose was to move Europe's unification further, beyond the ECSC.

The influence and role of trade unions in the establishment of the European Economic Community polarized strongly the opinions in the scientific and political debate. According to some, trade unions took a defensive stance, while others claimed that the creation of a European alliance would boost the formation of a trade union counterweight in Europe.

Indeed, national trade union confederations were genuinely and actively engaged in the formulation of the Treaty of Rome from July 1956 until March 1957 in the Château of Val-Duchesse.

However, Member States' governments did not take on board the demands of trade unions and did not incorporate them in the Treaty. Solely the **Economic and Social Committee** (ESC) was included in the Treaty in the last round of negotiations on the initiative of the Belgian government. ESC powers remained far from what trade unions insisted on. Many other trade union demands were ignored as well. Here is what the president of CGT Antoine Crier found:

- ✓ The Treaty did not take into account but rather ignored social problems;
- ✓ There was not a single article in the Treaty which should ensure social harmonization;
- ✓ There were no provisions on the restructuring of the economy that would ensure better living and working conditions;
- ✓ ESC was deprived of the power of own initiative and could not be involved in joint commissions tasked with solving specific problems;

<sup>1</sup> Fattman, Rainer, Für ein soziales Europa, Der Agrar-, Lebensmittel und Tourismusbereich in der europäischen Gewerkschaftspolitik seit der Gründung der europäischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft, Münster 2013, p. 44



- ✓ Trade Unions were not properly represented in the European Social Fund and the Investment Bank;

- ✓ There was no European Employment Agency, which should be managed jointly and would tackle protection issues affecting young workers<sup>2</sup>.

Despite the disappointment caused by trade unions' underrepresentation, it should be noted that many historians recognize the important role of trade unions in the preparation and signing of the Treaty of Rome mostly through their activities in their respective countries. After the Treaty was signed, many trade unions confirmed that they would continue to participate in the building of united Europe. As a logical consequence, a European trade union secretariat was in the making since January 1958.

In the Treaty of Rome agriculture was included as part of the common market, the foundation for a Common Agricultural Policy was laid and its main objectives were defined in article 39. The objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy shall be *"...to increase agricultural productivity by promoting technical progress and by ensuring the rational development of agricultural production and the optimum utilisation of the factors of production, in particular labour. [T]hus to ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural community, in particular by increasing the individual earnings of persons engaged in agriculture."*

In order to clarify the somewhat controversial goals of the Treaty, in July 1958 in Stresa on the lake Lago Maggiore **an Agrarian Conference** was held with the participation of social partners. An important outcome of the conference was **the Resolution**, which said that *"...agriculture is an integral part of the economy and an important factor for social life. ...Structural policy should ensure revenue to the labour and the capital such as in other similar sectors. It is also noted that professional reorientation of workers laid off from agricultural operations and the intensified industrialization of rural areas will gradually make it possible to resolve the problems in those border areas, which cannot be cost effective from a purely economic standpoint<sup>3</sup>."*

#### **1963<sup>4</sup> Joint Advisory Committees on Social Questions affecting Paid Agricultural Workers**

With the entry into force of the common market organization in 1962, the Commission appointed the first advisory committees for the most important agricultural products. Those committees helped the Commission and more specifically the competent directorate for Agriculture with the technical preparation and implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy and the related income of workers. In this way, the Commission responded to the wish of professional organizations, including agricultural trade unions, to be consulted and involved in the formulation and implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy. Initially, five advisory committees were set up: for grain, pork, eggs and poultry, fruits and vegeta-

bles, and wine; and other committees were set up subsequently<sup>5</sup>.

The first agreement within the Joint Advisory Committee on Social Questions Affecting Agricultural Workers was signed on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1968 and dealt with the harmonization of working time for workers involved in land cultivation. Three years later a similar agreement was reached for workers in livestock farming as well. Although those agreements were not legally binding, the president of the then German Union of Horticulture, Agriculture and Forestry Workers (GGLF) and president of the European Free Alliance found out that in 1973 all national agreements that existed were above the European threshold.

#### **1974<sup>6</sup> Demands for a generally applicable European "social basis" or respectively for ensuring respect for basic social rights were more and more in the spotlight.**

**In 1985**, the president of the Commission Jacques Delors invited representatives of the most influential trade unions for a discussion at Val-Duchesse. Social dialogue was born in that process of discussions.

**1987<sup>7</sup>** With the adoption of the **Single European Act** (SEA) in 1985 a new role was given to the social dimension, which included social dialogue. With the affirmation of the will to establish a European Union the process of integration received a fresh boost. One of the goals was also to finalize the establishment of the common European market by December 31st, 1992, and the decisions concerning the common market should be made by a majority as a general rule. The number of fields increased with the addition of research and technology, the environment, and social policy. Economic and social unity was planned to be achieved through a new concept for the use of structural funds and EC financing facilities.

With ample veto powers given to national governments, those objectives and initiatives were watered down. Yet the Single European Act helped EU social policy regain its importance.

"The Charter is seen as a political instrument containing „moral obligations“ whose object is to guarantee that certain social rights are respected in the countries concerned. These relate primarily to the labour market, vocational training, social protection, equal opportunities and health and safety at work. It also contains an explicit request to the Commission to put forward proposals for translating the content of the Charter into legislation. The Charter has been followed up by action programmes and specific legislative proposals<sup>8</sup>."

The social agreement differed from previous provisions of the Treaty as follows:

- ✓ The powers of the Community were increased with respect to social policy and most of all with respect to the minimum social standards;
- ✓ The decision-making procedure was simplified because the Social agreement stipulated that decisions in different areas would be adopted by a qualified majority of the

<sup>2</sup> See Fattmann in the same paper, p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> Schmalz, Hellmut, Agrarpolitik ohne Scheuklappen, Cologne 1973, p. 98.

<sup>4</sup> COMMISSION DECISION of 17 MAY 1963 setting up a Joint Advisory Committee on Social Questions affecting Paid Agricultural Workers (63/326/EEC) – Official Journal 1534/63 of May 29th, 1963

<sup>5</sup> Fattman, p.120.

<sup>6</sup> COMMISSION DECISION of 25 JULY 1974 relating to the setting-up of a Joint Committee on Social Problems of Agricultural Workers (74/442/EEC), excerpt from the Official Journal L 243

<sup>7</sup> COMMISSION DECISION of 31 JULY 1987 amending Decision 74/442/EEC relating to the setting up of a Joint Committee on Social Problems of Agricultural Workers (87/445/EEC)

<sup>8</sup> [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/glossary/social\\_charter\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/social_charter_en.htm)



Council of the EU and not by unanimity;

✓ Social dialogue that was nurtured by the European Commission since the mid-1980s developed and became a whole new institutional agreement for the political system of the EC/EU whereby the outcomes of European collective bargaining by trade union federations could be transposed in community law.

**In 1992 the Maastricht Treaty** was the first treaty that gave trade unions the possibility to conduct autonomous collective bargaining negotiations on the European level and to sign legally binding agreements which similarly to the escalation of national collective agreements could become part of Community law. The result was an intensified cooperation between key players from Member States representing workers and employers in their respective European organizations: the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), Business Europe (the former UNICE) and CEEP (for employers providing public services<sup>9</sup>). Those provisions (articles 137 and 138) continue to be in force without any modifications and were enshrined in articles 154 and 155 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Despite those increased powers, political activity in the context of the social agreements was slow in the period between 1993 and 1999. Only four directives were drafted on that basis.

**1989 The borders are opening.** With the opening of the borders in Europe the balance between economic and social policy was disturbed again. The European Union's greatest interest was to set foot on, or one may even say to conquer, as quickly as possible the newly opened Eastern European market. As a result, countries in Central and Eastern Europe experienced a real shock in the social sphere. EU companies started buying out enterprises in candidate countries indiscriminately and very often their goal was not to retrofit them but to eliminate the competition. Production and marketing structures in agriculture were created and reshaped and those processes affected the food processing sector the most, i.e. sugar refineries, dairy operations, etc. State-owned enterprises were sold out, cooperatives were dismantled and land was either sold or restituted to its original owners. As a result of those processes, many people lost their jobs and this effect was felt most severely in rural areas because alternative employment was hardly available. Many used the opportunity offered by the opening European labour market and in most cases left their home countries to become seasonal agricultural workers in Western Europe. This was an attractive option for employers because there was a great difference in pay scales between the East and the West at that time and even now, and there was an influx of inexpensive workforce. In addition, due to the special social security provisions carried through by employers' organizations, employers did not pay a large part of the social security contributions either.

The protection of workers' interests in candidate countries got off on the wrong foot. Often the old trade unions were politically discredited and had to undergo reforms. New

<sup>9</sup> <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sozialprotokoll>

trade unions emerged as well. Employers' organizations in the private sector were yet to be established and put to work, which is a process that is still ongoing in some places. As a result of all those circumstances, social dialogue in candidate countries was a difficult process. A helping hand was extended by the European Commission, Western trade unions and employers' organizations and by some Western European Member States and foundations. Tripartite cooperation was promoted as a good example that should be followed, numerous events, seminars and conferences were held. However, government players in that tripartite cooperation kept their old structures and did not allow for the development of open structures where social partners could have a place as well. Due to the weakness of social partners, there are still many pending problems in social dialogue. Often candidate countries witnessed national confederations taking over the representation of workers' interests in tripartite bodies, which meant that specific issues related to agriculture would be discussed only implicitly. Due to budgetary constraints in candidate countries, social security systems that used to be managed by the State had almost collapsed, if it were not for the dramatic cut in the services that were provided. Getting closer to western standards was unthinkable.

**1998<sup>10</sup>** The existing joint committees were replaced by sectoral dialogue committees. The Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in Agriculture coordinates binding instruments and recommendations between social partners and recommends measures to the Commission and European institutions to improve the social condition of agricultural workers. The Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in Agriculture represents and protects the interests of over 7 million workers and over 1 million employers in European agriculture.

The major key players in this process are the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT) and the European employers' organization of farmers COPA-GEOPA. (*EFFAT brings together the sectoral trade union organizations from all 28 EU Member States and other organizations from the remaining European countries. COPA-GEOPA is a membership type of employers' organization in the sector of agriculture which is recognized by the European Commission and is comprised of the national employers' organizations in agriculture which negotiate tariffs and social matters on the national level.*)

The meetings of the Committee are held with about 25 members representing trade unions and employers in the sector and are summoned four times a year; in the last meeting for the year held in December they decide on their annual priorities for discussion. The working groups discuss topics such as employment, training and education, working conditions, vacancies, transparency on the labour market in the sector, etc.

Between 1978 and 2011 the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in Agriculture had significant accomplishments such as:

✓ In 1968, social partners in the sector reached an agreement on the Europe-wide

<sup>10</sup> COMMISSION DECISION of 20 MAY 1998 on the establishment of Sectoral Dialogue Committees promoting the Dialogue between the social partners at European level (notified under document number C(1998) 2334) (98/500/EC)



introduction of the 45-hour working week in agriculture;

- ✓ In 1978, social partners in the sector reached an agreement on the Europe-wide introduction of a 40-hour working week in the agricultural and horticultural sector;
- ✓ In 1979, social partners in the sector reached an agreement on working time (including overtime, rest periods and night work) for livestock farming in Europe;
- ✓ In 1981, an Opinion was issued on the prevention of accidents in agriculture and the relationship between the elimination of technical barriers to trade in agricultural tractors and safety;
- ✓ In 1982, a Joint Opinion was issued on safety requirements for the construction of agricultural buildings;
- ✓ In 1997, a Framework Agreement was signed on the improvement of paid employment in agriculture in the Member States of the European Union;
- ✓ In 2000, a White Paper was published on Securing Employment through Vocational and Continuing Training in European Agriculture;
- ✓ In 2001, a Manual was published containing safety recommendations for the use of plant protection chemicals;
- ✓ In 2002, a Safety Manual was published for the forestry sector;
- ✓ In 2004, a Framework Agreement was signed on the reduction of workers' exposure to the risk of work-related musculo-skeletal disorders in agriculture;
- ✓ In 2007, a Resolution was adopted on the creation of a skills passport (skills and competencies) in agriculture (AGRIPASS).

### 2014 The current situation

The social protection system in Europe is diverse due to the varying historical, social, economic and cultural developmental processes in different countries.

The European Union is primarily an economic union. A commonly accepted view is that what is good for the economy is good for the people and improves their well-being and social cohesion. The development of many European countries has shown that this political view is fundamentally wrong. Many so-called Eurosceptics and the people who vote for them believe that the process of Europe's unification was to their detriment. Often criticisms towards national governments are mixed with criticisms towards Europe. Ultimately, politicians are unable to build a socially balanced and sustainable economic model.

The social protection system is comprised of many different laws and measures and it is difficult to delineate its exact boundaries because they are a matter of perspective. For trade unions, the workers' perspective matters the most. Here is a list of the most important areas of social protection according to the current view of (agricultural) trade unions, key development trends and measures within the framework of social dialogue.

**Health and Safety at Work.** Health and safety at work is a major topic for trade unions since it is directly related to the production process. This is also the most adequately regulated area between social partners in the European Union. There are multiple technical provisions at the European level and the voice of social partners is heard when important questions are at stake. Social partners were the initiators of the following agreements:

**2004: Agreement on musculo-skeletal disorders.** A European agreement on the reduction of workers' exposure to the risk of work-related musculo-skeletal disorders in agriculture was signed promoting a number of national initiatives aimed at enhancing health and safety in agriculture.

**2011: Health and Safety for the Operation of Agricultural Machinery,** resolutions on tractor safety.

However, many problems pertaining to occupational health and safety still persist and their solution is pending. Some of them have been discussed in the context of social dialogue, such as a maximum weight of 25 kg per package, cameras for rear motion of large heavy machinery, workers who operate alone.

**Unemployment Benefits and Employment Policy.** After 1992, the European Commission set up the Open Method of Coordination in the field of employment: Member States present reports and local action programmes which are assessed by the Commission. Thus, the Commission obtains a general overview and gives country specific guidance to each Member State. The desired coordination of national employment policies **is not compulsory**, the Commission is not in a position to impose sanctions which makes it impossible to use this route to achieve social convergence<sup>11</sup>. The Commission must rely on Member States' voluntary participation. There is no explicit aspiration towards harmonization. Social policy and employment policy are among the few political areas which remain strictly a prerogative of the Member States. According to article 129 of the EC Treaty the Commission can adopt: "incentive measures designed to encourage cooperation between Member States and to support their action in the field of employment<sup>12</sup>" such as exchanges of information and best practices, comparative analysis, promoting innovative approaches, pilot projects.

**EURES** is the acronym for **EUR**opean **E**mployment **S**ervices; it is a European network promoting cross-border mobility on the labour market established in 1993. This network is comprised of government administrations in charge of employment, trade unions and employers' organizations. The European Commission coordinates the operation of the network.

**Pension Insurance.** In the light of demographic changes, the financing of pensions is an important topic for the future. With its *White Paper – An Agenda for adequate, safe and sustainable pensions*<sup>13</sup> the European Commission determined a direction for the development of pension systems. Although the White Paper is not binding for the Member States, it sets a direction that they will find hard to deviate from. Some of the key recommendations are:

- ✓ link the retirement age with increases in life expectancy;
- ✓ restrict access to early retirement schemes and other early exit pathways;
- ✓ support longer working lives by providing better access to life-long learning;

<sup>11</sup> Keller S. 323.

<sup>12</sup> EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Treaty on EC, article 129

<sup>13</sup> European Commission, COM(2012) 55 final, White Paper – An Agenda for adequate, safe and sustainable pensions, Brussels.





- ✓ adapt work places to a more diverse workforce, develop employment opportunities for older workers and support active and healthy ageing;
- ✓ equalise the pensionable age between men and women; and
- ✓ support the development of complementary retirement savings to enhance retirement incomes.

In the context of agriculture, this will have many repercussions which are yet to be discussed.

**Health Insurance.** To date, social dialogue has not given rise to any initiatives in the field of health insurance.

**Care allowance.** Some Member States introduced a new compulsory social security allowance, the so-called care allowance. This compulsory allowance should ensure the availability of sufficient cash to provide for decent care, if needed.

**Prevention of exclusion** is an important aspect of social protection systems. To date, very little effort has been made to overcome social exclusion. Due to the expected poverty among the elderly in many regions of Europe, combatting poverty is one of the objectives for the new 2014–2020 financial period. Anyone whose income is less than half (60%) the typical average income for their country is considered poor. Although some programmes were launched for helping the inhabitants of deteriorating urban areas, permanently unemployed persons, elderly citizens and people with disabilities, to name but a few, the impact of those programmes is very limited. Some time needs to be given to find out what tools will be used in the Rural Development context in order to achieve the political goal for effective fight against poverty in rural areas.

**Social and Labour Law.** The Community uses the potential of law-making in the field of labour and social security in order to strengthen workers' social rights. It has two possible strands of action:

- ✓ It can protect employment standards of individual Member States from the competition on the internal market;
- ✓ It can draw up directives setting up minimum employment standards other than the ones concerning remuneration, the right of association and lockout.

Working time. An agreement on the harmonization of working time for workers in agriculture was signed in 1968<sup>14</sup>.

14 EFFAT (publication) The European Sectoral Social Dialogue for Agriculture from a Trade Union Perspective Towards the 50th anniversary, Brussels 2013, in [http://www.agri-social-dialogue.eu/pdf/2012%20SSD%20AGRI%20FINAL\\_EN.pdf](http://www.agri-social-dialogue.eu/pdf/2012%20SSD%20AGRI%20FINAL_EN.pdf)

**From past to present:**



With the establishment of the European Union, an economic and customs union was set up. It was conceived as an economic union whose purpose was to remove customs barriers and obstacles to trade. The social dimension did not have a role. The labour market and social policy remain a prerogative of the Member States.

The diversity of systems in the European Union demonstrates the existence of a significant potential for interaction and different involvement of social partners in dedicated social security schemes.

In addition to dedicated agricultural systems, the involvement of social partners in the management of those systems is ensured by trade union confederations, while agricultural trade unions can indirectly uphold the interests of workers in the agricultural sector.

At the European level, trade unions sit on various advisory committees jointly with representatives of national employers' organizations, national governments and the European Commission. One example is the Social Security Advisory Committee.

Institutionalized social dialogue exists in all project partner countries and involves employers, trade union representatives and the government. Dialogue takes place in different shapes depending on the specific national legislation in this area.

In Bulgaria, institutional social dialogue takes place in the framework of the National Council for Tripartite Cooperation (NCTC) and the relevant sectoral tripartite cooperation councils. The NCTC has several subject-matter subcommittees, such as subcommittees on budget, finance, social security relations, and labour law. The National Council for Tripartite Cooperation discusses all issues, legal instruments, strategies and other documents which have a bearing on employment and social security relations.

At the national level, trade unions participate in the governance bodies of the social security system: the Supervisory Board of the National Social Security Institute and the Supervisory Board of the National Health Insurance Fund. Those bodies discuss all matters related to the necessary amendments to the legislation; draft bills are examined and approved.

Trade unions' role and responsibilities are mostly at the national level and relate primarily to the provision of up-to-date information on key aspects of social security systems in other Member States, especially on issues that experience has shown to be of greatest interest in the respective country.

Active social dialogue in the old EU Member States takes place in the shape of bilateral cooperation.

The social security system in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, and Finland goes through a well-shaped social dialogue between social partners in the sector. Their commitment to expand social security rights for workers in agriculture is expressed in collective bargaining and multiple bilateral agreements for coverage of individual social risks.



Good practices in this respect should be successfully adopted, improved and applied in the national social security systems of new EU Member States.

Participants in the project make note of the low level of knowledge among workers about both the European decisions regarding social security and the national social security schemes. Trade unions do not have large powers to shape the legal reality either at the national or the European level but on the other hand **they have a significant role to play** with respect to information and training activities among workers which contribute greatly to the improvement of the situation of those workers on the labour market.

They continue their efforts to ensure coverage for additional categories of workers in the sector and for additional risks; they try to attain equal rights, financial stability and active cooperation.



Higher quality and increased potential of workers and employees in agriculture to gain better employment, income and motivation cannot be achieved without social protection, guaranteed social security of workers and in-depth discussions with social partners.

## 2. SOCIAL SECURITY OF FARMERS IN NINE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES THAT APPLY DEDICATED SECTORAL SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES

### Farming and rural population in Europe has special needs.

In general, problems related to social protection and social security for agricultural workers are similar, while solutions for their social protection as expressed in national legislative frameworks largely depend on the arrangements in this specific sector.

In Europe, rural population engaged in farming has specific needs. The sector of agriculture is a multifaceted group of subsectors and engages different kinds of workers. The nature of the economic activities, agriculture's restructurings, the central place of agricultural families, fluctuating prices of agricultural produce, climatic challenges can all generate risks of financial instability, poverty and social exclusion. This sector is typically reliant on natural resources; it is typically affected by market instability leading to instability of farms, income and compensations. The seasonal and campaign nature of farm work coupled with precarious labour market conditions add to the specificity of the sector.

In order to respond to the specific needs of this category of individuals, currently nine European countries **have created dedicated additional social protection systems for farmers**. Those systems cover a broad social security spectrum: accidents at work and occupational diseases, health services, pension insurance for old age and disability, family allowances and other support services.

**Six** of the nine EU Member States, which have rich experience and good practices with

respect to social protection of agricultural workers through **their existing dedicated additional systems for that group of individuals**, are members of the **European Network of Agriculture Social Protection Systems (ENASP)**. Those countries are Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Greece and Poland.

The European Network of Agriculture Social Protection Systems was established for the purpose of protecting the interests, values and principles of social protection for farmers based on solidarity and social cohesion. It represents the interests of agricultural social protection at the European level in accordance with farmers' own initiatives. Acting as a forum for consultations with the European bodies, the organization is also a platform for exchange of information and good practices among its members and all social protection partners.

**ENASP** covered close to 12.6 million beneficiaries in 2012 and the amount of paid benefits, allowances and pensions was EUR 48.13 billion.

It covers the entire spectrum of social protection for the rural population. Its members benefit from health and social services and launch regular local and national projects to support social inclusion and rural development. **This is an effective and operational social platform for the rural population in Europe.**

In order to bring those social security systems as close to the people as possible and ensure high quality and efficient services, the action of the network is based on a dense territorial network. Mixing proximity and coherence, national orientations and local context, these systems have demonstrated better adaptability and experience compared to the general social security systems which cover all individuals engaged in gainful activity. The ambition of public authorities is to help those systems adapt to changes in rural and agricultural areas, staying true to their values: equity, quality, social justice, autonomy, social democracy and defence of agricultural employment.

It is clear that the Single Market and various Treaties are making, and will continue to make, the European Union an indispensable level for coordination with regard to social issues. These latest advances are bringing about the implementation of trans-national cooperation between the different social protection schemes. Simultaneously, the Common Agricultural Policy and the community cohesion policy mean that specific farming and rural matters must be raised to the European level, to defend their interests and values.

The sections below are dedicated to the practices of the nine countries that operate additional sectoral social security schemes, including the six **ENASP** member countries.

### 2.1. Austria

In Austria, **social security for farmers (self-employed farmers and their families)** (Sozialversicherungsanstalt der Bauern, SVB) is a dedicated social security scheme covering **three branches: health insurance, insurance for accidents at work and pension insurance for all self-employed persons in agriculture and forestry**.

Farmers' social security is run by an independent authority. (This means that the State transfers certain administrative responsibilities to those groups in society who have a direct interest in these matters. Representatives of these groups of people form administrative



bodies performing administrative tasks without having to accept instructions from anyone.) This means that, within the legal framework, it is the farmers themselves, who, as representatives of the insured, are responsible for the administration of the farmers' social security.

**The system covers the following risks and benefits:**

Risks	Benefits
<b>Sickness benefits (in-kind)</b>	<p><b>Medical treatment:</b> Medical aid is administered by doctors under contract and doctors under no contract with the scheme.</p> <p><b>Hospital treatment:</b> If required by the type of illness (e.g. surgery becoming necessary), in-patient hospital care will be granted instead of medical treatment administered in a doctor's practice. If the insured farmer or a family member draws on hospital care, the insured farmer will have to pay a contribution for a maximum of four weeks per calendar year.</p> <p><b>Remedial Aids</b> (wheelchairs, prostheses) will be provided, if the necessity is assessed by a doctor.</p> <p><b>Medicines:</b> Per medicine issued, a fixed prescription charge is payable directly when obtaining the drug at the pharmacy. This charge is the same for all occupational groups, however, some exceptions do exist in order to protect the socially underprivileged.</p>
<b>Maternity benefits</b>	As regards maternity, health insurance will pay for all necessary medical measures including medical aid, midwives, remedial aids or in-patient hospital care. Moreover, maternity allowance as well as child-care allowance are granted by way of cash benefits.
<b>Social security for accidents at work</b>	Farmers' accident insurance is conceived as insurance for the agricultural/forestry entity. Thus, insurance protection is not solely extended to the insured person, but also covers certain family members provided that they, at least occasionally, assist in the work on the farm. Accident insurance protection covers accidents at work and occupational diseases.
<b>Farmers' care covered by social security</b>	If a farmer or a member of their family who works full time on the farm is absent for more than two weeks due to illness, they are eligible to receive an allowance in order to cover the costs of hiring additional workforce to fill in for the absent worker. <b>This farmers' supplement must be requested and provided through the competent farmers' trade unions.</b> The cash benefit can be used to cover the costs for additional farm hand for the entire period of absence of the insured person until the end of the sixth month following the onset of work.
<b>Occupational accidents benefit</b>	If one of the two relevant insured cases has occurred, the majority of the benefits are provided by the farmers' accident insurance scheme, according to the severity of the results arising from the injury or the disease. Depending on the social security scheme, in cases of occupational accidents the insured person does not have to pay any portion of the costs.

<b>Farmers' retirement insurance</b>	<p><b>Old age pension.</b> To become eligible for old age pension men must be 65 years old and women must be 60.</p> <p><b>Retirement in case of incapacity to work (disability due to illness)</b> From the age of 57, a higher level of work protection is provided for farmers. A farmer is considered incapable to work, if he/she, due to physical or mental illness, is incapable of pursuing the job in the entity he/she has pursued during the last 180 calendar months prior to reporting date for a minimum period of 120 calendar months.</p> <p><b>Widow/Widower's pension.</b> It is equal to between zero and 60 percent of the retirement benefit which was or would have been payable to the deceased. Calculation of the relevant percentage rate is based on the gross income earned by the deceased and the widow/widower in the two calendar years preceding the death.</p> <p><b>Orphan's pension.</b> For every child having lost one parent, orphan's pension accounts for 40 percent of the widow's/widower's pension (set at 60 percent of the pension of the deceased) and 60 percent for every child having lost both parents. Orphans are entitled to a pension until the age of 18. After that, such benefits can only be claimed provided that certain conditions are met.</p>
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**The Austrian Farmers' Social Security Authority (SVB)** is comprised of one central fund at the national level, seven local funds at the regional level and four specialized hospitals.

**Financing**

The contribution for accidents at work and occupational diseases is 1.9% and is split into 75.5% personal financing and 24.5% government financing.

The contribution for health insurance is 7.65% and is split into 53.6% personal financing and 46.5% government financing.

The contribution for retirement insurance is 15% and is split into 25.7% personal financing and 74.3% government financing (from taxes).

No information is available about the contribution rate for family allowances. The payment is split into 0.2% personal financing and 99.8% government financing.

**The total number of persons who paid contributions (contributors) and the total number of beneficiaries, i.e. the recipients of benefits are:**

- ✓ 280,000 contributors in 2012 (3.4% of the entire population of Austria)
- ✓ 376,000 beneficiaries in 2012 (4.6% of the entire population of Austria).

**Insured persons covered** by the dedicated system are engaged in agriculture, viticulture, pomiculture, horticulture as well as hunting and fishing.

**Qualifying conditions**

The unit value of the agricultural entity must reach a certain threshold (150 Euro for the Accident at Work benefit and 1500 Euro for the Health and Retirement benefits). If the entity is smaller, contributions are compulsory only if the income comes primarily from farming.

If the income is not primarily from farming, social security contributions are compulsory for all activities. The obligation to pay contributions can go as high as the total maximum threshold of the contributory income.



## 2.2. Finland

In Finland organising the earnings-related pension security of agricultural entrepreneurs is a task of the **Farmers' Social Insurance Institution (MELA)**. In addition to employment pension security, MELA is responsible for the statutory accident insurance of agricultural entrepreneurs, e.g. the holiday stand-in system of agricultural entrepreneurs.

**The Farmers' Social Insurance Institution works in close relation with the other pension and occupational accident and disease insurance systems.**

The Finnish social security system is based on two statutory schemes: *the national pension scheme providing a minimum security and the earnings-related employment pension system*. **The employment pension system** is based on the fact that the labour input of both wage earners and entrepreneurs is insured in adherence with the same principles, and also the benefits are alike.

The social security provided by the Social Insurance Institution (KELA) guarantees a minimum security to everyone living in Finland. In addition to basic pension security it covers many other forms of benefits such as general treatment of illnesses, family benefits, basic unemployment security and many other benefits related to basic livelihood.

The earnings-related employment pension security system covers all persons working as wage-earners or entrepreneurs, and through the system the insured accumulate earnings-related old age, disability, and family pension security. *The earnings-related pension security system of agricultural entrepreneurs is very similar to the system of wage-earners and other entrepreneurs.*

**Through employment insurance** agricultural entrepreneurs are secured with the right to receive old age pension, disability pension and related rehabilitation, part-time employment pension and unemployment pension corresponding with those of other entrepreneurs and wage earners. Benefits of accident insurance include daily allowances, pensions, compensation and rehabilitation measures resulting from accidents and occupational diseases.

**Through the early retirement pension system (disability not required) the recruitment of young agricultural entrepreneurs into carrying on agriculture and farming business is promoted.**

Another key aspect is the promotion of the structural development of agriculture. A short-term allowance for illness provides economic security when the illness persists more than four but less than ten working days.

**The farmers' holiday stand-in system** secures especially the right of agricultural entrepreneurs carrying on animal husbandry to an annual holiday and stand-ins during illness. Since the beginning of 2010, the farmers' holiday stand-in system was expanded and now covers game and reindeer keepers.

To be covered by the above mentioned insurance and benefits the agricultural entrepreneur must have valid insurance pursuant to the Farmers' Pensions Act and the Accident Insurance Act.

A specific **social security premium system** is in place for agricultural entrepre-

neurs, whereby entrepreneurs with lower income pay a lower premium than the rest.

**The key content of the Finnish earnings-related employment pension security system is based on tripartite negotiations between social partners and the government.** In this way, all changes that are adopted reach broader circles.

**In addition to the head office, MELA** has 58 agency regions and approximately 200 local receptions. It also has a regional network of agents that largely handles the practical customer service.

In addition to agricultural entrepreneurs, MELA insures reindeer breeders, fishers and entrepreneurs carrying on forestry.

The insurance covers also other business operations carried on in connection with farms.

### Financing of the system

The financing of the benefits system is divided into three main categories: The financing of:

- ✓ the employment pension system;
- ✓ the accident system and
- ✓ the holiday stand-in system.

### Financing of the employment pensions system

The financing share of the agricultural entrepreneurs' employment pension system is determined on the basis of each entrepreneur's personal earned income, the rate of the employment pension premium of the general system and the agricultural entrepreneurs' cut-rate system. The difference between the actual pension cost and the premium income is paid by the government. The general premium rate is adopted annually by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

For pensions and family allowances, the pension premium amount (contributions) depends both on the premium amount (contributions) paid to the general social security system (social policy) **and on the collective bargaining between farmers' trade unions and the government (agricultural policy).**

In 2009, farmers paid a premium of 10.192% of the calculated annual income (up to 22,984.43 Euro) and 20.8% of the calculated annual income (up to 36,118.45 Euro).

The financing ratio is 25% personal financing and 75% government financing.

*Due to the relatively low income level, the premium rate of agricultural entrepreneurs in practice is approx. 11.0 % of earned income. Correspondingly the government pays a notable share. The amount of the cut-rate premium is governed by law.*

### Financing of the occupational accidents and diseases system

The burden of the occupational accidents and diseases insurance is shared as follows: 33.5% of the total cost is paid by the entrepreneurs, 29.5% are covered by the government and 37% are covered by the general social security system, i.e. the agricultural entrepreneurs pay approximately a third of the costs of the obligatory accident insurance. The premium system is a reserve fund system.



### Financing of holiday stand-in system

The government is responsible for financing the annual holiday. Of the costs of the stand-ins, based on illness or short-term disability, a premium based on the amount of earned income is collected from agricultural entrepreneurs. The difference between the actual pension cost and the premium income is paid by the government.

#### The total number of persons who paid contributions (contributors) and the total number of beneficiaries, i.e. the recipients of benefits in 2012 are:

- ✓ 73,000 contributors (i.e. around 1.4% of the entire population of Finland)
- ✓ 144,000 beneficiaries (2,9% of the entire population of Finland).

#### The total amount of paid cash benefits in 2012 was over EUR 1.2 billion.

#### Qualifying conditions

Access to social security is given to agricultural entrepreneurs (and their spouses and close relatives) who are between the age of 18 and 67; who cultivate arable land of at least 5 hectares (owned or rented); there is no upper limit; the value of the work done should be no less than 3,300 Euro per year; the system is also accessible to part-time farmers and some very limited groups of shareholders who are also entrepreneurs.

### 2.3. France

In France, **Mutualité Sociale Agricole (MSA) manages compulsory social welfare coverage for the whole of the agricultural sector, encompassing farmers, employers, employees and their families, seasonal workers and their families** who are engaged in crop production or in livestock farming (all kinds of farm animals), pomiculture, horticulture, fish farming, forest maintenance, companies of all kinds that complement and carry on farming activities, *tourist structures related to rural tourism, village craft businesses, agricultural chambers, private schools which train future cadre for agriculture, etc.* It provides services to over 5.5 million people. 35 MSA offices pay more than EUR 27.1 billion in benefits each year.

The most typical feature of social protection for agricultural workers in France **is the universal coverage of social security for this large category of insured persons.**

**The MSA is its members' one-stop shop for all social welfare protection,** encompassing healthcare, the family, retirement, occupational accident and disease insurance; it also collects social security contributions.

In addition to making benefit payments, this institution is also in charge of supervising employers and self-employed persons. On behalf of its partner organizations, MSA also deals with the provision of supplementary pension insurance, health insurance and social security. Furthermore, the MSA manages occupational medicine and occupational health and safety. MSA provides protection to self-employed persons, such as farmers who are employers, agricultural workers and their dependents, seasonal workers and their families, and pensioners. This is the difference between the MSA and health insurance bodies and this is what makes the MSA unique. Simultaneous management of all social security

branches is the best way to ensure maximum protection of the members and effective operation of the MSA. Being a responsible player, the MSA establishes relations and links with other social and government structures in order to meet the needs and expectations of rural areas and communities.

*MSA's development strategy and basic legal framework are based on the capacity to identify the needs of the local population and to meet them taking into consideration demographic and social specificities.* In that sense, the MSA possesses a unique power which gives it the ability to meet specific needs of the population at the local level through an established network of locally elected representatives who understand the local way of living and needs.

**The structure of the Agricultural Social Insurance Mutual Benefit Fund (MSA)** comprises one central fund at the national level, 35 regional offices and other organizational units (130 village homes for the elderly, 1 telesecurity network, 8 vacation centers, 6 medical and social centers for rehabilitation, 47 enterprises run by non-governmental organizations which provide protected jobs, 72,000 members in 9000 village clubs for the elderly).

The system provides multiple services. **All insured persons have access to AVMA** centers, MSA's vacation compounds. **Pensioners have access to MARPA**, homes for the elderly located in the countryside, and the PRÉSENCE VERTE network for electronic social security.

**For the disabled:** the SOLIDEL network, protected jobs in agriculture and conveniences for those persons.

**The entire rural population has access to** the national customer services platform FOURMI VERTE created jointly with Groupama and Familles Rurales. Beyond that range of services, the rural population has also set up additional partnerships, such as the 10,000 village clubs for the elderly which founded their national federation (called the FNCA).

#### Financing

The financing of the system is split between two schemes: one for the independent farmers (self-employed persons) and the other for employed workers in agriculture.

The distribution of funding sources for **self-employed farmers is the following:** 18% from social security contributions and taxes and 82% from external funding.

The distribution of funding sources for the **employed workers' scheme is the following:**

47% from social security contributions and taxes and 53% from external funding.

#### The total number of persons who paid contributions (contributors) and the total number of beneficiaries, i.e. the recipients of benefits are:

- ✓ 1,200,000 contributors of which 560,000 independent farmers and 640,000 employed workers and
- ✓ 5,500,000 beneficiaries in 2012

**The total amount of cash benefits exceeds EUR 27.1 billion** (in 2008), including 61% paid to independent farmers who are self-employed persons and 39% paid to



employed agricultural workers.

#### **Qualifying conditions**

Conditions for self-employed farmers are determined by the MSA depending on whether they are engaged in farming activity and depending on the size of the farming operation. This is defined in the Rural Areas Code.

The size of the operation is defined according to a fixed threshold. This threshold may be defined based on the area of cultivated land. If the area exceeds the defined threshold, the farmer is included in MSA. Theoretically, this is the case when the area farmed by an individual exceeds half of the minimum area fixed in the law (SMI), i.e. 0.25 hectares. However, those requirements may vary from one region to another and between farming activities. If measurement is not possible on the basis of area, the size is measured based on another threshold – working time necessary to operate the farm. The threshold is 1200 working hours per year.

*For a detailed presentation of the MSA system and the importance of social partnership within that system, see the Analytical Study developed by the project.*

## **2.4. Germany**

**Agricultural social insurance in Germany (SVLFG) is an autonomous agricultural social protection that presents a whole set of specificities and differences compared to the principles of general social insurance.**

**A special feature of the agricultural social insurance system is that it offers everything under one roof:** accident insurance, old age pension, health insurance, dependency insurance. Independent (self-employed) farmers and their families are insured for health and pension benefits.

Accident insurance applies to independent farmers having the status of self-employed persons and their families, employed workers and seasonal workers.

Furthermore, there is **supplementary pension security for workers in agriculture and forestry holdings and it is available to holding owners who are members of the SVLFG on the basis of legal and tariff provisions.**

The oldest branch of this system **is farmers' accident insurance which is comprised of: prevention, readjustment and compensation.**

**Prevention:** These are agricultural funds earmarked for prevention of workplace accidents, occupational diseases and risks linked to professional activity.

**Readjustment:** After an accident, health and work ability have to be recovered by all possible means.

**Compensation:** The insured person and the rightful owners are compensated with financial benefits, if necessary.

Another type of social protection is **help to farms that guarantees the existence of the enterprise.** Help to farms and households is a type of social protection that is specifically targeted at farmers. It guarantees work is competently carried out in the farm and the family, if the farmer or the spouse is absent due to illness or hospital treatment.

The relevant expenses are financed by agricultural funds exclusively with farmers' contributions. Moreover, *the State provides grants in order to reduce the share of those expenses covered by contributions. It is important to keep this situation within reasonable boundaries in view of the constant decrease of the number of farmers. The State also helps balance the deficit caused by structural changes.*

#### **Old age help to farmers: over sixties prevention's pillar**

This is the second pillar of the system which supplements the state pension system and helps people who have reached retirement age. Thanks to it, all the farmers are covered provided their farm reaches a certain size. Despite the relatively weak start, many farmers' social and economic conditions have been sensibly improved. *It explains why farms have been left sooner to younger generations, which permitted their modernisation and rationalisation. In the European context, Germany has consequently the youngest farmers' generation. It corresponded to the goals of the agrarian policy and social goals at the origin of the relevant law. Nevertheless, old age help is a partial insurance only. Whereas retirement insurance contributions depend on the income, old age help is linked to an independent contribution and an independent benefit.*

From January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1995, compulsory insurance has been extended to farmers' spouses of which from 95% to 98% are farmers' wives. Farmers' old age help generally offers the same benefits as pension insurance. It means that medical readjustment is included as a form of help to farms and families, if needed. It also allows for professional readjustment in order to avoid premature exclusion from professional life – old age pensions, reduced working ability pensions, pensions for widows/widowers and orphans. Due to structural changes and reduced contribution rates, the State commits itself to cover the yearly difference between the income and the expenses in order to guarantee the functioning of the system.

**The structure of the independent German Social Insurance Company for Agriculture, Forestry and Horticulture (SVLFG)** consists of one central fund at the national level, nine accident insurance funds, nine pension funds and nine sickness insurance funds at the regional level.

#### **Financing**

**In the context of occupational accident and disease insurance** the funds are replenished through a system of allocations. Those allocations are calculated every year on the basis of expenditures from the previous year. The amount allocated for 2009 was approximately EUR 832 million. An ongoing subsidy is allocated by the State for social compensations in agriculture.

**In the context of health and pension insurance** insured persons and the State pay monthly contributions. The share of the State is approximately 75% of the pension contribution and approximately 50% of the health insurance contribution.

**The total number of persons who paid contributions (contributors) and the total number of beneficiaries, i.e. the recipients of benefits are as follows:**

✓ For occupational accidents and diseases: 1,600,000 contributors and 3,500,000 beneficiaries (4% of the entire population of Germany);



- ✓ For pensions: 260,000 contributors and 610,000 beneficiaries;
- ✓ For health insurance: 210,000 contributors and 667,000 beneficiaries.

**The total amount of cash benefits and pensions was EUR 6.9 billion (paid in 2008).**

#### Qualifying conditions

The qualifying conditions for benefits from the **funds for accidents at work and occupational diseases** depend on the operation (usage) of the farming enterprise (without any requirements in terms of area or an income based criterion). For less than 0.25 hectares of cultivated land, farmers may be exempt from the insurance obligation.

For **old age and sickness funds**, the area of cultivated land must exceed a certain threshold (approximately 6 hectares but it depends on the region). This threshold is defined by the regional funds themselves. Exceptions are allowed depending on the conditions. *For a detailed presentation of the German system, see the Analytical Study (developed by the project.)*

### 2.5. Greece

**OGA** is the second most important social security organisation in Greece after IKA (the Social Insurance Institute which covers the majority of the active population). The system is an independent organisation of public state administered by a nine-member Board of Administration, under the supervision of the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection. Established by law in 1961, the **OGA** deals not only with social protection for farmers and their families, but also with agricultural employees and many other categories of rural population. OGA is a true rural system of social security, working far beyond the pure agricultural dimension. It offers social protection not only to independent farmers (the owner and exploiter of a farm, the stock breeder, the bee keeper etc.) and their families (spouses, children, members of family), but also to the employed workers in the field of agriculture and their families (including unskilled workers in agricultural enterprises like plantations, floriculture, fish breeding, stock breeding). In addition, it covers employed people of all categories living in areas up to 5000 inhabitants (on the condition that they are not affiliated with any other social security organisations or funds), self-employed people and craftsmen in villages up to 2000 inhabitants, monks and nuns working in the agricultural sector.

**Seven contribution categories are provided:** insured persons can choose one of the seven categories and have to pay 7% of a fixed amount set for each category. **The State participates, contributing 14% on the same amount.**

**OGA provides** pensions, maternity allowances, and family allowances. In addition, it provides benefits in kind for medical treatment, hospital treatment, pharmaceutical treatment, social programs.

#### Pensions

**The basic pension** (flat rate) is decreased by 4% per year, starting in 2003, and the goal set for the year 2026 is the abolishment of this pension which is based on the State and its transformation to main pension based on contributions.

The entitlement conditions **for old age basic pension** calculated on the basis of contributions are 65 year of age and 25 years of agricultural employment.

The entitlement conditions **for invalidity basic pension** are 67% invalidity, lasting for at least 3 years, 5 years of agricultural employment before the occurrence of the invalidity.

**Survivors' basic pension:** the surviving spouse must be 65 year old and not a pensioner of any other scheme. The deceased must have been an OGA pensioner or if not, he/she must have fulfilled the conditions for the Invalidity main insurance pension. For the surviving spouse, he/she must not receive any kind of pension and must have had an agricultural employment. For the children, they must be single and under 18. OGA also provides extra allowance to fully disabled pensioners, extra allowance to blind pensioners, and death grants. **Uninsured basic pension:** 65 year old, total annual income less than the annual OGA basic pension.

**The structure of the OGA consists of** one central fund at the national level and eight regional departments. It has representatives across the country who are employees of the local municipal governments.

#### Financing

Contribution rates are respectively 4.1% for pension, 3.5% for health insurance, and 0.2% for social programmes. The government share in contributions is 76.8%.

**The number of insured persons** is about 625,000 and the number of persons who received benefits in 2012 was about 1,800,000 (this is the number of persons that OGA provides with pensions, health insurance, family allowances and social programmes). The amount of cash benefits paid to those persons in 2008 was EUR 7.8 billion.

#### Qualifying conditions

The person's main gainful activity should be in agriculture and in the activities listed above. The main source of income should be from agriculture and from the activities listed above.

### 2.6. Poland

**KRUS** is an institution established with a view to providing services related to the social insurance system for farmers in Poland.

**KRUS** provides services for insured persons and beneficiaries in respect of all matters pertaining to the social security system; it determines the premium rate, collects premiums and takes care of benefit payments.

KRUS performs activities to prevent accidents at work and occupational diseases in agriculture by means of analysis of underlying causes of such accidents and injuries; it provides free voluntary trainings pertaining to protection of life and health on the farm and promotes safety of agricultural machinery and equipment and the use of protective clothing.

The farmers' social insurance law specifies two types of insurance: retirement pension insurance, accident, sickness and maternity insurance, as well as two types of insurance coverage: mandatory and voluntary.



Both types of insurance are mandatory for:

- ✓ Any farmer residing in the Republic of Poland and performing, personally and on his own account, agricultural activity on the farm belonging to him, exceeding 1 comparative fiscal hectare of arable land (including as part of the group of farmers), or special agriculture-related production activity which does not require ownership of a farm, with surface and production type specified in the Law;
- ✓ Farmers' spouses;
- ✓ Any household member i.e. a person close to the farmer, who is over 16 years of age and who lives with the farmer in a shared household or the same farm, works on the farm and is not bound by a contract of employment with the farmer, provided that such persons are not covered by a different social insurance and are not eligible for retirement benefits, disability pension or other social security benefits.

**Cash benefits** within the framework of social security are divided into several categories of benefits and pensions as follows:

Benefits	What is provided
<b>Farmers' old age benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Agricultural retirement pension</li> <li>✓ Agricultural pension due to unfitness for work</li> <li>✓ Retirement benefits and pension from the social insurance for individual farmers and their families (benefits set forth in the regulations before January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1999)</li> <li>✓ Additional retirement and pension allowances</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits payable within the accident, sickness and maternity insurance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Single indemnity for a permanent or substantial bodily harm or death as a result of an accident at work or a professional disease, both related to the agriculture</li> <li>✓ Sickness benefit</li> <li>✓ Maternity allowance</li> </ul>
<b>Family benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Agricultural training allowance;</li> <li>✓ Family allowance;</li> <li>✓ Orphan's allowance</li> <li>✓ Domiciliary care allowance</li> </ul>

**The structure of the KRUS** consists of one central fund at the national level, 16 regional branches and 256 local offices. Other organizational units include the centers for rehabilitation of farmers, training and rehabilitation center.

**KRUS has an independent finance administration** and consists of the following funds: **Premium Fund** of the Farmers' Social Insurance, **Retirement Pension Fund, Administrative Fund, Prevention and Rehabilitation Fund, and Motivation Fund.**

**The Premium Fund** is created based on premiums for the accident, sickness or maternity insurance as well as other sources specified in the Fund's Statute. The funds are allocated to finance accident, sickness and maternity benefits; to finance the development of voluntary insurance offered by the insurance companies; and to make deductions for the

Administrative Fund and the Prevention and Rehabilitation Fund.

**The Retirement Pension Fund** is composed of Premiums for the retirement pension insurance, Refunds from the Social Insurance Fund to cover specific expenses, Supplementary subsidy from the national budget. The funds are allocated to finance retirement pension benefits; pension from other social insurance, paid with the retirement pension insurance benefits and allowances; refund of certain costs to the Social Insurance Fund, if so provided in the relevant retirement regulations; and health insurance.

The aim of the **Administrative Fund** is to finance the insurance service costs (except for the costs covered by the Premium Fund or the Fund of Prevention and Rehabilitation) and costs incurred in connection with the health insurance services.

**The Prevention and Rehabilitation Fund** consists of deductions from the Premium Fund amounting to 5% of anticipated expenses and the government subsidies. The funds are allocated to perform activities to prevent work accidents and professional diseases in agriculture, assist the insured and beneficiaries unfit for work on the farm, or at risk to suffer such incapacity, providing them with different forms of treatment and rehabilitation.

**The Motivation Fund** may be created by deductions for the Administrative Fund calculated from the Premium Fund.

**Financing**

Accident and sickness insurance as well as health and maternity insurance are funded solely by farmers' premiums which are collected in the **Premium Fund.** This fund is a legal entity; it has a Supervisory Body chaired by the President of KRUS and is monitored by the Council of Farmers.

Pensions are funded mainly by government subsidies: around 90% of the costs are subsidized by the national budget. The remainder is covered by farmers' premiums.

**The total number of persons who paid contributions (contributors) and the total number of beneficiaries, i.e. the recipients of benefits** in 2012 are as follows:

- ✓ 1,160,000 contributors;
- ✓ 1,285,725 beneficiaries.

**The total amount of cash benefits and pensions paid in 2012 was over EUR 4 billion.**

**2.7. Spain**

The Spanish social security system contains a dedicated scheme for people engaged in crafts and commerce called **R.E.T.A. (Régimen Especial Trabajadores Autónomos).** Another dedicated scheme covers sea workers who also belong to the self-employed category. Since January 1st, 2008, a dedicated system has been in place for self-employed persons in agriculture as well called *Régimen Especial Agrario de la Seguridad Social (R.E.A)*, which became part of the general scheme for self-employed persons (R.E.T.A).

The risks covered by that dedicated scheme for self-employed persons in agriculture are as follows:





### **Sickness and maternity and benefits in kind.**

Membership in the scheme is compulsory. The different types of benefits are provided both by the system administered by the National Institute for Health Management and by the competent authorities of autonomous communities which provide the in-kind benefits for maternity and sickness.

#### **Sickness and maternity. Cash benefits.**

As a general rule, the Special System provides for cash benefits in the event of sickness, **based on voluntary insurance**. Entitlement to a benefit in case of common illness requires a minimum insurance period of **180 days**. In case of common illness or non-occupational injury, the benefit amounts to 60% of the contribution basis from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> day and to 75% from the 21<sup>st</sup> day.

When the incapacity for work is due to an accident at work or an occupational disease, and if the person has voluntary insurance, the percentage is 75% as of the day following sickness leave. The duration of the benefit is limited to a maximum of 365 days, but can be extended by a further 180 days depending on the condition of the insured person.

The Special System also includes cash benefits in the event of pregnancy, maternity and paternity, and non-contributory maternity allowance which are granted under the same conditions as in the General Scheme.

The dedicated scheme covers childcare benefits for children affected by cancer or another serious illness. The right to receive the benefit will only be granted to one of the parents.

#### **Disability**

Membership in the scheme is compulsory. After a minimum contribution period, which depends on the age of the beneficiary when disability occurred, the beneficiary is entitled to a disability pension under the same conditions as in the General Scheme.

#### **Old age benefits**

Old age insurance in the farmers' dedicated scheme mimics the general scheme. To qualify for old-age pension, persons must be aged 65 years with 35 years and 3 months of contributions (in 2013).

#### **Survivor's benefits**

The compulsory survivors insurance of the Special System provides for pensions under the same conditions as the General Scheme.

Accidents at work and occupational diseases

Membership is not compulsory except for permanent incapacity (pension for work related injury or occupational disease) and survivors' pensions as a result of death caused by an accident at work or occupational disease. No minimum insurance periods are required.

#### **Unemployment**

Unemployment allowances are paid to jobless individuals. *They cover risks that are inherent to the nature of agricultural activities and the specificities of agricultural work.*

#### **Financing**

Benefits in the event of sickness and maternity, disability, old-age and survivorship are

funded from contributions, with an overall rate of 18.75% of a certain contribution basis.

For 2013, the contributory basis varied between a minimum of EUR 850.60 and a maximum of EUR 3,425.70 per month with a few exceptions.

For accidents at work and occupational diseases, rates are fixed by government decree according to the different risk levels of activities, industries and jobs.

For cash benefits in the event of sickness a voluntary insurance can be concluded. The contribution amounts to 3.30% of the basis.

### **2.8. Belgium**

Belgium has a **dedicated social security system which covers all self-employed persons**, including farmers and the members of their families (dependents), **against all traditional risks**, with the exception of accidents at work, occupational diseases and unemployment, and also provides for national insurance in case of bankruptcy.

**Sickness and maternity. Benefits in kind.** Membership in this scheme is compulsory. Self-employed persons enjoy the same entitlements and reimbursement in health care as employed persons and civil servants.

**Sickness and maternity. Cash benefits.** Insurance is compulsory for self-employed persons, helpers and assisting spouses. The right to benefits is applied after a qualifying period of 6 months required by law. *In addition, for sickness benefits, a 1-month waiting period exists with no benefits paid.*

Financial compensation is then granted for 11 months maximum and the amount depends on the family situation of the self-employed person.

**Disability.** Disability insurance **is compulsory for self-employed persons, including farmers, helpers and assisting spouses**. The amount of the benefits varies depending on the family situation of the self-employed person.

**Old age benefits.** The retirement pension system for self-employed persons is compulsory for self-employed persons, helpers and assisting spouses born after January 1st, 1956 (for assisting spouses born before this date, contributing to this system is voluntary). Theoretically, retirement age is 65. *Early retirement is possible, provided that the person can produce documentary evidence of length of service with paid contributions of 38 years (in any social security system in Belgium). In those cases, the amount of the pension is reduced by 5% per year when the retirement starts between the age of 60 and 61, by 4.5% per year when the retirement starts after the age of 61 and before 62, by 4% per year when the retirement starts after the age of 62 and before 63, by 3.5% per year when the retirement starts at the age of 63 and before 64, and by 3% when the retirement starts at the age of 64 and before 65. However, the amount of the pension is not reduced by the above specified percentages, if the worker can prove length of service of at least 42 calendar years.* The amount of the retirement pension depends directly on the length of service and the income on the basis of which the self-employed person paid his/her contributions throughout his/her career.

**Survivor's benefits.** Compulsory insurance of self-employed persons also includes



benefits for survivors. The rule is that the spouse married to a self-employed person for at least one year may receive a survivorship pension from the age of 45. It amounts to 80% of the retirement pension of the deceased calculated on the basis of his/her contributory professional income.

**Accidents at work and occupational diseases.** No protection system exists for the self-employed, including farmers, for the risks of occupational accidents and diseases.

**Unemployment.** No protection system exists for the self-employed.

**Social insurance in case of bankruptcy.** Social insurance in case of bankruptcy allows self-employed retailers (in case of bankruptcy) or self-employed non-retailers (in case of receipt of a debt settlement plan) to receive financial aid for a period of up to 12 months and to acquire entitlement to benefits from the obligatory sickness and disability insurance, to health care and to childcare benefit.

As of October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012, social insurance in case of bankruptcy is extended to self-employed persons who were affected by an emergency situation beyond their control (temporarily or permanently). Such emergencies are: natural disaster, fire, destruction, etc. To qualify for the benefit, self-employed persons, including farmers, should have lost any professional income and should not be able to claim a replacement income.

**Financing.** This system, subject to global management, is financed by three sources: contributions with a share of 57%, taxes and fees with a share of 42.8% and other sources with a share of 0.2%.

A global national insurance contribution with a progressive amount is paid for all branches of social welfare. *A minimum and maximum contribution is provided for.*

**The Belgian social security system is subjected to intensive social dialogue and is based on the commitment of social partners in the sector.** Their main goal is to expand the social security coverage in the sector. On the basis of multiple bilateral agreements signed between trade unions and employers, coverage is provided for individual social security risks, such as unemployment, accidents at work, family allowances, training and qualification, etc., whereas the scope of those agreements covers employed workers, self-employed persons and the members of their family. Since 2012, coverage is provided for the risk of insolvency of farmers.

## 2.9. Italy

The social security system in Italy is administered by several government agencies under the umbrella of the National Social Security Institute (*INPS or Istituto Nazionale della Previdenza Sociale*). All employed and self-employed persons pay social security contributions with a few exceptions. Generally, for employed workers (*lavoratore dipendente*) contributions amount to about 45% of the gross wage: workers pay 10% and employers pay 35%. Self-employed persons must register with and pay contributions to either an independent organization called “Cassa” (which is a social security fund according to the person’s profession such as architects, accountants, lawyers, engineers, medical practitioners, etc.) or directly to the INPS.

Unlike other sectors in the country, **agriculture has a special dedicated social security system**, whose methods of operation and contributions are different for both employed workers and self-employed individuals. **The category of employed workers** can be subdivided in three main groups: **full time workers; part time workers; small tenants.**

The specific nature of social security is due to the fact that farming is characterized mainly by seasonality of crops and the impact of climate and weather conditions. This presupposes more flexible conditions in terms of contributions on the basis of which individuals are entitled to benefits from the social protection system.

**In Italy, seasonal temporary workers in agriculture also have access to the social security system with respect to unemployment benefits depending on the number of working days entered in the official registers published annually by the National Social Security Institute.** With respect to pensions, temporary workers are entitled to pensions under the same conditions that apply to employees in other private sectors.

**In Italy, self-employed persons/farmers receive healthcare and maternity care as well as benefits in respect of accidents at work and occupational diseases according to specific qualifying (required) conditions foreseen in their special scheme.**

In addition, a special coverage scheme is in place for the risks of **disability, old age, death (survivor’s benefits) and family allowances**, which is similar to the general system.

**The eligibility conditions for benefits are the same for all self-employed persons:** no distinction is made between farmers, craftsmen and retailers.

The main requirement is for them to be insured for the risks of **disability, old age and death** (survivor’s benefits). This social security package covering three risks was changed in 1995 and the two current systems came into being.

For the purposes of social security, a distinction needs to be made between the following:

- ✓ farmers who do not own land (tenants and share farmers);
- ✓ farmers who are owners and who are engaged in agriculture exclusively or primarily;
- ✓ entrepreneurs (persons to whom agriculture is the main occupation and who are engaged in it at least 2/3 (for standard land parcels) or 50% (for mountainous or difficult land parcels) of their working time). This category of persons only pay retirement contributions.

*Farmers – tenants and share farmers – pay 50% of the contribution. The remaining 50% are paid by the land owner for the risks of disability, old age, death (survivor’s benefits) and family allowances.*

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**Sickness and maternity: Benefits in kind.** Benefits are granted according to the regulations of the general social security system in Italy.

**Sickness and maternity: Cash benefits.** No special protection system exists for



sickness cash benefits for farmers, craftsmen or retailers and those benefits are paid by the general social security system (by the National Social Security Institute).

**Disability.** Disability benefits covered by the special scheme for self-employed persons (including farmers) are subject to income limits. The minimum period of membership for a person to become eligible for disability benefits is 5 years, 3 of which must have been completed in the last 5 years.

**Old age.** According to the new system, a minimum qualifying period of 20 years of contributions is required regardless of the contribution related calculation system to be applied when calculating the benefit.

Persons insured after January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1996 can retire prior to reaching the age of 70 provided that the amount of their pension equals at least 1.5 times the amount of the welfare-based minimum social allowance. A minimum qualifying period of 5 years of contributions applies to insured persons retiring at the age of 70.

Legal retirement age is as follows:

- ✓ Male self-employed and para-subordinate workers: 66 years and 3 months;
- ✓ Female self-employed and para-subordinate workers: 63 years and 9 months.

Since 2012, the retirement age has been gradually increased according to the increase in life expectancy. Since January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012, the pension payment deferment scheme no longer applies.

*The amount of old-age pension, after a membership of 20 years, amounts to 2% of the number of years of contributions (max. 40) multiplied by the reference salary.*

**Early retirement.** Since January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 the former seniority pension has been replaced by the early retirement pension. When the benefit is claimed before the age of 63 years and 3 months and the person has accrued the contribution qualifying conditions of 42 years and 5 months for men and 41 years and 5 months for women, the benefit itself shall be subject to a permanent reduction in amount, thus discouraging the use of existing pathways to early retirement: 1% reduction applies while benefiting of an early retirement pension claimed two years prior to the age of 63 years and 3 months, whereas a reduction of 2% shall apply if the benefit has been claimed even earlier than 2 years prior to the age of 63 years and 3 months.

The early retirement pension contribution qualifying condition will also be gradually increased from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012, according to the increase in average life expectancy.

The increases for 2013 are as follows:

- ✓ 42 years and 5 months of insurance and contributions for men;
- ✓ 41 years and 5 months of insurance and contributions for women.

**Survivor's benefits.** The widow(er) receives 60% of the disability or retirement pension of the insured or retired person, if he/she does not remarry or in case of remarriage, a flat-rate benefit of two years of pension is granted. Orphans receive the pension until the age of 18, or 21 if they are students, or 26 if they study at the university, or lifelong if they are disabled.

**Accidents at work and occupational diseases.** Benefits are granted according to

the specific qualifying conditions provided for within their special scheme and according to the level of disability determined by competent medical authorities.

**Family benefits.** According to the special scheme, family benefits per month amount to € 10.21 (for pensioners) and to € 8.18 (for farmers) for each member of the household dependent on the insured person/pensioner. The standard age limit for the provision of family benefits is 18 years. The age limit is 21 years, if the dependent family member is a student, and 26 years, if he/she studies at the university.

**Unemployment.** In Italy, no special insurance scheme is provided for unemployment of farmers.

**Financing.** Farmers pay a percentage based on four values, which varies according to the type of land cultivated, the age, the number of workdays and a reference income ("conventional income"). Moreover, they pay contributions for accidents at work and occupational diseases which are again calculated on the basis of the number of workdays and with a reference income equal to € 14,681.10 for 2012.

A lower contribution rate is applied to farmers whose land plots are less productive due to the fact that they are located in mountainous areas or are difficult to cultivate due to the type of land.

An additional charge of € 0.61 per work day is accrued when payment is made to the pension fund.

A set contribution of € 7.49 for maternity benefits is paid every year.

Family benefits are financed at 100% by taxes.

**Italy has a developed system of bipartite social cooperation whose purpose is to improve and expand social protection for workers in agriculture. Italy's experience can be studied and transferred to other countries where such collaboration is missing or weak.**

The bipartite system is explicated in the Collective Bargaining Agreement as negotiated by social partners.

Negotiations are held at two levels: national and regional level, each having a specific subject matter and containing different bilateral safeguard clauses.

At the national level, the E.B.A.N. (the National Agriculture Bipartite Body) has the expertise in:

- ✓ national, regional and local centers;
- ✓ „Agriform“ and training;
- ✓ Joint National Commission on Equal Opportunities;
- ✓ National and Provincial Joint Committees for Occupational Health and Safety.

In addition, E.B.A.N. has several other tasks:

- ✓ to ensure, through the Health Insurance Fund, that additional healthcare services are provided to farmers and their families on top of the benefits ensured by the National Health Service;
- ✓ to organize and manage the activities and/or bilateral services related to social assistance and income support;



- ✓ to promote and coordinate the setting up of bilateral and regional institutions which provide compensations and services to workers;
- ✓ to promote and support workers' full employment through initiatives aimed at identifying training needs and implementing the activities commissioned by Agriform;
- ✓ to implement the activities assigned to the Joint Committee on National Occupational Health and Safety;
- ✓ to maintain constant debate on the issues of development, employment, and competitiveness.

Employers pay contributions in order to ensure that bilateral bodies will be able to guarantee and ensure medical treatment benefits and care. The contribution amounts to:

- 0.30% of the social security contributory income for full-time workers;
- 0.60% of the social security contributory income for part-time workers.

The parties determine in a separate agreement the share of the contribution which will be allocated to each of the activities listed above.

The provincial (local) bargaining agreement governs bilateral relations at the level of the province where bilateral regional agricultural agencies are set up for the disbursement of additional funds for medical treatment of illnesses and work related injuries.

The local body can also:

- ✓ organize and manage activities and/or services which fall within the scope of bilateral social assistance and income support and are defined in the provincial bargaining agreements;
- ✓ perform other duties that the parties may consider appropriate to improve employment relations and support the negotiations.

**Collective bargaining agreements at the level of the province determine the share of the contribution that must be financed by provincial bodies' own resources.**

### 3. From conclusions to summary and recommendations



The fact that independent dedicated schemes were created for farmers does not deprive those farmers of the possibility to participate in the general social security system in order to acquire access to certain types of benefits.

The analysis of social security systems of the nine project countries, which is presented in great detail in the **Analytical Study** developed by the project, and the overview of **dedicated social security schemes** should help us identify highlights that we will propose for discussion to the social partners and stakeholders in the search for effective solutions to the key challenges faced by the systems.



Expanding social security for farmers and workers in agriculture is an issue which requires a debate about future prospects.

The key issue to be resolved in this context is how to build a social security scheme from square one taking into account that regular full time employment with fully declared income is the exception rather than the rule with farmers and especially small farmers who make up the majority of persons working in the sector of agriculture.

#### **Categories of workers in agriculture: differences in the structural make-up**

The predominant majority of persons engaged in agriculture are self-employed. Those are farm owners and members of their households: farmers, entrepreneurs, tobacco growers, etc. The economic impact of the work done by those individuals is contained in the product of their activity.

**Employed workers** have an employment contract with an employer to provide their live workforce under certain conditions negotiated by the parties. The compulsory provisions of an employment contract are specified in the relevant national labour law. Unlike self-employed persons, employed workers have a fixed work place, working time and a salary.

It should be noted that self-employed farmers are significantly different from other self-employed persons and in addition there are differences between the various groups of farmers, i.e. small and big farmers possessing different sizes of land of varying fertility,



different numbers of heads of livestock, machinery and equipment, revenue from marketing their produce.



There is a need for differentiation of the social security basis for calculation of contributions that would result in setting up systems at different levels of protection.

**Therefore,** it is important that the farmers' group should be clearly defined in the context of social security.

**The delineation of the farmers' group in the specific scope** of general (universal) social security systems and the financing of social and health insurance should take into consideration situations where social security law would have to cover farmers who are engaged in other types of gainful activity besides farming (e.g. as an employed worker or a self-employed person), provided that they are primarily engaged in agriculture (e.g. over 75% of their income are from farming). A specific scope set up in a way that would prevent a person to qualify as a farmer for the purposes of social security law, if he/she is engaged in another type of employment or self-employed activity, should be revised (Bulgaria and Macedonia). With the amendments, this category of persons, similarly to the other groups of insured persons, will follow the principle that contributions are paid on the entire income from any gainful activity they may be engaged in. Using the combined income from several gainful activities as a basis will ensure higher cash benefit amounts and pensions for farmers which will in turn be an incentive for them to pay contributions on their full income. Technically, this should not be a problem having in mind that those are general (universal) social security systems covering all kinds of professional groups.

**Employed workers** in project countries are covered for all social risks: sickness, disability, maternity (paternity), accidents at work and occupational diseases, unemployment, old age and death (regardless of whether they are insured under general social security schemes or dedicated schemes for workers in agriculture).



However, the system needs to be expanded and improved with respect to registration and reporting for all persons employed in this sector, including seasonal workers.

We will take a closer look at the group of self-employed persons who are more vulnerable in the context of social security as shown in our study and more clarity is needed in this area.

Social security arrangements for farmers are organized in two ways.

**A General (Universal) System which covers all groups of workers. The General Social Security System ensures a single basic coverage of social risks, an umbrella administrative structure and a single financial scheme.** For self-employed persons, including farmers, risk coverage in the countries where those categories of persons are insured under the general social security systems is significantly different and the difference is most prominent for the **risk of accident at work and occupational disease**.

In **Bulgaria**, self-employed persons, including farmers, cannot be insured against the risk of **accident at work and occupational disease**, while insurance for sickness and maternity (paternity) is **voluntary**. In Romania and the Czech Republic the same category of persons are given the choice to insure themselves against accidents at work and occupational diseases, if they wished to do so.

Differences also exist in terms of **unemployment** coverage. In **Bulgaria** farmers, are excluded from social security for unemployment, while in **Romania** farmers being part of the group of self-employed persons may voluntarily insure themselves against unemployment. In Slovenia as well farmers obtain voluntary coverage for that risk. In addition, farmers in that country receive temporary unemployment coverage at a certain rate, if they have lost their crops due to inclement weather (or more generally, due to the seasonal nature of their agricultural activities). In **Denmark**, unemployment insurance covers that category of individuals as well and is managed through professional organizations.

In **the Czech Republic**, due to the fact that the majority of workers in agriculture enjoy the status of employees and their income is paid in the form of employment salaries, the security system is, therefore, the same for employees and self-employed persons. Farmers who belong to the group of self-employed persons and do not have the status of workers are also protected against unemployment as part of the system for compulsory social security funded by contributions and providing income related benefits.

If practices in terms of **unemployment coverage** of the nine project countries need to be summarized, we believe that it is crucial for the success of an unemployment scheme for self-employed persons **to reflect in its structure the specific features of the relevant group of self-employed persons**. All conditions should be defined depending on the specific occupational situation of self-employed persons in general and farmers in particular.

In countries where workers in agriculture are covered by dedicated social security schemes, such as **Germany**, unemployment coverage applies only to agricultural workers hired by an employer. *Self-employed farmers are not covered for that risk*.

In **Italy**, temporary seasonal workers in agriculture also have unemployment coverage within the social security system depending on the number of work days recorded in the official registers published by the National Social Security Institute every year.

In **France**, unemployment coverage for farmers can be negotiated between social partners but is not included as a social security risk covered by the MSA.



Unemployment schemes for self-employed persons are possible in all countries which have not provided coverage for that risk yet.

There are many similarities, **as shown in the overview of the nine European countries which have dedicated social security schemes for self-employed persons or only for farmers** (although in some countries those schemes also cover employed workers in agriculture). Similar social security risks are covered: sickness, maternity occupational accidents and diseases, old age, survivorship, family allowances, health insurance, etc. However, experience has shown that there is still room for improvement, more specifically in relation to **unemployment insurance and social security rights of seasonal workers**.

A typical feature of the workforce in agriculture is the higher share of seasonal workers for whom unemployment insurance is not adequately reflected in the relevant social security legislation. A worrisome trend is the higher number of workers hired on a fixed term contract that can be seen in all European countries; it is a way to circumvent the law and open the door for social dumping, higher risks of unemployment and precariousness. Heavier working conditions and more limited opportunities to accumulate sufficient contributory length of service in order to become eligible for retirement should also be considered when farmers and especially tobacco growers and other groups of agricultural producers are concerned. In fact, general social security law, if no dedicated social security schemes are available to farmers, could provide for **more flexible conditions** for granting benefits for certain social risks and **fairer methods of financing** which should meet the real needs of people engaged in this kind of activity. **Financing of individual social security risks** should take into consideration the specificities of farming activities; differentiated insurance thresholds and less stringent qualifying conditions should be introduced for self-employed farmers.



Social security systems should strive to provide equivalent coverage for all professional groups, while taking into consideration the specific working conditions for farmers.

**The structure of social security systems** covering farmers in their capacity as insured persons should change only insofar as to introduce specific rules for farmers in view of their specific working conditions. Yet, core social security provisions governing the methods of financing, benefits, and pensions should be the same for all groups of workers regardless of their status as self-employed persons, employed workers, freelance professionals, registered farmers, etc. The applicability of core provisions should not preclude the introduction of specific provisions which should reflect the specific working conditions of a certain group (such as the provisions applicable to workers in hazardous environments due to the different working conditions they are placed in versus other professional groups of insured persons). Social security schemes should strive to provide equivalent coverage for all professional groups, while taking into consideration the specific working conditions for farmers. This should entail the future inclusion of this category of persons in the coverage for risks that it does not enjoy at this time (in Bulgaria those are the risks of occupational accidents and diseases and unemployment).



Structural cooperation among key partners should have the best possible effect on the parameters and social security rights applicable to farmers.

**Administration.** The best possible social security system for farmers is not necessarily a dedicated one. General (universal) social security systems covering all persons engaged in gainful activity (or even the entire population like in Denmark) can be adequate and fair to farmers as well. It is crucial to apply the key principles of social security law to all groups equally, including the group (or even the subgroups) of farmers, which creates the need of administration or coordination with other competent administrations dealing with the specific issues of those persons. Ideally, structural cooperation among key partners, including social partners, with the administration may be developed in a way that will ensure the best possible impact of future changes in agriculture on the parameters and social security rights applicable to farmers.



Adequate pensions for farmers



An important question that is yet to be resolved urgently by the new Member States in the project concerns **pension rates for farmers**. A large portion of those persons receive the minimum pension which is higher than the actual amount of their pensions calculated on the basis of their contributory income. Some of the measures that may result in increased revenue in the system and a fairer redistribution of public funds include improved contribution collection rates and the introduction of differentiated income bases (where they have not been introduced before, such as Bulgaria), application of techniques that will help effectively monitor and report real income generated by farmers.

Of course, the policy to introduce a bigger length of service (to make farmers eligible for full pension) should be pursued further. At the same time, due to seasonality of work, income insecurity, and other factors specific to agriculture, a significant portion of the farmers cannot accumulate the necessary contributory length of service to become eligible for pension. For that reason, a legal possibility should be given to this category of persons to have early retirement with a reduced amount of the pension because this solution may prove more effective than the alternative for those persons to receive other social benefits (disability benefits or pensions, unemployment benefits, welfare).



Temporary incapacity benefits (especially if the person suffered a work related injury or was affected by an occupational disease) and unemployment benefits should be extended to farmers as well.

Farmers should enjoy **temporary incapacity benefits (especially if the person suffered a work related injury or was affected by an occupational disease) and unemployment benefits** equivalent to those enjoyed by employed workers. Although the current environment is not conducive to the adequate development of accident and unemployment insurance schemes for farmers (in case they have not been introduced in the general social security system) in view of the difficult economic situation, we believe that as soon as the situation stabilizes this proposal should be taken on board.



New provisions of the law should make it possible to temporarily defer payments of pension contributions based on a claim to defer payables to a later stage in case of unfavourable conditions or market situation.

**Adequate policies should be introduced for farmers who experience hardships due to inclement weather or unfavourable market conditions** and should take the shape of temporary support (two options are possible: support should be provided either through the social security system or through the social assistance system). This would entail the introduction of new legal provisions that will make it possible to temporarily defer payments of pension contributions based on a claim to defer payables to a later stage without losing the right.



To what extent could existing farmers' unions play a role in the official registration of farming operations and potentially in the execution of administrative tasks related to coordination with social security systems.

Another important question that should be raised concerns **the capabilities of existing farmers' unions to play a role in the official registration of farming operations and potentially in the execution of administrative tasks related to coordination with social security systems**.

Typically, the group of interested self-employed persons is well represented in the management and governance bodies of those schemes as well as in the general system covering all self-employed persons. In cases where self-employed persons are not specifically represented, farmers' interests are generally protected by representatives of employers in this sector and by the relevant trade union structures, if such structures exist. In this field, opportunities for dialogue and intervention for optimizing the system need to be sought by pursuing synergies and correlation with the Common Agricultural Policy and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

This is yet another emphasis on the importance of social dialogue and industrial relations which provide a tool to search for and find solutions for better protection and social security of workers and persons engaged in agriculture. Those examples of good practices which exist in the analysed old member states must be encouraged, studied and promoted taking into account specific national characteristics of the new member states.

Based on the work of project partners on the National Action Plans, we can formulate the following common actions to tackle the listed pending problems.



Problems/Challenges	Objectives ⇒ Measures and methods	Recommendations
<p>1. Demographic challenges and structural changes in the sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Retirement age requirements and working conditions are heavy and inadequate</li> <li>✓ Continuity between generations</li> <li>✓ Changing jobs/businesses</li> </ul>	<p>The sector should become attractive to sustainable operations/businesses offering decent jobs through investments in training and professional qualification of workers in healthy and safe working conditions, in new and promising jobs, including <i>green</i> and <i>environmentally friendly</i> jobs, employment programmes that encourage savvy and experienced farmers to introduce new people to the farming business which will also enable them to retire with dignity from active work.</p>	<p>Social partners and social dialogue at the national level should follow closely and participate in the development of plans and measures to promote the induction of young/new people to agricultural occupations and dignified retirement of elderly workers.</p>
<p>2. Low income ⇒ Meagre social security coverage ⇒ Low pensions and compensations ⇒ Poverty ⇒ Low motivation to start work in this sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Low level of supplementary pensions, if any</li> </ul>	<p>Higher pay in the sector through the introduction of minimum working standards and a minimum wage by virtue of a law.</p>	<p>Social partners should undertake an annual review of industrial relations and income rates in the sector and using the mechanisms of collective bargaining, they should bring income levels and social security rights up to date.</p>
<p>3. The sector is prone to problems because of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Undeclared work</li> <li>✓ Farmers' and helpers' family members</li> <li>✓ Seasonal workers with different status</li> <li>✓ No coverage for unemployment, occupational accidents and diseases</li> <li>✓ Not informed about labour and social security rights</li> <li>✓ Farmers should be differentiated according to the type of income generating activity</li> </ul>	<p>To achieve the highest level of transparency and lawfulness on the labour market through amendments of the law and public supply and demand of workforce.</p>	<p>Social partners should have access to updated information about the number of farmers/employers, the number of contracted employed workers, the number of seasonal workers in the sector. A single information system/register transferring data between social security, tax and employment administrations.</p>

<p>4. Interaction between key players, i.e. social partners and the government/institutions is insufficient at the level of the sector.</p>	<p>To attain a high level of interaction through tripartite negotiations and consultations regarding social security systems and joint trainings. Information campaigns and training measures on the subject of workers' rights, especially seasonal workers. Large-scale information campaigns on occupational health and safety and risk prevention.</p>	<p>Representatives of trade unions and employers should be included in all bodies which create labour market and social protection policies at the level of the sector, rather than including them solely at the national level. Closer coordination with local institutional and government bodies.</p>
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To summarize, let us reiterate our conclusions about possible action at the European and national level on the part of trade unions and employers within the framework of social dialogue.

**Coordinated social policy should be on the key players' agenda**

At the backdrop of the economic crisis where politicians and economists preach about the gradual abolition of the welfare state, introduce austerity and measures that will destroy social responsibility, there is a yet more pressing need for a stronger pan-European social policy. The policy of austerity failed to help Europe emerge from the crisis and resulted in slower growth of the European economy instead. Consequently, divergences and inequality between the regions of Europe and in the member states became deeper and the process of seeking opportunities for attaining social cohesion and integration slowed down. In any case, at the current stage neither trade unions nor the other political partners/key players have proposed any clear economic and socio-political solutions to improve the social situation of the groups of citizens affected by the economic crisis.

**Social partners must continue monitoring and analysing the condition of social security systems.**

Trade unions' continuous work under this project and other projects related to social security (the so-called project for Social Security Coordination) reveals a clear growing need for information across Europe in relation to different social security systems. Although the European Parliament's MISSOC database offers a dedicated portal with a wealth of information materials about different social security systems, our impression is that this information is not readily understood by citizens and due to the diversity of activities and jobs in the sector of agriculture many questions remain open, such as:

- ✓ What does general social security cover in different countries?
- ✓ How effective is social security in dealing with growing poverty in rural areas?
- ✓ Transparency/lawfulness of employment relations in agriculture and transfer of accumulated social security rights of seasonal workers from one EU Member State to another (using the A1 form).
- ✓ What specific proposals can social partners introduce in order to improve social protection for farmers and make their benefits and pensions more adequate?





**Achieving a transparent and informed environment must be encouraged and supported.**

Social partners are in a position to make specific proposals:

- ✓ Compatibility between social rights in a situation where the same insured person has more than one status (e.g. the person has an employment contract but is also a self-employed person; or the exchange of data and information between different social security administrations, etc.). This information must be improved and expanded.
- ✓ Upon entering the labour market, all citizens of the European Union must be regularly informed about their future retirement rights and key questions concerning their social security: eligible retirement age, estimated pension, entitlement to cash benefits, etc.
- ✓ No lump sum payment of pension contributions/instalments; payments should reflect the individual situation.

**The need to clearly formulate the objectives of trade union social policy at the European level.**

The review of historical events in this paper has shown that even trade unions do not always have a clear understanding or unanimous view on the objective for a more coordinated social policy in the European Community. The current situation requires intensive discussions in the field of social policy and agreement on key issues: general agreement between national social partners and between organizations and confederations in the sector.

This is not a finite list and it leaves room for further discussions and possible solutions.

Ongoing, continuous and active social dialogue is the main tool for reaching an agreement and finding solutions to the social policy problems at stake.

**ADDENDUM**

**Action Plans Developed by the Partners**

**Useful Methodological Clarifications**

The action plans that were presented resulted from the joint work and discussions of the participants during the three regional workshops. Participants representing trade unions, employers, institutions, experts interested in the subject matter of social security and social dialogue were challenged to absorb and reflect upon the information, experience and ideas that were shared in the light of their respective national contexts and to generate and discuss ideas that would be applicable to the process of social dialogue. The results of the deliberations within the groups were discussed with the other partners and experts within the project cycle process and constitute an important contribution to the discussions about broadening the social protection for workers in agriculture through active social dialogue.

**Action Plan for concerted measures of the social partners in Agriculture  
Developed by FNSZ - Bulgaria**

Identified Problem/Shortage	Goal to be reached	How to....? Activities/Solutions	Remarks*
<b>Social security rights and insurance fees</b>			
<b>1. Lack of differentiation of the agricultural producers according to their incomes, get by the agricultural activity</b>	To prepare an <b>updated register</b> of farmers, containing information about the farms – land, animals, agricultural products, realized income and number of persons included in the activities of farmers.	General Proposal from Social partners to Ministry of agriculture and food – motivated standpoint	The register shall be compatible with the system of National Revenue Agency and National Social Security Institute <b>Funding:</b> Common Agricultural Policy (Single payment per area scheme + first and second pillar)



<p><b>2. Very low % of the covered/insured agricultural producers – 11,1%</b></p>	<p>Expanding the range of secured farmers by creating more flexible terms for payment of social security contributions (for pensions) and differentiated minimum income for social security contributions. Implementation of similar to self-employed approach for a differentiated minimum security income for farmers on the basis of actual annual income from agricultural activities in the previous year.</p>	<p>In the Social Insurance Code: to be provided for the possibility of making contributions to the „Pensions“ to 31 March of the following year and the introduction of minimum insurance income for farmers according realized and declared annual income from farming.</p>	<p><b>To the executive and legislative authority.</b></p>
<p><b>Benefits</b></p>			
<p><b>1. The risks of “Unemployment” and “Accident by work and professional diseases” are not included in the Law for the agricultural producers/farmers</b></p>	<p>To supplement the orders of Social Insurance Code and to be included the risks „Unemployment“ and „Accidents at work and occupational disease“, taking into account the specificities of the sector.</p>	<p>Motivated Proposal for changes in Social Insurance Code</p>	<p><b>To the executive and legislative authority.</b></p>
<p><b>2. Lack of possibility for earlier retirement of the agricultural producers with reduced pension</b></p>	<p>To be created an opportunity in Social Insurance Code in order to retire those, who do not reach a few years of service (due to changes in the sector during the transition period – after 1990).</p>	<p>Motivated Proposal for changes in Social Insurance Code</p>	<p><b>To the executive and legislative authority.</b></p>

<p><b>3. Lack of adequate insurance/coverage for unemployment risk in cases of the seasonal workers (in regards to the seasonal character of agricultural work)</b></p>	<p>To supplement the labor and social security legislation – the Labour Code and the Social Insurance Code, by adding a definition of seasonal employment and criteria for its inclusion as a risk. To provide more favorable conditions for acquiring the right to unemployment benefit for seasonal workers as well as a shorter period of payment of those benefits.</p>	<p>Motivated Proposal for changes in Social Insurance Code and Labour Code</p>	<p><b>To the executive and legislative authority.</b></p>
<p><b>4. No regulation, which could compensate the loss of incomes in cases of unfavorable weather conditions or natural disasters</b> (as it is organized in the guarantee fund for the workers' incomes by case of bankruptcy)</p>	<p>To create a special system to ensure the income of farmers, for whom this is the only profitable business when they can not produce and implement agricultural production due to adverse weather conditions or natural disasters. Farmers to participate in a certain amount of fee based on realized income from the previous year.</p>	<p>Motivated proposal for the creation of a Guarantee Fund to be paid compensation and social security contributions for small farmers on the basis of the register.</p>	<p><b>To the executive and legislative authority.</b></p>
<p><b>Horizontal actions</b></p>	<p>Informational campaign about social security rights for employed in agriculture, especially for farmers – exchange of information and publicity, pressure on institutions and effective solutions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Joint cooperation through social dialogue – bi- and tri-partitas</li> <li>2. Signing of a partnership agreement and social arrangements</li> <li>3. Promotion of social enterprises in the sector.</li> <li>4. Arrangement of Trilateral conference about the problems in social security with the participation of the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, National Revenue Agency, National Social Security Institute and others.</li> <li>5. Addressing the drawn common action at European level - EFFAT, ESD-Committee, EC</li> </ol>		



**Action Plan for concerted measures of the social partners in Agriculture  
Developed by OSZPV - ASO - Czech Republic**

Identified Problem/ Shortage	Goal to be reached	How to....? Activities/ Solutions	Risks/ Failures	Timing	Remarks*
<b>Social security rights and insurance fees</b>					
<b>1. The lack of poor tackling the consequences of an accident at work, lack of prevention, lack of rehabilitation</b>	Prepare transition from commercial casualty insurance to public, non-profit, service administered by the tripartite where the emphasis is placed on preventing avoidance of accidents. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on potential rehabilitation to accelerate the integration of disabled people back into work.	The common draft of the social partners for Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic.		Until 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2016	
<b>2. The lack of security of family members working together on farms at work accident.</b>	Enact automatic, free insurance against the consequences of accidents at work, for family members who are involved in the functioning of farms including children over 10 years.	The common draft of the social partners for Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic	The possibility of abuse	Until 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2016	In this case it is assumed that this is not stable work at the farm, but only occasional assistance. In children older than 10 years it is expected that work on the farm is a necessity due to the acquisition of habits and skills for the future taking over the farm. Also it is the occasional assistance.

<b>3. Lack of security of people cooperating during „neighborhood assistance“ in case of possible consequences of an accident at work.</b>	Enact automatic, free insurance against the consequences of occupational injuries and who cooperate with at the seasonal work, called „neighborhood assistance“.	The common draft of the social partners for Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic.	The possibility of abuse	Until 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2016	In this case it is assumed that it is not a regular job, but occasional assistance. It is assumed that the owner of the company and all other employees will be insured, as the law provides.
<b>Horizontal actions</b>	Information campaign about the right to social security for workers in agriculture, especially for farmers (exchange of information and publicity, pressure on institutions and effective solutions): 1. Information campaign for agricultural employees about the social security system. 2. Cooperation through social dialogue at tripartite level. 3. Use of social dialogue at the bipartite level to promote social enterprises.				

**Action Plan for concerted measures of the social partners in Agriculture  
Developed by IG BAU - Germany**

Identified Problem/ Shortage	Goal to be reached	How to....? Activities/ Solutions	Risks/ Failures	Timing
<b>The level of the supplementary pension is not sufficient</b>	To improve financially the supplementary Social security	Improvement of the Collective agreements	The state decreases the contributions	Next year
<b>Differentiation of the work- and social rights' of the employees</b>	Check and analysis of the working relations in the Agriculture	Research and analysis	Lack of financing	continuously
<b>To low wages/ Insufficient wages</b>	Increasing the wages in agriculture	Minimum wages to be set by the Law	Politics	2014/2015



<b>Demographic changes/challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ More and better jobs/employment</li> <li>✓ More education</li> <li>✓ More health and safety at work</li> <li>✓ Human resource development and more involvement of the employees</li> </ul>	Initiatives taken by IG BAU	The policy and employers are blocking the initiatives	July 2014
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**Action Plan for concerted measures of the social partners in Agriculture  
Developed by ALPAA - Italy**

<b>Identified Problem/ Shortage</b>	<b>Goal to be reached</b>	<b>How to....? Activities/ Solutions</b>	<b>Risks/ Failures</b>	<b>Remarks*</b>
<b>The labor market is not clear</b>	Transparency, legality of the labor market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• match supply and demand in public way</li> <li>• develop a clear and appropriate legislation</li> </ul>	• identifying appropriate locations for the match	It was approved law on illegal hiring. you are working at union level ad on respect for the law
<b>Retirement age for farm workers is the same as the other categories</b>	Lower retirement age for farm workers	creating tables consultation	economic difficulties to find funds for pensions	Age agricultural workers is low, it have to consider this aspect when it comes to security in the agricultural sector.
<b>Fair pay for farm workers</b>	Equalization wage for agricultural workers			Presence intermediaries for the pursuit of labor in the agricultural sector



**Action Plan for concerted measures of the social partners in Agriculture  
Developed by Agro Sindikat - Macedonia**

Identified Problem/ Shortage	Goal to be reached	How to....? Activities/ Solutions	Risks/ Failures	Timing	Remarks*
<b>Insufficient information on seasonal workers about their rights and opportunities to improve their social security</b>	Massively inform migrant workers of their rights and opportunities to improve their social security, and collecting their experiences and opinions about working conditions	Organizing meetings and trainings	Lack of attendance by seasonal workers	2014	
<b>Insufficient communication with institutions with seasonal workers</b>	Improving the cooperation with institutions	Regular meetings and other electronic and verbal communication with institutions	Lack of interest and desire of institutions to communicate	2014	This activity is ongoing
<b>Lack of reliable official data on the status and working conditions of seasonal workers</b>	Getting reliable official data on the status and working conditions of seasonal workers by the respective institutions	Submitting a formal request to the relevant institutions for providing official information	Lack of interest and desire of institutions to communicate	2014	This activity has already begun and there are some results

<b>Lack of cooperation and exchange of opinions and solutions with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Organization of Employers of Macedonia, Agency for Employment and the Insurance Trusts</b>	Fruitful cooperation and exchange of opinions and adopting concrete practical solutions jointly with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Organization of Employers of Macedonia, Agency for Employment and the Insurance Trusts	Organize a round table together with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Organization of Employers of Macedonia, Agency for Employment and the Insurance Trusts, with the aim of adopting concrete practical solutions together	Lack of interest and desire of institutions to communicate	2014	This activity has already begun, we wait for the response from stakeholders for a date of the meeting
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**Action Plan for concerted measures of the social partners in Agriculture  
Developed by KZI - Slovenia**

Identified Problem/ Shortage	Goal to be reached	How to...? Activities/ Solutions	Risks/ Failures	Timing
<b>Payment of contributions (erratic/irregular and uneven percentage)</b>	Appropriate legislation	In negotiations with the social partners (employers and government)	Lack of interest of employers and policy	Four years (until the end of the term of office of the Government)
<b>Aging population Working conditions (unadjusted for older workers)</b>	Appropriate legislation	In negotiations with the social partners (employers and government)	Lack of interest of employers and policy	Four years (until the end of the term of office of the Government)
<b>Undeclared work Seasonal work (conditions are not the same as for the workers who work under an employment agreement/contract)</b>	Appropriate legislation and the provisions/conditions of the collective agreement	In negotiations with the social partners (employers and government)	Lack of interest of employers and policy	Four years (until the end of the term of office of the Government)

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The purpose of this Brochure is to provide an overview and analysis of social security systems with a focus on the good practices of supplementary and dedicated social security schemes in agriculture. It aims to foster dialogue among sectoral social partners, encourage proactive steps on their part in order to solve the problems of agricultural workers in situations of crises, structural changes and financial instability, and promote their commitment in shaping social reality.

This publication is the result of partners and experts' collective work and a contribution to the development of effective social dialogue in the sector and to the discussion on improving agricultural workers' social security.

*The sole responsibility for this publication lies with the authors and the European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained here.*



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