

**To the kind attention of:**

Minister of Regional Affairs and Agriculture

Brussels, 15 June 2026

**Subject:** Defending and Strengthening Social Conditionality in the Future CAP

Dear Minister,  
Dear Mr Johannes Terras,

The European Trade Union Confederation ([ETUC](#)), and the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions ([EFFAT](#)), representing 45 million workers across Europe, are writing to urge you to safeguard and strengthen the social dimension of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and, in particular, the Social Conditionality mechanism.

According to information available to us, the Cyprus Presidency intends to propose the removal of social conditionality from the future CAP framework. This proposal is currently being discussed within the Council's Working Party on Horizontal Agricultural Questions, which is preparing the political discussions at the forthcoming Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AgriFish Council) on 22–23 June.

Social conditionality is one of the most important social achievements of the latest EU legislative term. For the first time, the receipt of CAP payments has been linked to compliance with a set of labour rights, including occupational health and safety standards. This reflects a simple and widely supported principle: public money should not subsidise violations of workers' rights.

As discussions on the future of the CAP advance, it is essential that social conditionality remains a central pillar of European agricultural policy. The European trade union movement will not accept a rollback of this fundamental principle which promotes the responsible and ethical use of EU taxpayers' money and the protection of farm workers and responsible employers. These hard-won protections must not be dismantled under the guise of "simplification". Rather than weakening this instrument, the forthcoming CAP revision should be used as an opportunity to strengthen its effectiveness, broaden its scope, and improve its implementation and enforcement, in line with the [proposals](#) advanced by EFFAT.

At a time when directly employed workers are essential to sustain agricultural production, and when labour shortages continue to affect the sector across Europe, improving working conditions must be recognised as a strategic priority. Poor wages, precarious employment, health and safety risks, and labour exploitation are among the key factors undermining the attractiveness of agricultural work. If properly implemented and enforced, social conditionality can make a significant contribution to improving labour standards in the primary sector, strengthening Europe's long-term resilience and competitiveness.

In recent months, several misleading arguments have been raised against social conditionality in Council discussions. Claims that it creates additional administrative burdens are unfounded. Social conditionality does not impose any paperwork on farmers, nor does it introduce new obligations; it

simply links CAP payments to compliance with labour and occupational safety legislation that employers are already legally required to respect. Likewise, it does not require new inspections, as it relies on existing labour enforcement mechanisms.

The argument that social conditionality constitutes a “double penalty” is equally misleading. Labour law sanctions are the legal consequence of violating workers’ rights. Social conditionality serves a different and complementary purpose: ensuring that public subsidies are granted only to beneficiaries who comply with applicable labour standards. It is a matter of accountability and ethical use of public funds.

Social conditionality has the potential to become a powerful tool for raising labour standards in one of the most precarious sectors of the economy. Agriculture continues to record high rates of workplace accidents, undeclared work, labour exploitation and abuse, particularly affecting seasonal, mobile and migrant workers. At the same time, social conditionality supports responsible employers who respect labour standards and face unfair competition from those that don’t.

We call on your leadership to defend a principle that has only recently begun to deliver. Social conditionality is fair, proportionate and necessary. It contributes to protecting workers, ensuring fair competition between farmers, strengthening public trust in the CAP, and making the European agricultural sector more attractive, sustainable and competitive.

We trust that you will support the preservation and strengthening of social conditionality in the forthcoming CAP reform and oppose any attempt to remove or weaken this important instrument.

We remain at your disposal should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,



Esther Lynch  
General Secretary ETUC



Enrico Somaglia  
General Secretary EFFAT