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Press Release

MEPs praise Geopa-Copa for report on social dumping and undeclared work in agriculture presented to Parliament

MEPs from the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development praised this week a report presented by the Employers Group of Professional Agricultural Organisations in the EU (Geopa-Copa) on social dumping and undeclared work (UDW) in the EU agricultural sector which calls for more social dialogue and simplification of administrative requirements to effectively tackle UDW.

The two year project, which was supported by the EU Commission, aimed to tackle the problem of undeclared work in the EU agricultural sector in a more effective way to improve the situation of farm workers and to cut red tape for employers. A key problem with the current system is that undeclared and illegal work promotes social fraud and unfair competition and this must be fought.

The report concludes that simplification of administrative requirements related to employment, taxes and social security are essential to effectively tackling UDW. This will benefit farm workers, employers and Member States.

Welcoming the report, Chris Botterman, President of Geopa-Copa, said he was delighted with the results. “From Poland to Portugal, from Cyprus to Finland, we identified the national problems but also the best practices in the agricultural sector to tackle undeclared work and social dumping. We want to help fight unfair competition and disadvantaged positions and support those who comply with the rules. Also the employees must enjoy fair conditions in their employment. We need a simpler system which benefits both farm workers and employers”.

Speaking at the hearing, Spanish MEP Aguilera Garcia (S&D) thanked Geopa-Copa for the report, saying “agriculture has to be competitive and, of course, this has to be reflected in the labour costs”. Whilst MEP Petir (EPP) highlighted the need for farmers to be better organised at national level by joining cooperatives and also underlined the need for a better social status for the assisting spouses of farmers.

The report “Social dialogue as the most effective mean of combating social dumping and the undeclared work in the agriculture sector – The shift towards sustainable and high quality jobs” is set to be presented at the EU Platform on Undeclared Work. The report is already available at: <http://www.copa-cogeca.eu/Main.aspx?page=GeopaMembers>

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