

SEASONAL WORK, SBARRA, REAFFIRMING RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS AND STRENGTHENING UNION SYNERGIES AND BARGAINING AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

The conference related to the European project "Valuing migrant seasonal worker through a sectorial social dialogue that will professionalize its contents" (VP 2015/001/0064) was concluded today in Rome, with the intervention of Luigi Sbarra. The initiative, organized by the FAI-CISL, covered two days and saw the participation of a large delegation of European trade unionists, academics, industry and EFFAT experts.

On the first day, chaired by Ermanno Bonaldo - Deputy President and Coordinator of EFFAT Agriculture and Food sectors, the project report was presented, which was followed by data and evidence that enlightened the complex picture of the criticalities of seasonal migrant work. The situation was outlined in detail by Paolo Mezzio, INAS Vice President, Liliana Ocmin, head of the CISL Immigration Department, Marilena Rocha, ANOLF Vice President, Federico Borgoni from COLDIRETTI, Francesca Zapala from ALPAA, and Franco Pittau, IDOS President, who presented data from the 2016 Immigration Report. Union leaders of the German (IG BAU), French (CFE-CGC-AGRO), Spanish (CCOO and UGT), Belgian (CETTAR), Bulgarian (PODKREPA- FITU_FOOD and FNSZ), Romanian (FSA-EARTH) and Albanian (SPPBBSH) trade unions also gave their contributions. The conclusions of the first day of the conference were entrusted to the FAI-CISL National Secretary, Mohamed Saady.

The second day of the conference saw two moving testimonies by two migrant workers and a panel discussion moderated by Salvo Guglielmino, which was attended by Antonio Dias Moreno, Spanish unionist and member of the EESC, Gauthier Bodivit, French unionist CFE-CGC-AGRO, Marco Cilento of ETUC, Daniela Kadiyska, from the Bulgarian Labour Inspectorate, Thomas Hentchel, director of the German PECO. Interventions focused on the need for a new, more coordinated and harmonized model, centred on a more intensive social dialogue. The speakers, in particular, pointed out the need for a new season of more effective social collaboration at the European level to govern the currently fragmented seasonal labour market. The Union negotiation at European level was detected as the tool through which extremely uneven conditions could be harmonized.

"Bargaining - Sbarra said in its conclusions - is the main tool by which we must strengthen rights and protections in the seasonal work, both at European level and in individual countries. The conquests of the free bargaining are plain to see: the solution cannot come from a legislative action on wages". It is therefore necessary to "activate all the tools we have, from EFFAT to ETUC, to start drawing the scope of a possible European negotiation".

It is certain - added Sbarra - that we also need "rules to enhance bilateral bargaining and recognise the leading role of joint institutions in labour market governance." For that, "on the one hand, we should greet with enthusiasm the new Italian legislation against illegal hiring, which provides new tasks for bilateral agricultural organisations. But, on the other hand, opposition must be raised against the use of agricultural vouchers, which deconstruct and dismantle bargaining and labour rights". The way to consolidate the leading role of social dialogue also requires unions that are able to innovate themselves: "We need to update our interpretive models. The goal is a stronger, free and innovative European Union, able to dialogue and negotiate in direct contact with workers and to make the real difference in development policies," concluded Sbarra.