



Corporate  
Social Responsibility  
and social dialogue  
**in the European  
sugar industry**



# INTRODUCTION

## *Corporate Social Responsibility and social dialogue in the European sugar industry*

The EU sugar industry is committed to creating added human and social value by incorporating corporate social responsibility (CSR) into all its activities. Established in 1969, just after the creation of the Sugar CMO, social dialogue in the European sugar industry has brought together employers, represented by CEFS, and employees, represented by EFFAT, for almost 50 years.

Official recognition of these social partners by the European Commission was formalised in 1999 with the creation of the social dialogue committee for the sugar industry. In 2003, CEFS and EFFAT voluntarily became engaged in CSR and agreed on a Code of Conduct that sets eight compulsory minimum social standards and basic rights. CSR reflects the commitment of the social partners to progressively develop the overall sustainability of the sugar industry. Some fifty examples of best practices are regularly updated and serve as an inspiration for sugar companies.

Every other year, a report is presented to the European Commission concerning the implementation of the Code of Conduct and examples of new and developing good practices. These reports can be consulted at the joint CEFS-EFFAT website [www. sugardialogue.eu](http://www.sugardialogue.eu).

First produced in 2004, this brochure is an important tool for dissemination of the principles of CSR and for visibility of the added value to the sectoral social dialogue. This update is particularly relevant as the EU sector enters a new era following the end of production quotas on 30 September 2017.





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## THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

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### THE COMITE EUROPEEN DES FABRICANTS DE SUCRE



Le Comité Européen des Fabricants de Sucre, or, in English, the European Association of Sugar Manufacturers, is an international non-profit organisation and a recognised interlocutor for the EU institutions since 1953, sharing knowledge and technical expertise on sugar. CEFS' membership is composed of sugar-producing companies in 20 EU Member States and Switzerland.



Credit – Azucarera



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### EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM



EFFAT is the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions. As a European Trade Union Federation representing 120 national trade unions from 35 European countries, EFFAT defends the interests of more than 22 million workers towards the European Institutions, European employers' associations and transnational companies. EFFAT is a member of the ETUC and the European regional organisation of the IUF.





**PAUL MESTERS**  
**President of CEFS**

Since 2004, the European sugar industry has included commitments to Corporate Social Responsibility in its overall industrial policy at both European and company level, and we intend to continue our efforts in this field.

In the context of globalisation, the European sugar industry is committed to reinforcing its overall sustainability in collaboration with its main partners. The social partners take the opportunity of this brochure to underline once again the need to ensure that our industrial sector remains sufficiently competitive: in practice the CSR commitments entered into by the European sugar industry can only be realised in a context of economic viability that is unthreatened by sudden radical changes in the regulatory and market environment.



**HARALD WIEDENHOFER**  
**General Secretary of EFFAT**

Certainly the most significant aspect of the commitment of the European sugar industry to Corporate Social Responsibility is the implementation of the Code of Conduct by companies, at national and local level, in collaboration with our partners. We welcome this approach, which we consider essential to give credibility to voluntary minimum standards.

We also welcome the concrete measures taken at company level for implementation of the Code of Conduct. They are favouring the development of highly interesting good practices, as demonstrated by the biennial implementation reports.



**DORTE NØRTOFT-ANDERSEN**  
**Chair of the CEFS Working Group on Social Questions**

With a long tradition of social dialogue, the social partners in the sugar industry know that good management of human resources plays an important role in mobilising energies in order to increase competitiveness. The CSR Code of Conduct constitutes a responsible management framework which has proved very helpful to cope with change in the context of restructuring. It has given a fresh impetus to the social dialogue in an enlarged Europe by bringing a new autonomous dimension to the acceding countries and by endeavouring to promote a model of dynamic dialogue.



**ROBERTO IOVINO**  
**Chair of the EFFAT delegation in the sugar industry**

Social dialogue serves as the cornerstone of constructive and lasting initiatives and actions which are essential for both employees and employer. The code of conduct is an initiative that shows our commitment to work together and find solutions on many converging topics such as health and safety, training, development, lifelong learning, and others. The EU sugar industry has a good and longstanding working relationship between employer and employee representatives that we hope will continue to be effective and deliver good results into the future.

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## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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**IN FEBRUARY 2003 THE SOCIAL PARTNERS SIGNED  
AND LAUNCHED A CSR CODE OF CONDUCT**

IN EFFECT SINCE 1 JANUARY 2004

*Established on a voluntary basis,  
this Code of Conduct covers eight minimum  
standards, illustrated by some  
fifty examples of good practice.*

Along with the work carried out in regard to the environment,  
the social partners are endeavouring to develop  
the sustainability of the sugar industry at social level.<sup>1</sup>

Recognising that companies are not only responsible for their products  
but also for the conditions under which they are produced,  
the European sugar industry has embarked upon a dynamic process  
covering all social aspects.

***"Our vision is to create added human and social value  
by incorporating CSR into all our activities".***

1. See [www.sustainablesugar.eu](http://www.sustainablesugar.eu).



Comité Européen  
des Fabricants de Sucre  
Avenue de Tervuren 182  
B-1150 Brussels  
Tel: +32 2 762 0760  
[www.cefs.org](http://www.cefs.org)



European Federation of Food,  
Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions  
Avenue Louise 130A Bte 3  
B-1050 Brussels  
Tel: +32 2 218 77 30  
[www.effat.org](http://www.effat.org)

## *Corporate Social Responsibility in the European sugar industry*

# CODE OF CONDUCT

### *I. Introduction*

As an industry, our companies are not only responsible for their products and services, but also for the conditions under which they are produced. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the European sugar industry is a framework within which we as a sector have voluntarily decided to promote social development and respect for fundamental rights.<sup>2</sup>

For a number of years the European sugar industry has lent its support to a European social model through a whole series of guarantees going well beyond legal requirements. One of the major elements of this model is the involvement of employees in social dialogue at all levels.

This is why the social partners decided to take a joint initiative on Corporate Social Responsibility.

Now this CSR framework in the European sugar industry goes even further and sets voluntary minimum standards in a number of areas such as human rights, education and training, health and safety, pay and working conditions, restructuring, and the relationship between the social partners.

This framework has been created to serve as a vehicle for sharing experiences and will function as a source for the dissemination of best practices throughout the European sugar industry, as well as an inspiration for continuous improvement.

This framework clearly positions the European sugar industry in relation to our partners, be they employees, consumers, customers, shareholders, suppliers, public and financial authorities, the European Commission, or international organisations like the World Trade Organisation.

Our vision for this work is to create added human and social value by incorporating Corporate Social Responsibility into all our activities.

Our approach builds upon a holistic view of CSR, and upon a transparent and open dialogue with our partners.

<sup>2</sup> In this context the European sugar industry covers the members of CEFS operating in countries where CEFS is represented and within the field of activity of CEFS. See the list of CEFS members on the CEFS website: [www.cefs.org](http://www.cefs.org)

## ***II - Minimum Standards***

The members of CEFS undertake to comply with the minimum standards set out below and, as appropriate, to promote these standards beyond the area of activities for which CEFS has a mandate. These voluntary standards of a general scope are usually much lower than the standards actually applicable in the Union. The respect of these standards shall not constitute a valid reason for reducing pre-existing higher standards – on the contrary.

### **I. HUMAN RIGHTS**

The European sugar industry complies with the principles and rights at work as defined by the ILO and in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European legislation.

The European sugar industry:

- a) respects the freedom of association and thus the right for all workers to establish trade unions and to affiliate, including for workers representatives the right of access to the enterprise (ILO convention 87).
- b) recognises the effective right to collective bargaining as well as the right for worker representatives to get facilities as appropriate in order to carry out their functions promptly and efficiently. (ILO conventions 98 and 135).
- c) confirms the fact that exercising these rights will not cause any personal or professional damage to the workers and their representatives.
- d) will not operate with any form of forced or compulsory labour (ILO Convention 29).
- e) is opposed to child labour (Convention 182) and meets ILO convention 138 in relation to the minimum age for admission to employment.
- f) is against all discrimination, be it based on ethnic or national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, affiliation to trade union, age or political affiliation and undertakes in particular to guarantee and promote equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women (ILO conventions 100 and 111 - EU directives n° 76/207/EEC of 9.2.1976, n° 2000/43/EC of 29.06.2000 and n° 2000/78/EC of 27.11.2000).

### **2. EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL AND LIFE LONG TRAINING**

The European sugar industry endeavours to invest in its employees by providing them with the best possible skills and abilities in order to develop their individual potential to the maximum, thereby contributing to the success and competitiveness of the enterprise.

The European sugar industry commits to give specific training to employees as regards technical aspects connected with the production process, health and safety in the workplace, and all other relevant aspects connected with the enterprise.

Education and training constitute an integral part of social dialogue. Proposals and initiatives by employees and their representatives are welcome and will be implemented in accordance with national habits.

The European sugar industry recommends to sugar companies, whenever economically and socially feasible, to make a significant effort to offer more young people training periods and places as apprentices in order to improve their skills on the labour market.



### 3. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The European sugar industry pays special attention to health and safety. The industry strives to create working conditions that give its employees the possibility to work in a safe environment without risk to their health. In cooperation with employees and their representatives, the sugar industry commits to ensure a healthy and safe working environment; all preventive measures on health and safety are considered a priority.

The European sugar industry endeavours not only to pay special attention to European legislation on health and safety – in particular, the framework directive of 1989 – but to go beyond it.

The European sugar industry endeavours to continue to implement specific training programmes, safety procedures and policies that take into account the unique hazards linked to the sugar manufacturing process.

### 4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

The social partners of the European sugar industry – represented by the Comité Européen des Fabricants de Sucre (CEFS) and the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism (EFFAT) – consider that a constructive social dialogue between employer and employee representatives at all levels is an important element for the successful functioning of enterprises. Informing and consulting employee representatives promotes confidence and cooperation between employees and employers.

This is why the sugar industry commits to maintain its social dialogue at European level, in place since 1969 and officially recognised by the European Commission in 1999 with the establishment of a sectoral social dialogue committee for the sugar industry.

At national level, the representation of employees and collective bargaining apply in accordance with the legislation, and often go beyond it. The European sugar industry commits to continue on this path.

### 5. FAIR PAY

The present pay levels in the sugar industry meet and in many cases exceed the minimum rates provided for by branch or industry collective agreements and/or legal provisions. The European sugar industry commits to reward every employee with remuneration that is fair and commensurate to their work.

When no agreement or pay scale exists, wages are enough to ensure that workers and their families

have a decent standard of living as defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ILO Tripartite Declaration.<sup>3</sup>

In order to avoid any discrimination, the sugar industry also recognises the right for employees in similar conditions to get equal pay for equal work (ILO Convention 100, EU Treaty 141, Directive 2000/78/EC).

### 6. WORKING CONDITIONS

The European sugar industry meets the European legislation covering working conditions and complies with branch or industry standards on working hours. The industry commits to adhere to these standards into the future.

As far as working time during the processing season is concerned, special agreements may have been concluded between the social partners or with

the public authorities.

When no standard exists, the social partners can conclude appropriate agreements. Working conditions must be at least equivalent to those offered by comparable employers in the country concerned.

3. Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Art. 23: “everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity”. ILO Tripartite Declaration: “Wages, benefits and conditions of work offered by multinational enterprises should not be less favourable to the workers than those offered by comparable employers in the country concerned”.



## 7. RESTRUCTURING

Since an open dialogue between management and employees is a pre-requisite for a climate of mutual respect and confidence, employers in the sugar sector endeavour to keep employees and their representatives aware on a regular basis of the situation of the enterprise. Further, sugar sector employers commit to keep employers informed and consulted on planned restructuring measures in due time.

In the case of restructuring and of investments with a potential social impact as provided by the present Code of Conduct, the sugar industry commits to act in a socially responsible way.

The European sugar industry commits to take steps improve the employability of employees.

## 8. BUSINESS RELATIONS AND CHOICE OF SUPPLIERS

The European sugar industry expects socially responsible behaviour from its suppliers. The industry commits to take into account the social and environmental sustainability of suppliers, in accordance with the provisions of this Code of Conduct.

The European sugar industry will thus contribute to circulate the concept of corporate social responsibility at global level and endeavour to make a concrete contribution to the fight against child

and forced labour.

The European sugar industry supports all European provisions aimed at counteracting fraud and corruption in the trade developed with different countries of the world and, in the general context of business ethics, undertakes to comply with the OECD guidelines for multinational companies, or, beyond the CEFS area of activities, to promote them as far as possible.<sup>4</sup>

## *III - Monitoring, Assessment, Updating*

1. EFFAT and CEFS will, within the context of their Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee, ensure the monitoring of the progressive implementation of this Code of Conduct and regular update of the examples of good practice.
2. To this effect EFFAT and CEFS will conduct a joint assessment of the implementation of the Code of Conduct at European level, in the form of a biennial report covering the calendar year and to be presented in February of the following year, within the framework of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee, at a meeting specifically devoted to this subject. This biennial report will be prepared on the basis of data collected by the European social partners.
3. To ensure a wide dissemination and good understanding of the Code of Conduct at national level, it will be translated into the different European languages by the national delegations. The French, English and German versions will be deemed authentic.

4. See Regulation on the General Scheme of Preferences n° 2501/2001 of 1012.2001-OJEC L 346 of 31.12.2001, art. 26, and withdrawal or suspension provisions included in different regulations as regulation 2007/2000/EC on Balkans, as well as in bilateral agreements. See also the OECD website: [www.OECD.org](http://www.OECD.org).

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## EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

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### A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

Some fifty examples of good practice, regularly updated, illustrate positive behaviour going beyond each of the eight minimum standards defined by the Code of Conduct. Constituting the dynamic part of the Code, they must be regarded as a source of inspiration and an exchange of excellence. They can be consulted on the website [www.sugardialogue.eu](http://www.sugardialogue.eu)

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## CSR IMPLEMENTATION REPORTS

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### A DYNAMIC CSR PROCESS

A CSR implementation report is presented every two years at the plenary meeting of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for sugar, which normally takes place in late February or early March. This report covers the different CSR activities of the previous calendar year and includes following aspects:

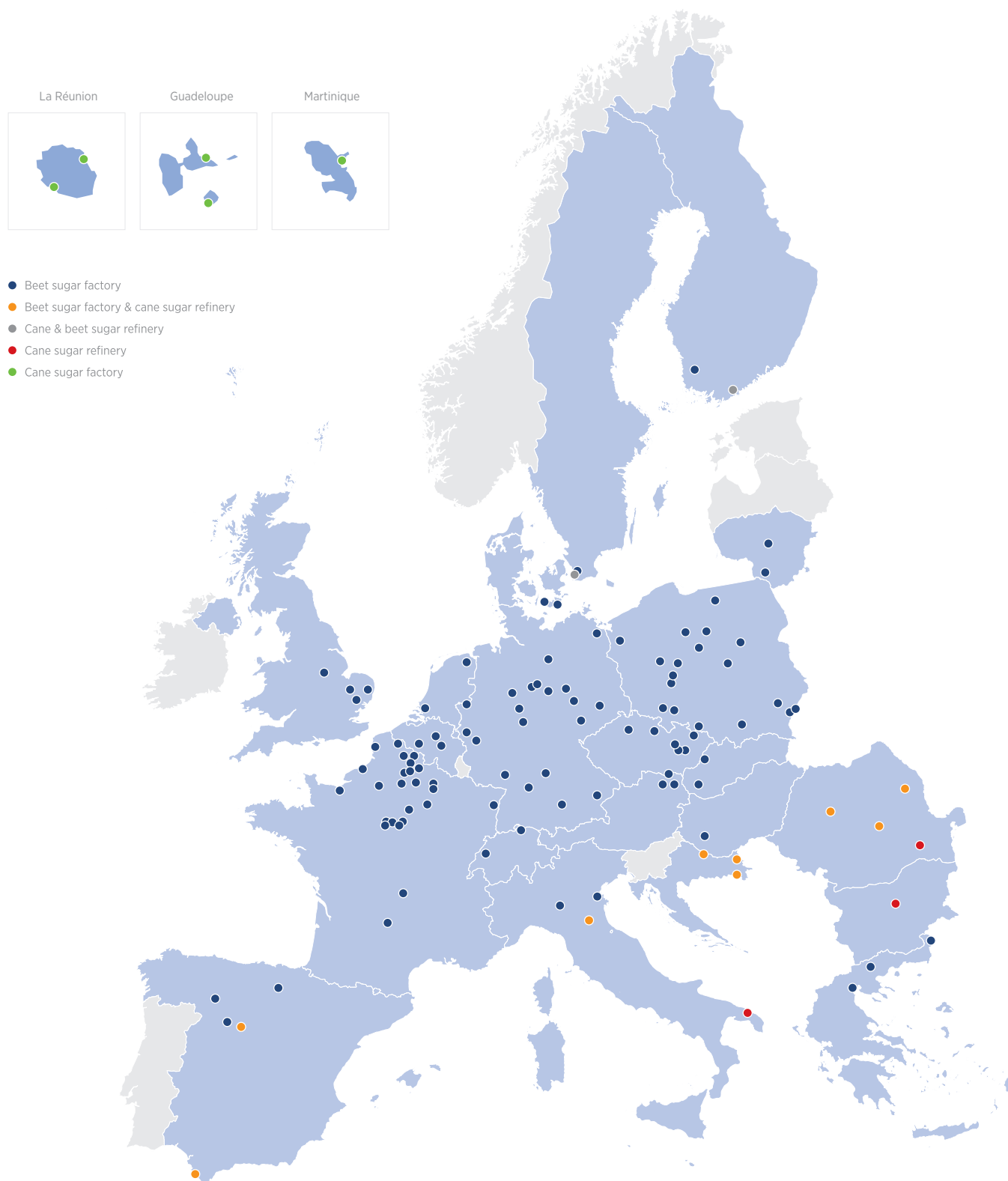
1. Economic and political context
2. Management of restructuring
3. Implementation of the Code of Conduct
4. Summary and conclusions

Fourteen reports have already been produced since 2003, the last one covering year 2017 (see [www.sugardialogue.eu](http://www.sugardialogue.eu)). Such reports are used extensively in contacts with the European institutions and Member States.

The implementation reports present the joint assessment of the social partners on the development of the European policies, their joint positions, requests, actions and expectations. They are mainly used:

- to assess the CSR progress
- to try and influence European policies
- to help share information on main sugar topics.

# SUGAR PRODUCTION IN THE EU



EU and Swiss beet sugar factories and cane sugar refineries associated with CEFS



**CEFS**

Comité Européen  
des Fabricants de Sucre

Avenue de Tervuren 182  
B-1150 Brussels

cefs@cefs.org  
Tel: +32 2 762 0760  
Fax: +32 2 771 0026

[www.cefs.org](http://www.cefs.org)  
[www.sugardialogue.eu](http://www.sugardialogue.eu)

Founded in 1953, CEFS represents  
EU beet sugar manufacturers and cane  
sugar refiners in 20 EU Member States  
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**EFFAT**

European Federation of Food,  
Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions

Avenue Louise 130A Bte 3  
B-1050 Brussels

effat@effat.org  
Tel: +32 2 218 77 30  
Fax: +32 2 218 30 18

[www.effat.org](http://www.effat.org)  
[www.sugardialogue.eu](http://www.sugardialogue.eu)

EFFAT results from the merger of  
two European federations (ECF-IUF  
and EFA) in 2000. It represents  
120 national trade unions from  
35 European countries, defending  
the interests of more than 2.6 million  
members in the food, agriculture  
and tourism sectors.

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