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The EU sugar industry matters

Presenting the conclusions of the High-Level Group on sugar at the working group meeting of the EU sugar sector social dialogue, representatives of the European Commission Directorate General for Agriculture & Rural Development once again offered no concrete, immediate actions to the most pressing question ever faced by the EU beet sugar sector: how to arrest the current serious, unprecedented, and prolonged market decline?

Discussions have been on-going since more than a year and no tangible steps have been taken to stabilise the EU sugar market. The EU price reporting is well below the EU reference threshold since January 2018.

The context is however quite straightforward: beet sugar factories, which concentrate skilled, remunerative industrial employment, are often the heart of the rural communities where they are situated. These factories generate important economic multipliers: supporting sugar beet farmers; secondary processors, with high-quality, sustainable sugar; the chemicals and fermentation industries, with bioethanol and molasses; and pastoral agriculture, with nourishing animal feed from beet pulp. It is no exaggeration to say that the closure of a single such factory can shatter the fortunes of an entire community. And this at a time when rural desertification shows no sign of letting up.

Number talks: 14 Jobs are supported for every direct job in a sugar factory.

EFFAT, representing employees of the EU sugar sector, and CEFS, representing EU sugar manufacturers urge the European Commission to implement market measures urgently.

The EU sugar industry matters. Ensuring the continued competitiveness and sustainability of our industry is vital to the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of European citizens and some of our most fragile communities.