



Brussels
Tuesday, 11 March 2025

SSDC SUGAR - JOINT STATEMENT

CEFS AND EFFAT SOUND THE ALARM ON MERCOSUR DEAL—AGAIN

On Friday the social partners of the SSDC Sugar (CEFS and EFFAT) called on the European Member States and the European Parliament not to give the green light to the EU-Mercosur agreement as negotiated.

At a time when the EU's domestic beet sugar sector is facing multiple pressures, this agreement would deal a further blow to its viability. Over the past year, EU white sugar prices have fallen by 35%, according to the European Commission. Since 2017, an average of two sugar factories have closed every year.

The Mercosur deal would only make the market situation worse. Granting Brazil and Paraguay duty-free access for 190,000 tonnes of sugar to the EU market will not only deepen this crisis but also undermine the EU's Green Deal objectives and fair labour standards. Seen that sugar from Mercosur is produced under much lower environmental and social standards.

CEFS Director General Marie-Christine Ribera said: "This comes on top of the pressure caused by sugar imports from Ukraine, which have already disrupted the EU market. The result of the future renegotiation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement is a source of additional uncertainty, with potentially significant consequences for sugar manufacturers and workers."

The EU sugar industry supports some of the EU's most vulnerable rural communities, provides high-quality jobs, ensures strong social protections through collective agreements, and maintains a tradition of social dialogue. However, the EU's trade policy risks undermining these achievements.

EFFAT General Secretary Enrico Somaglia said: "The Mercosur agreement in its current form is detrimental to sugar workers in Europe and does nothing to improve social standards in the Mercosur countries. The TSD chapter is once



again unenforceable, and the new "rebalancing mechanism" threatens existing and future EU social legislation."

The social partners stress the urgent need for policy coherence to ensure trade agreements align with the EU's broader goals of sustainability and social fairness. Employers and workers in the sugar sector are aligned: if policymakers at the European and national levels want to protect Europe's sugar sector, they should vote against the deal.

CEFS, European Association of Sugar
Manufacturers
Marie-Christine Ribera
Director General
+32 2 762 07 60
mariechristine.ribera@cefs.org

EFFAT, European Federation of Food,
Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions
Enrico Somaglia
Secretary General
+32 (0)2 209 62 68
e.somaglia@effat.org