



**EFFAT REGIONAL COUNCIL OF THE TRADE UNIONS  
IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE  
FOR COOPERATION, SOLIDARITY AND SUPPORT**

**DRAFT**

**Stronger Unions in CEE/SEE  
For One Europe with fair wages for all workers**

***Common Paper/Position/Declaration***

1. United in our unwavering defence of peace, solidarity and social justice in the region and in Europe;
2. Conscious of the damage suffered to workers' rights in our region over the last two decades when **social dialogue** has not been recognised or respected;
3. Resolute in our advocacy for the 10% of working people in Europe who are **working poor**, as well as the traditionally low-waged workers in agriculture, food and tourism, sectors particularly culpable for increasingly precarious working conditions, seasonal work and exacerbating demographic ageing;
4. Convinced of the need to reorient the European economy in favour of labour, away from capital, by ensuring adequate mechanisms for guaranteeing **wage growth** and **decent working** and employment conditions for workers;
5. Responsive to the longstanding and **unfair pay gap** between workers in Central, Eastern and South-East Europe and founder Member States – that sees minimum wages vary from 1,70€ in Bulgaria to 12€ in Luxembourg – that results in an East-to-West 'brain drain', **social dumping** and the widespread **exploitation** of labour;
6. Focused on the need for **wage increases** to combat in-work poverty and socioeconomic inequality, improving productivity and **social cohesion**;
7. Striving for a European economy where **working people** have the recognition and **respect** they deserve;

We, the EFFAT member organisations from Central, Eastern and South-East Europe, united under the EFFAT banner, declare that:

- We can no longer afford the **lowest labour pay** of any strategic sector in Europe.



- We do not accept the **unfair difference** between the wages of workers in CE or SE Europe and those in Western Europe. We want to see a **convergence of wages** in Europe – a prerequisite for social justice.
- We need **firm European regulation** governing **social dialogue** provisions and guaranteeing a **fair minimum wage** across Europe.
- We condemn in any form the **exploitation** of agricultural and seasonal labour, and call for fair wages and decent labour conditions for workers in the sector in line with profit and economic growth deriving from **European funding and the CAP**.
- In place of the prioritisation of short-term financial interests – especially shareholder value – we want to see profits reinvested back into the workforce, into human potential, in the form of professional training and upskilling, workshops to improve knowledge of health and safety regulations etc.
- To manage the **effects of digitalisation** in our sectors we call for special measures concerning work in CEE to be guaranteed in collective agreements.
- As trade unionists, we **condemn unequivocally racism** in all its forms and any other action geared towards undermining our democratic institutions.
- To deliver **sustainable social progress**, and to preserve the unity of Europe, we are pushing for solidarity and joint action to prevent the erosion of social dialogue and combat attempts to marginalise the trade union movement.
- We call for coordinated action to strengthen the **cooperation** between North and West and South Eastern European trade unions, to intensify the **exchange of information** and **best practice** in the field of social dialogue, pay and social policies (in respect of TNCs, as a first step).

*5 November 2019, Zagreb, Croatia*

