



European Organisation of Agricultural, Rural and Forestry Contractors

Confédération Européenne des Entrepreneurs de Travaux Techniques Agricoles, Ruraux et Forestiers

Europäischer Zentralverband der land- und forstwirtschaftlichen Lohnunternehmer und ländlichen Dienstleistungsunternehmen

COVID-19: Rural, agricultural and forestry contractors need the Single Market to keep working in times of crisis

If EU Member States decide to lock themselves behind their respective borders because of the COVID-19, agricultural, rural and forestry entrepreneurs will not be able to carry on their activities as service providers and to continue to supply European citizens in a responsible manner. To do so, they call for the integrity of the Single Market to be safeguarded.

Brussels, 3rd April 2020

To counter the spread of COVID-19, agricultural and forestry contractors and their employees are mobilising to ensure the safety of their workers and clients, as the peak of the agricultural and silviculture season approaches with the return of spring.

While taking into account the restrictions already imposed by the initial health measures, contractors are endeavouring to continue to provide their services to farmers so that the supply of food to the market can continue without interruption.

Furthermore, CEETTAR wishes to underline not only the willingness of forest-based contractors to participate in the movement, but also the difficulties encountered in forestry and logging due to the closure of building sites, sawmills and woodworking factories.

If even more drastic sanitary measures need to be taken in the future, contractors hope that these measures will not jeopardise the functioning of the Single Market. In order to be able to seamlessly carry on their activities, they are calling on the European Commissioner for Agriculture to act as spokesperson for their demands:

➤ Free movement of labour in compliance with the health and safety rules specific to Covid 19

Seasonal workers are responsible for manual work, planting and sowing, harvesting vegetables and fodder and maintaining machinery. The need for workers increases precisely at this time of the year. Too drastic measures taken individually by each Member State risk hampering the free movement of agricultural employees and preventing the smooth running of production. Several countries are already restricting border crossings, which is having a disastrous impact on the major vegetable-producing regions. The same kind of problem can be seen in manual forestry work, but the scale and seriousness are smaller.

➤ **Free movement of goods**

It is imperative that borders remain open to allow the transit of goods. Indeed, a significant proportion of goods useful to agriculture such as fertilisers, agricultural and forestry machinery, spare parts, plant protection products etc. are not produced in all European countries. Trade between countries is therefore necessary to allow for the adequate flow of food and services as well as the production of these products in all member states. Agricultural, rural and forestry contractors are calling for the creation of an ad hoc unit to deal with all the existing challenges.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Klaus Pentzlin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Klaus Pentzlin
President of CEETTAR

CEETTAR in brief:

The European Confederation of Agricultural, Rural and Forestry Contractors represents approximately 150,000 independent enterprises and almost 600,000 employees, affiliated to 20 national organisations in 16 Member States. On average 25% of agricultural, rural and forestry works are carried out by land-based contractors. CEETTAR promotes the interests of these contractors at EU level.