



GRUPE EMPLOYEURS
des Organisations Professionnelles
Agricoles de la CE - COPA



EUROPEAN AGREEMENT ON VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN AGRICULTURE

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PREAMBLE

The strategic aim of the European Union, established by the Lisbon summit in March 2000, is to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge economy in the world by 2010, capable of sustained economic growth accompanied by a quantitative and qualitative improvement in employment and greater social cohesion.

The social policy agenda, approved by the Nice summit in December 2000, provides a coherent framework of reforms necessary for achieving this aim. The agenda, in particular, has affirmed that in order to achieve full employment and mobilise all available employment potential, it is essential to improve qualifications and increase opportunities for lifelong education and training, entrusting the social partners with a key role.

Improving the employment of agricultural workers has for many years been the common aim of the social partners in agriculture. In their European framework agreement of 24 July 1997, however, GEOPA-COPA and EFFAT stated that improving employment could only be done in a context of improving the competitiveness of agricultural holdings.

Raising the level of vocational qualifications for agricultural workers is essential for improving competitiveness and, therefore, employment. The White Paper on vocational training in European agriculture, published following seminars organised in 1999 and 2000 within the framework of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee, stated that the Member States had done much, but that much also remained to be done.

The European social partners in agriculture, GEOPA-COPA and EFFAT (ETUC), have in this context taken the initiative to conclude this present agreement.

ARTICLE 1 - SUBJECT AND FIELD OF APPLICATION

- 1-1 The present European agreement, concluded in accordance with the provisions of Article 139 of the Treaty, is intended to propose to national organisations representing agricultural employers and employees, the authorities in the Member States and the Commission a number of initiatives relating to vocational training for agricultural workers
- 1-2 This European agreement applies to concerns and businesses as well as to salaried employees who, according to the legislation and practice of each Member State, are part of the professional agricultural sector.

ARTICLE 2 - ORGANISATION OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING

- 2-1 Initial and ongoing agricultural vocational training shall be organised in the Member States either by the authorities or by private organisations in accordance with various procedures.
- 2-2 The signatory organisations to this agreement propose that, in accordance with procedures to be determined in each Member State, the organisations representing agricultural employers and employees be involved in the organisation of training. Participation or consultation of the social partners shall be essential at various stages in the organisation of training:
- drawing up frames of reference for diplomas;
 - preparing training programmes;
 - evaluating the training provided;
 - organising juries for examinations;
 - organising work placements.

ARTICLE 3 - SKILLS ASSESSMENTS

- 3-1 The jobs offered on agricultural holdings cover a wide range of occupations and require a range of skills. The content of these occupations is permanently evolving and employers require ever higher skill levels in greater variety.
- 3-2 The signatory organisations to this agreement propose that, in accordance with procedures to be determined in each Member State, agricultural workers in employment or those unemployed have the opportunity of having a "skills assessment" drawn up. The aim of this assessment should be to analyse a worker's motivations and professional and personal interests, identify his professional and personal skills and aptitudes and evaluate his general knowledge, determine the possibilities for professional development and where appropriate draw up a training and/or professional plan. The worker's professional skills, as identified in drawing up the assessment, should be described in terms of the frames of reference for officially recognised vocational training diplomas. The legal and/or agreement-based

provisions establishing the skills assessment must designate the bodies competent to undertake these assessments, specify the conditions under which agricultural workers in employment may benefit from such an assessment and lay down how the procedure is to be funded.

ARTICLE 4 - VALIDATION OF VOCATIONAL SKILLS

- 4-1 Many agricultural workers have acquired a real vocational qualification on the job, through carrying out their occupational activity, without having completed a training cycle related to that qualification or having only partially completed such a cycle. Under these conditions, the qualification is not certified.
- 4-2 The signatory organisations to this agreement propose that, in accordance with procedures to be determined in each Member State, qualifications acquired through the carrying out of an agricultural occupational activity could be validated by a competent authority with a view to obtaining a diploma or gaining access to a training cycle. The national organisations representing agricultural employers and employees should be involved in the process of validating vocational skills.

ARTICLE 5 - TRANSPARENCY OF DIPLOMAS

- 5-1 Owing to the diversity of agricultural occupations and the increasing skill levels required, initial and ongoing agricultural vocational training offered in the Member States leads to a wide variety of diplomas, which forms an obstacle to the free movement of workers within the European Union.
- 5-2 The signatory organisations to this agreement propose that each employer, employee, applicant for training and teacher have the opportunity to understand and appreciate the vocational qualifications certified by the competent authorities in the different Member States. To this end, any official diploma or certificate for initial and ongoing agricultural vocational training issued in a Member State shall be translated into at least two Community languages. Each diploma or certificate shall be accompanied by a document, the "occupational reference", describing the tasks corresponding to all occupational situations likely to be faced by the holder of the diploma. This document shall also be translated into at least two Community languages. The diplomas, certificates and occupational references shall be registered in a national reference centre. In the absence of a European directive organising the establishment of these national reference centres, the signatories to this agreement propose that these centres be established in accordance with procedures to be determined in each Member State.

ARTICLE 6 - QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS BOOKLET

- 6-1 In order to facilitate occupational mobility and the free movement of workers within the European Union, agricultural workers shall be able to have a document drawn up attesting to certified vocational qualifications from initial and ongoing training and to the skills set out in the skills assessment referred to in Article 3 above.

- 6-2 The signatory organisations to this agreement propose that, in accordance with procedures to be determined in each Member State, an authority or public or private organisation be responsible for issuing to each agricultural worker who applies for it an "agricultural worker's booklet of vocational qualifications and skills". This shall contain the information referred to in Annex 1 to this agreement. In accordance with procedures to be determined in each Member State, it shall be specified that the worker is free to pass this booklet to a third party, but presentation thereof may not be demanded under any circumstances by an administration, public or private organisation or employer.

ARTICLE 7 - GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED

- 7-1 In order to ensure a consistent interpretation of this agreement, a glossary of terms relating to vocational training is attached (Annex 2).
- 7-2 It is noted that the definitions set out in this glossary should not call into question other possible definitions used in the Member States of the European Union.

ARTICLE 8 - IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS AGREEMENT

- 8-1 In accordance with the provisions of the first part of Article 139(2) of the Treaty, implementation of this agreement shall be in accordance with the procedures and practices proper to the social partners at national level and to the Member States. To ensure this implementation, the signatory organisations propose that the national social partners work jointly and, if necessary, in cooperation with the competent state authorities.
- 8-2 To facilitate the implementation of this agreement, the signatory organisations shall set up a follow-up commission within the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in Agriculture. This commission will circulate documents to the national social partners that relate to the organisation of vocational training in the different Member States and will be available to advise them about how to practically achieve the objectives set out in this agreement. An assessment of the implementation of this agreement will be drawn up in three years.
- 8-3 Given the role of the European Commission to support the social partners in developing information and monitoring procedures to ensure effective implementation of agreements¹ at national level, the signatory organisations call upon the Commission to take this into account when the social partners submit possible requests for the co-financing of projects in this regard.

¹ COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION "The European social dialogue, a force for innovation and change" COM(2002) 341 final.

AGRICULTURAL WORKER'S BOOKLET OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

The agricultural worker's booklet of vocational qualifications and skills, the creation of which is called for in Article 6-2 of this agreement, shall contain the information given below:

IDENTITY DOCUMENT

- Surname and forename
- Sex
- Date of birth
- Nationality
- Profession

DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES: INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING

- Designation of diplomas and certificates held by the worker
- Date of issue of diplomas and certificates
- Designation of the authorities issuing the diplomas and certificates
- Registration numbers of diplomas and certificates and occupational references corresponding to the national reference centre, and languages in which these documents are available.

DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES: ONGOING VOCATIONAL TRAINING

- Designation of diplomas and certificates held by the worker
- Date of issue of diplomas and certificates
- Designation of the authorities issuing the diplomas and certificates
- Registration numbers of diplomas and certificates and occupational references corresponding to the national reference centre, and languages in which these documents are available.

OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS

- Description of the worker's occupational skills attested by a skills assessment in relation to the occupational reference, approved vocational training diploma or certificate

- Date on which the skills assessment was drawn up
- Designation of the organisation drawing up the skills assessment
- National reference centre at which the occupational reference corresponding to the worker's skills is registered, and languages in which the document is available.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS RELATING TO VOCATIONAL TRAINING

In order to ensure a consistent interpretation of this agreement, the terms relating to vocational training are defined below. These definitions do not call into question any different definitions which may be in use in the Member States of the European Union.

SKILL is the sum of acquired knowledge and know-how which constitutes an individual's basic resources. Skill may be developed, in particular, through training and the exercise of an occupation.

VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION is the social recognition of skill and of mastery of the knowledge and skills required for a job and which, if necessary, facilitate adaptation to another job and may be transferable to other areas of activity. A distinction should be made between:

- **the qualification required** by an employer for a job. It is recognised and given value by the occupational classification drawn up by the collective agreement;
- **the certified qualification**, which is the recognition by a competent authority of the capability and mastery of the knowledge and skills required for an occupational activity.

CERTIFICATION is an operation carried out by a competent authority authenticating, through the issue of a document (certificate), an individual's knowledge and know-how in relation to a formal standard by the occupational reference corresponding to a diploma or title.

THE OCCUPATIONAL REFERENCE FOR A DIPLOMA is the inventory of tasks corresponding to the range of occupational situations likely to be faced by the holder of the diploma.

VALIDATION OF VOCATIONAL SKILLS is the procedure whereby an individual having carried out an occupational activity related to the diploma for which he is preparing may obtain dispensation from examinations or units counting towards the diploma. There are three different procedures for validating vocational skills:

- validation systems resulting in dispensation from some or all of the final examinations for the awarding of a diploma;
- recognition of the occupational experience acquired in order for a candidate not fulfilling the academic requirements to be able to enter training or apply for a diploma;
- systems intended to modulate the duration of training with a view to obtaining certification.

SKILLS ASSESSMENT is the action taken by a body competent in this regard which aims to allow workers to analyse their motivations and personal and professional interests, to identify their professional and personal skills and aptitudes, to evaluate their general knowledge and possibilities for professional development and, where appropriate, to draw up a training plan.

VOCATIONAL COMPETENCE is the sum of knowledge, know-how and behaviour, attested to if necessary by a skills assessment and in any event attested to, evaluated and validated by an employer when used in an occupational situation.