

PROJECT NEWCHALLENGES+

FINAL CONFERENCE

ATENE, 4 NOVEMBRE 2022

THEME:

***“IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON EMPLOYMENT AD
INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION PROCESSES.
PRESENTATIO OF PRACTICES AND CASES”***

One of the consequences of the pandemic crisis has been to put things back in the right order.

The only awareness: is that if the country has held up, if we have managed to hold on in the darkest moment, it is above all thanks to millions of workers, women and men, Italians and migrants.

It is the work that has saved Italy and Europe.

The courage and sacrifices faced by every type of worker and by all those who have continued to guarantee essential services and goods even in periods of lockdown are all workers who operate in the "supply chains of life", in the agri-food sector, in logistics, transport, distribution, health assistance.

If difficult decisions have been taken in recent years without undermining cohesion, if obstacles that could have made us fall ruinously have been overcome, it was thanks to the responsible, active and aware role of workers, companies and above all trade union representatives.

The recent pandemic has highlighted above all the fragility of workers' health and safety in the workplace.

If we also reflect the entire national economy has been significantly affected by the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, especially the agri-food sector, although it has never stopped production activity, the sector had to deal with organizational and management problems deriving from the necessary measures, aimed at containing the epidemic.

The leading sector of the entire national economy is certainly the agri-food sector.

The Made in Italy agri-food sector is a one with significant numbers: according to the Institute of Economic Studies Report (ISMEA), it has a total value of 171 billion and has 1.4 million employees.

The entire sector has more than one million enterprises, there are agricultural enterprises, processing and distribution companies.

Despite the wound caused by the virus on the entire national production, the agri-food sector could represent, due to the important number and dimension, the key to overcoming the crisis itself.

The supply chain has in fact always been considered, in the various law decrees, as an anti-pandemic function, with economic and social reasons, social and support for the population.

It must be said that food companies have never stopped their production.

Italian trade unions have also been able to respond with enormous capacity either to define the tools of prevention or to collaborate with the scientific community, or through intervention, with several mobilization initiatives, campaigns, as well as through a vast production of agreements, protocols, paths of negotiation, bargaining, social dialogue with institutions and employers' organizations.

A strong and significant contribution that we have provided as a trade union for the contrast and containment of the spread of the Covid-19 virus in the workplace was the signing of "Shared Protocols" starting from the first one which we signed on March 14, 2020, which was followed by sector territorial and corporate agreements.

It should be emphasized that the first Protocol of March 14, 2020, in addition to being shared between all the trade unions and employers' associations, was also signed on the invitation and in the presence of the Government, which favored, as far as its competence is concerned, its full implementation.

The aim of the Protocol was to "provide operational indications aimed at increasing, in non-healthcare workplaces, the effectiveness of the precautionary containment measures adopted to combat the Covid-19 epidemic".

Given that Covid-19 represented a generic biological risk, for which equal measures were valid for the entire population, it was and is the instrument that dictated precautionary measures for the workplace, especially for all those working realities that have continued to operate despite an extreme emergency situation.

In addition, we as a trade union and Agrifood Federation have faced the "health" situation by providing that the Supplementary health care fund, in collaboration with Insurance Company, would guarantee a new health coverage against coronavirus, for workers in the food sectors.

The coverage with the name of "Diary for Covid -19", was established specially to help the workers in the supply chain who found themselves on the front line and not subjected to the national lockdown in the difficult moment.

Furthermore, through the national protocol stipulated between the social partners Trade Unions, the national government and the Employers Organizations, the work of smart working for all those activities that can be carried out from one's home was established.

The pandemic, therefore, has only slowed down the agri-food sector, which is confirmed as anticyclical.

Activities related to cultivation and fishing have suffered in a very limited way the restrictions imposed during the most difficult moments of the health crisis, because they are included among those considered indispensable, despite having to face the difficulties of logistic chains, with restrictions on the freedom of movement and with the generalized fall in consumer income.

The negative effects of the health crisis have been most evidently suffered by secondary activities, particularly those linked to tourism.

The crisis has therefore damaged above all secondary agricultural activities such as agritourism.

From the point of view of agricultural work, 2020 was certainly a negative year: employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing, measured in work units, decreased by 2%, while the decline in employment was even more evident in the food industry (-5.2%), which led to an overall decline of 2.8% in labor input in the agri-food sector.

The economic crisis due to the health emergency, as it was published by the National Institute of data report and, the subsequent increase in demand in the post-pandemic phase, the negative effects of the pandemic on logistics and transport, adverse weather conditions, the increase in prices of raw materials, materials necessary for the agri-food production chain are all factors that have acted in a combined manner, determining an unavoidable upward trend in prices in agricultural crops.

The war in Ukraine makes any prospective assessment extremely complex now: the tightening of the price increases of energy raw materials, and the new difficulties in supplying companies, in addition to the pre-existing supply bottlenecks, could in fact cause long-lasting consequences for Italian agriculture.

The pandemic has therefore placed the risks and specific needs of agriculture at the center of international attention. Agricultural work, together with health work and care and assistance work, as well as some activities in retail and transport, were considered to be "essential work".

In many countries, agriculture benefits from many subsidies. These subsidies could be restructured to ensure better working conditions for agricultural workers rather than paying them only for production. Migrant workers are a key part of this sector and should therefore benefit from wage increases and other safeguards at work. The pandemic should represent a great opportunity to redesign measures for migrant seasonal work.

For this it is necessary:

- **We should strengthen mechanisms of social dialogue and representation:** to contribute to the development and knowledge of Social dialogue practice in the Agrifood at the European level and in the countries involved, supporting the dissemination and implementation of the European Pillar of social Rights.

This pandemic crisis has accelerated and intensified disintegrating dynamics already active due to globalization, this push has increased the various inequalities between countries, geographical areas and social groups. As well as the technological, industrial, energy, environmental, demographic transitions.

The only way to respond to these dynamics is to innovate the tools which could make us able to better exercise our role by extending the representation to new forms of digital and platform work, to new social migrants, to women.

Every kind of work should not be precariousness, illegal hiring and illegal work, exploitation of the weakest social categories, of women, of migrants and, cannot coincide with discrimination, harassment and violence to the detriment of workers, inside and outside of the production sites.

It is therefore important to invest in training by introducing the subject in school programs themes such as prevention, safety and health and technological innovation.

Furthermore, there is a need for specific policies to encourage professional training and quality work in agriculture, social and cultural inclusion, safety and health in the workplace but above all more and more trained trade union operators, able to take charge of the worker and his family.

For this reason, that Fai Cisl has organized various campaigns for example "**Do more** " promoted together with the Social Security Institution of Cisl Trade Union, for the management of agricultural unemployment 2019. Our fundamental objective is to provide, to the people who come to us more protections, more assistance, more opportunities to participate in our activities.

Or "**THERE IS NO FOOD WITHOUT LAND**" a concrete commitment to a green change that puts the world of work at the center of a law on land consumption: the primary sector most affected by the consequences of climate change, as well as by the wrong policies that have led to the disappearance of 50 square kilometers of agricultural land per year. With this motto we asked the Government to conclude the parliamentary process for a balanced, clear law, shared by all social partners.

Also the "**PORT SAFELY**" campaign, an initiative engaged in the main Italian navies, with permanent contact, to provide assistance to workers in the sector.

Our operators will discuss with the workers on fundamental aspects such as strenuous work, social safety nets, application of the Consolidated Law on safety, welfare, pension requirements, unfair competition and, also prevent any form of illegal hiring in fishing and collect any reports of exploitation, especially workers. of foreign origin.

Last September we had the "**Relay of Legality**" on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Capaci and Via D'Amelio massacres.

To bring a plant from these Squares and plant it in a school in the North of the country.

A special initiative that symbolically unites the cities of Palermo, Milan and Lecco to remember the values of justice, civil commitment and courage that the judges Falcone and Borsellino bequeathed to all of us, no one excluded.

With this "**Relay**" the Fai Cisl wanted to enhance the culture of legality, peace and solidarity, as every day the Federation fights against illegal work, exploitation, the abused suffered especially by the weakest social group.

Our “**Sos Caporalato (Stop the illegal work and recruitment)**” campaign together with the “**No more ghettos**” petition, for which we have collected more than 20,000 signatures, represent some of the actions taken to guarantee more rights and protections for migrant workers.

Also the “**Rights in movement**” a mobile help desk promoted with other Social Associations.

The camper is active every day and, during its movements, it will stop in the settlements of migrant, workers and non-workers, in the area, in practice in the fields where there is a large presence of foreign workers, especially seasonal, part of them is irregular.

This “**Rights in Movement**” desk offers medical, legal and trade union assistance and provides foreign workers with: information on the rights and duties of the worker, health and medical assistance, legal advice, linguistic-cultural mediation services, information on Italian language courses, professional training, social security and tax information and orientation to local services.