SafeHabitus

MIGRANT AND SEASONAL WORKERS: THE INVISIBLE WORKFORCE?

The European agricultural sector relies heavily on migrant and seasonal workers. Estimates indicate that around 2.4 million seasonal and migrant workers are working in the sector.

WHO ARE THESE WORKERS?

DIFFERENT WORKERS = DIFFERENT RIGHTS

DOMESTIC SEASONAL WORKERS

- **Local workers** employed seasonally

INTRA-EU MIGRANTS

- Workers from **other EU countries** (e.g., Romanians in Spain, Poles in Germany)
- Protected by **EU freedom of movement**

THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS

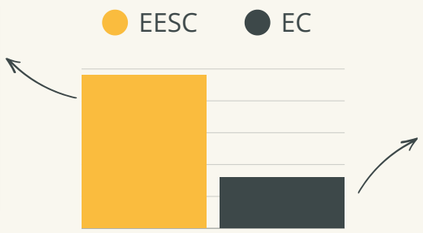
- Workers from **outside the EU** (e.g. Morocco, Ukraine, Philippines)
- **Limited protections** under the Seasonal Workers Directive

71% of non-EU seasonal workers fall outside directive protections

THE COUNTING CHALLENGE

We can only rely on different estimates:

European Economic and Social Committee[1]
~2 million intra-EU seasonal workers
+ 0.4 million non-EU seasonal workers



European Commission[2]
650,000 - 800,000 seasonal workers

It is not possible to accurately estimate the total number of migrant and seasonal workers.

WHY DON'T WE KNOW MORE?

- **Intra-EU workers often do not register** with local authorities during short stays
- Undocumented workers are **invisible in official statistics**
- **Informal employment** is widespread

32% of agricultural workers have no written contract

Sources: 1 - EESC (2023), 2- European Commission (2021), Platform for Undeclared Work. The inability to accurately count seasonal and migrant agricultural workers reflects their systemic exclusion from labour protections

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