

"Promoting Associative Movement, Strengthen Family Farming" – a workshop for reflection and debate on collective action in the agricultural sector

On 24 February, the workshop "Promoting the Associative Movement, Strengthening Family Agriculture" was held at the Agrarian School of Coimbra (ESAC) – Portugal, an initiative carried out within the framework of the BOND project and integrated into the 41 years of the CNA – Confederação Nacional da Agricultura).

With the anniversary of the Confederation to be celebrated on 26 February, it was understood that it would be an excellent opportunity to reflect on the collective action around the agricultural sector, specifically Family Agriculture and the organizations that represent and defend it.

In this sense, this workshop, which was attended by close to 50 people from different regions of the country, among farmers, technicians, associative leaders, and others, was an important moment for reflection and debate on the agricultural and peasant associative movement.

Remembering what unites us and the achievements made in defense of Family Farming, Farmers and the Rural World, as a result of 41 years of action and struggle – *Always with Farmers!*, as is the motto of CNA – this initiative focused on the constraints that limit collective action and proposed ways of overcoming them, in order to strengthen the role, unity and trust of peasant organizations and CNA.

The workshop started with a plenary debate on the theme "CNA, member organizations and their role in collective action", a space dedicated to analysing the situation of the agricultural associative movement in Portugal, in order to make clear the current context of agricultural and food policies and peasant associativism.

This prior discussion served as a basis for the afternoon's work in which the participants, divided into three groups, discussed the topics "Participation of young people in farmers' organizations", "Sustainability of the associative movement" and "Organic capacity and associative influence", listing for each one of them the possible causes and the potential solutions to overcome the constraints identified.

As all the groups dealt with the three issues, a fruitful contribution was made at the end of the workshop. Each group was able to present, in plenary, the causes and solutions it identified, and there was still some room for an exchange of views.

By bringing together various actors from different parts of the country with diverse experiences, but with a common commitment to defend and promote collective action and associativism in the farming sector, this initiative was of great importance for farmers' organizations, for farmers, for Family Farming and for the Rural World.

The contributions collected will be the basis for the definition of an "Action Plan" to overcome constraints and disincentives identified, in order to strengthen the associative movement around Family Agriculture.

As mentioned, this initiative was carried out under the BOND project, a Horizon 2020 project funded by the European Union and led by the University of Coventry, UK, which CNA integrates with 16 other partners from 12 European countries.

As the aim of the project was to achieve higher levels of organization and networking in the agricultural sector, this working session was an important contribution to the strengthening and vitality of the peasant associative movement in Portugal.