



SafeHabitus

PRESS RELEASE | SafeHabitus

## Coming together to make European farms safer and healthier places for all

Brussels, 9 April 2024 – Representatives from the 11 SafeHabitus Communities of Practice (CoPs) met in Brussels on April 9<sup>th</sup> to address the urgent challenges of farm safety and farmer health. This is significant because recent SafeHabitus research confirmed the considerable underreporting of farm-related injuries and fatalities in EU statistics highlighting a disparity between EU data and the true extent of farm accidents.

Each of the 11 CoPs gather farmers, farming organisations, farm advisors, researchers, trade unions, health authorities, policy stakeholders, and other relevant actors to identify the root causes of critical health and safety challenges faced by farmers and farm workers, and develop integrated solutions across different European contexts, involving policy stakeholders, regulators, farm advisors and safety specialists and farmers.

Research undertaken by the CoPs found that the root causes of these incidents are shaped by the physical and social environment, and public and private governance system that shape the safety practices of farmers, farm workers and farm businesses. This knowledge will inform the next steps that the CoPs will take in the coming months as they focus on identifying good practices and policy recommendations to overcome the key challenges in farm safety. The work of the 11 CoPs fits with calls from the European Economic and Social Committee for a need to learn from best practices to improve farm safety strategies.

Jarkko Leppälä, one of the CoP Coordinators in the SafeHabitus project: “The transnational CoP meetings are crucial for CoPs to share both challenges and good practices in farm safety. Exchanging knowledge, information and experiences is key for improving safety culture and management tools for farmers. The meetings also allow farmers, advisors and other relevant actors to get first-hand knowledge about innovation and good practices on farm primary safety.”

Speaking after the meeting, Dr David Meredith the SafeHabitus project leader, highlighted that whilst farmers and workers are responsible for how they do their work, they need to be provided with the tools and resources to ensure that they can do so safely. He stated “We cannot simply tell farmers and workers to ‘be safe’. We have to work with them. We also have to involve the public and private organisations that impact farmer’s lives. Only by working together can we develop practical initiatives and identify the resources needed to implement them. These are critical to reducing the level of death and injury on farms across the EU and enhancing the social sustainability of farming and agriculture.”

**More information:** <https://www.safehabitus.eu/>

*SafeHabitus project is a four-year project coordinated by TEAGASC Ireland, funded by the European Union as part of the Horizon Europe Programme, grant agreement number 101084270. This multi-actor project aims to strengthen Farm Health and Safety Knowledge Innovation Systems (FHS KIS) and support the EU transition to social sustainability in farming.*

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