Renewed call by European local and regional authorities for more Fair Trade

4 June 2015 (Brussels) - The Committee of the Regions plenary adopted today an opinion on Fair Trade. This EU advisory body representing local and regional authorities calls again on the European Commission to adopt a more ambitious approach to this topic.

In the own-initiative opinion “local and regional support for Fair Trade in Europe”, its author Barbara Duden, Vice-President of the Free and Hanseatic Parliament of the City of Hamburg, expresses the need for a fully-fledged EU Fair Trade Strategy that mainstreams this concept across various EU policy areas: trade, development and sustainable consumption and production. The Committee of the Regions had already called for such a Strategy in an opinion dating from 2010, with no concrete follow-up by the EU.

One of the landmark initiatives that should be put forward is the setup of a European Fair Trade Capital Award. It would not only reward the various modalities of Fair Trade support by cities in Europe, but also help to disseminate the good examples to encourage other cities to take action in this area. In addition, this EU-wide recognition would be an incentive for them to go further in their commitments, besides giving visibility to the topic among citizens.

Local and regional authorities play a relevant role in promoting Fair Trade: by setting the example with their own consumption and by raising awareness among citizens. They can furthermore encourage the supply of Fair Trade products by economic actors in their territory. To date there are more than 1,500 communities in Europe that have been awarded Fair Trade town status.

“The European Commission is the best placed to mainstream Fair Trade, and should use the upcoming new EU Trade Strategy to do so” stated Sergi Corbalán, Executive Director of the Fair Trade Advocacy Office.

“In my country many of the good practices from the regional and local level are encouraged by the award of the German capital of Fair Trade, this should also be replicated at EU level with a similar scheme” declared Barbara Duden during her speech at the plenary session.
Further information

The Committee of the Regions press release is available [here](#).

In support of the above mentioned opinion, the Committee of the Regions has published a study on "[local and regional authorities promoting Fair Trade](#)".

Fair Trade campaigners and organisations from across the world, predominantly from Europe, meet each year at the International Fair Trade Towns Conference to share Best Practise. The 2015 Conference in Bristol UK focusses on 'Fair Trade for Sustainability' to tie in with Bristol's year as European Green Capital and explore how Fair Trade plays a part in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

A pdf version of this press release can be found [here](#).

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The Fair Trade Advocacy Office (FTAO) speaks out on behalf of the Fair Trade movement for Fair Trade and Trade Justice with the aim to improve the livelihoods of marginalised producers and workers in the South. The FTAO is a joint initiative of Fairtrade International, the European Fair Trade Association and the World Fair Trade Organization-Europe. Through these three networks the FTAO represents an estimate of 2.5 million Fair Trade producers and workers from 70 countries, 24 labelling initiatives, over 500 specialised Fair Trade importers, 4,000 World Shops and more than 100,000 volunteers.

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