Press release

European Commission unveils new European Fair Trade Capital Award

12 October 2016 (Brussels) – On the occasion of the annual European Parliament Fair Trade Breakfast, the EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström has publically announced today the plan to launch a new Pan-European Fair and Ethical Trade City Award. The Fair Trade movement welcomes this new initiative and commits to support the Commission in making this Award a success.

The EC “Trade for All” strategy (October 2015) includes, for the first time, a section on the promotion of Fair and Ethical Trade schemes. The EC referred in this document to the idea of a possible European-wide Fair and Ethical Trade City award, but only as a possibility.

12 months after the “Trade for All” strategy, the EU Trade Commissioner has confirmed and officially made public the new Award today. The Award’s main goals are to promote awareness amongst European citizens of Fair and Ethical Trade and to facilitate cross-country learning on the role of Local Authorities in promoting Fair and Ethical Trade.

The announcement has taken place in the framework of the annual European Parliament Fair Trade breakfast, hosted by Linda McAvan, Chair of the European Parliament’s (EP) Development Committee and EP Fair Trade Working Group, together with Bernd Lange, Chair of the EP International Trade Committee. This event was attended by numerous MEPs across countries, Fair Trade movement representatives and Local Authorities committed to localising the SDGs through Fair Trade. This event has taken place in the framework of the funded “Smart Food Cities for Development” and also supported by the Trade for Development Centre in the context of Belgian Fair Trade week, an initiative of the Belgian Development Cooperation.

The Fair Trade Towns movement started in Garstang (UK) when its residents self-declared Garstang as the world first Fair Trade Town in April 2000. This movement has grown since then to become a vibrant wide network of 1,800 towns committed to promoting Fair Trade at local level, via a combination of awareness-raising activities, public procurement, engagement with local private sector and engagement with civil society.

“We welcome the new exciting initiative by the European Commission and commit to support the Commission in making it a success” stated Sergi Corbalan, Executive Director of the Fair Trade Advocacy Office.

A picture of the event in high resolution can be found here. A pdf version of this press release can be found here.

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The Fair Trade Advocacy Office (FTAO) speaks out 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 World Fair Trade Organization-Global and the World Fair Trade Organization-Europe.

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