

Public Affairs

Mobilising action for Fair Trade Public Procurement

Issue 1
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Public Affairs

Welcome to our first newsletter!

This newsletter is published as part of the Public Affairs project, which aims to mobilise public authorities to introduce Fair Trade considerations into their public purchasing policies.

In this newsletter you will find information on the project itself as well as news and developments regarding Fair and Sustainable Procurement.

We also wish to offer inspiration through examples of other public authorities who have already opted for Fair Trade Procurement!

Feedback and suggestions regarding this newsletter are always welcome and can be sent to: fair-procura@eftafairtrade.org

The Public Affairs partners



Public Affairs Project launched

About the project

EFTA, the European Fair Trade Association, started its most recent project "Public Affairs: Mobilising action for Fair Trade Public Procurement" in December 2007. This 3 year project brings together 3 of EFTA's members - CTM-Altromercato in Italy, IDEAS in Spain and Oxfam Wereldwinkels in Belgium - and ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability. Co-financed by the European Commission, this project will build on the previous "Fair Procura" project, also led by EFTA.

Fair Public Procurement

Public authorities are major consumers and public procurement currently accounts for around 16% of the EU's GDP. This purchasing power represents a huge opportunity to boost the sales of Fair Trade products and is an excellent way for public authorities to set an example and show their support to Fair Trade.

"Public Affairs" focuses on raising awareness towards European, national and regional authorities about Fair Public Procurement (FPP), but attention is also given to other actors in FPP such as the catering and vending sector. The European Observatory, a Europe-wide platform for those interested in Fair Public Procurement, has been set up and will continuously monitor and analyse laws on Public Procurement, disseminate research and studies on this subject and make available best practices, case studies and tenders.

By 2010, a European Model on FPP that will guide public authorities on how to include Fair Trade criteria in their tenders, indicating targets towards purchasing in a fair manner, will be published.

New Website - Observatory on FPP

Public Affairs will soon launch a website for the "European Observatory on Fair Trade Public Procurement" - www.eftafairtrade.org/observatory - a Europe-wide site focusing on Fair Public Procurement (FPP) at both European and member-state level. On the new website you will find information related to FPP, case studies and legislation.

Aiming at bringing together various actors and providing an interactive online platform where those interested can gather and share information, an online network has been created.

You can access the website and register to the Observatory's network for free, permitting you access to various documents and functionalities that will be developed and expanded throughout 2008. Website features will include:

- ◆ An Observatory Network, with free registered access
- ◆ Access to documents for Observatory Network members

- ◆ Mailing lists on specific topics for the Observatory Network
- ◆ Discussion forum
- ◆ Document sharing, with the possibility to upload and download documents to and from the website
- ◆ Photo gallery
- ◆ Event calendar
- ◆ News and information
- ◆ European Model on FPP



First Spanish website on FPP



IDEAS has launched the first Spanish website on Fair Public Procurement:

www.comrapublicaetica.org.

The site includes general information about Fair Trade, ethical certification, good practices, technical guides and also models of public tenders including Fair Trade criteria. Users can participate and exchange experiences through a restricted area called *Comunidad CPE* (Ethical Public Procurement Community).

EC Study on Social Considerations in Public Procurement

Preparation for future guide

On 6th June the European Commission's DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities held an information meeting regarding a feasibility study that is being carried out by the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC-ILO).

This study had been commissioned by DG Employment in 2007 to obtain an overview of Public Procurement legislation and current usage of social considerations in public procurement procedures. Within this study, different categories of social considerations were identified, such as

Fair Trade and ethical trade, equal opportunities, health and safety in the workplace, decent work, accessibility issues and training provisions in public procurement procedures.

We welcome the fact that one of the dimensions of "Social Considerations" identified by ITC-ILO is "Fair and Ethical Procurement", initially not foreseen in the terms of reference for the study.

The study should be concluded by August 2008, after which Commission services will produce a guide.

Inspiration from...

... Italy

Liguria first "Fair Regional Administration"

On Saturday 5th April, the regional government of Liguria was recognised as the first "Fair Regional Administration" in the Fairtrade Towns Campaign for supporting Fair Trade organisations through a specific law.

In 2008, a new tender will be published, allowing all local municipalities to apply for financial aid in order to encourage Fair Trade public consumption.

The regional government has allocated 250 thousand Euros to help cover additional costs local authorities may have in school canteens, catering services and vending machines.

A best practice well worth being followed by other public authorities!

Positive impact of FPP on CONACADO producers

Mr. Abel Fernandez, representative of CONACADO - The National Confederation of Dominican Cocoa Producers - visited Italy from 22nd to 28th April.

He was invited by CTM Altromercato (public procurement office) to motivate local authorities to introduce Fair Trade chocolate in school canteens by showing the positive impact of Fair Trade on 9.000 small producers, members of CONACADO.

During his visit, Mr. Fernandez met with representatives from the municipalities of Genoa, La Spezia and Bergamo, as well as the directors of the University of Pisa which had all introduced FT chocolate bars in their tenders, thus guarantying an additional income to producers and increasing the awareness of students involved in this form of ethical consumption.

... Spain

Jaén University becomes first Fairtrade University in Spain

On 9 May, Jaén University was awarded the title of "Fairtrade University", making it the first public academic institution in Spain to fully comply with the criteria laid out in the Fairtrade Towns Campaign, coordinated in Spain by IDEAS.



New Public Procurement legislation in Spain

New Spanish National legislation on Public Procurement came into force in April. Innovations in this law include a specific mention to Fair Trade as well as the possibility of

including compliance with ILO Conventions as a contract performance clause. It also foresees the possibility of giving preference to Fair Trade organisations in the case of equal bids.

... France

Paris tenders for Fair Trade cotton clothing

Paris has become the first French city to tender for Fair Trade cotton clothing. Within the Local Agenda 21 programme and the city's

commitment to sustainable purchasing, Paris has recently tendered for clothing made with Fair Trade cotton for its sanitation department.

... Wales

Wales becomes first Fair Trade Nation

Wales has become the world's first Fair Trade Nation and is pioneering the way in helping poor developing world producers get a fair price for their products.

Today all of Wales' cities are Fairtrade, there are Fair Trade groups in 58 towns, all 22 Welsh counties, and in less than a year over 400 schools have committed to learning about Fairtrade and using Fairtrade products.



Regional Updates

Belgium

A legal framework on Fair Trade?

With the wide array of "ethical" labels, the Belgian consumer has no easy job in making the right choice. It is often unclear which label offers the best guarantee with regards to respect for the environment, ambitious social criteria or the payment of a fair price to the producer in the South. This label jungle creates a lot of confusion, which is why Oxfam-Wereldwinkels (OWW) and other Belgian Fair Trade organisations advocate for a legal framework on Fair Trade, with the belief that legislation on Fair Trade will certainly prevent the erosion of this concept. In the Commission on Economy and Enterprises of the Belgian Federal Parliament, members of parliament are discussing legislative proposals on Fair Trade presented by 3 different political parties: the Flemish and French speaking Greens, the Flemish and French speaking Social Democrats, and the French speaking Christian Democrats.

On 8th January, the Parliament held a public hearing where the Belgian Fair Trade organisations (OWW, Oxfam Magasins du Monde, Miel Maya Honing, Fair Trade Original and Max Havelaar) explained their common point of view. They advocated an open and flexible system that allows a lot of new players into the

market, ensuring the continuation of the solid growth of Fair Trade in Belgium. With a view to consolidate the three proposals, Fair Trade organisations will cooperate with Members of Parliament to work on a new, common proposal. Labour unions and the consumer organisation Test Aankoop / Test Achat are also in favour of a legal framework. They are particularly concerned regarding the rights of consumers. However, some enterprises fear that a legal framework on Fair Trade will discriminate against other initiatives, while others would prefer less ambitious standards in order to get a greater market share.

The three political families are now working on a new proposal, in collaboration with the Flemish Christian Democrats. Similar processes are going on in Italy and France, with France being the most advanced: a law on Fair Trade has been passed in 2005 and a related decree exists since 2007. In the meantime, a law firm is conducting research on behalf of the Fair Trade Advocacy Office in Brussels on the different legal initiatives in Europe, comparing French, Italian and Belgian law proposals, and will also analyse their compatibility with WTO and EU rules on trade.

World Fair Trade Day and Fair Procurement in Belgium

Throughout April and May 2008 pink chairs in various shapes and sizes could be seen across Flanders and around the world in places such as Paris, Egypt and Soweto.

In a mystery campaign for World Fair Trade Day on 10th May, thousands of Oxfam-Wereldwinkels (OWW) volunteers painted chairs pink in order to catch the attention of passers by and the media, displaying these images, with no additional information, on the website www.eenstoel.be. On World Fair Trade Day, in Antwerp, the meaning of these chairs was finally disclosed in a press release explaining that these chairs symbolised a place for small producers at the world negotiation tables were their voice isn't being heard.



The current increase in food prices poses a great threat to developing countries resulting in more hunger and poverty. Given that the majority of the population in developing countries lives off small-scale agriculture, higher prices for agro-food products could actually create opportunities for a rise in income and living standards if equally distributed. However, due to large concentration of importers and retailers, less of the final price goes to the small producers, who don't play a role

Italy

Lazio Region: first "Social Economy Exposition" and support for regional law

An exposition showing all local activities in the Fair Trade, organic and environmental energy production fields was organised by the regional government of the Lazio Region on Saturday 10th May, in Viterbo. In this event, CTM Altromercato was invited as speaker in a workshop entitled "Towards a regional law for the Social Economy". The experience of the project "Ristorazione Solidale" and the positive case of the law to support Fair Trade in the Liguria region was presented to the members of the regional government, motivating them to start a similar process.

in international trade negotiations where decisions are nonetheless made for them and their families, which is why OWW decided to give the farmers in the South a voice and a chair at the table.

World Fair Trade Day in Antwerp

This event in Antwerp was organised by OWW in close cooperation with the city of Antwerp, who was also celebrating its 1st anniversary as Fairtrade Town. Since its commitment to Fair Procurement last year, Antwerp finds it important to take part in events like this. It was also a good opportunity to ask Leen Verbist, the city's responsible for development cooperation, what their future commitments will be:

OWW - Last year you promised that the City of Antwerp would buy an extra Fair Trade product every year. Did you succeed this year?

LV - It is with great honour that I can announce we did! The city has been buying Fair Trade coffee and tea for a long time now. From this year forward, Fair Trade fruit juice will also be served during receptions in the town hall.

OWW - That's great! Did the city also promote their commitment to Fair Trade and Fair Procurement?

LV - We did that in different ways and at different moments. For example, through city festival in June last year and during the Fair Trade Week in October when we sent postcard to every staff member with an encouragement to buy Fair Trade products well. Furthermore, we published articles in the city's magazines and created a working group to examine how the city can take ethical considerations, such as Fair Trade, into account in all its buying policies.



Events

Past

Conference: Promoting best value through social dialogue

The European Commission has organised a conference on "Promoting best value through social dialogue", which took place on 18th April 2008.

Practical examples of how to promote qualitative criteria in tendering, including through Fair Trade, were presented by actors with direct experience in the matter. Handbooks assisting

purchasers in selecting best value bids, issued by organisations in the contract catering, cleaning, private security and clothing-textiles sectors were promoted at this event.

More information can be found on the website: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_dialogue/conference_en.htm

Spanish Conference on Ethical Procurement



IDEAS organised the first National Conference on Ethical Procurement with the support of the European Commission (*Responsible Purchasing in Europe* and *Public Affairs* projects) on 22 May 2008.

This Conference aimed to disseminate the possibilities of Fair/ethical Procurement in both the private and public sectors. The conference was inaugurated by the National Cooperation Secretary.

Important companies of the clothing sector such as MANGO discussed the introduction of ethical criteria in the supply chain. Also, representatives of public administrations such as the Municipality of Barcelona presented good practices in integrating Fair and ethical procurement in their purchasing.

More information (in Spanish) can be found at: <http://www.comrapublicaetica.org/>

1st European Fair Trade Fair

Organised by Equi'sol, the first European Fair Trade Fair that took place from 1-3 February 2008 was a great success, counting with 174 stands and 6000 visitors - a clear indication of the growing interest for Fair Trade in Europe.

Fair Trade and Public Procurement

Workshops and roundtables were organised to debate various issues concerning Fair Trade, among which a workshop on Fair Trade and Public Procurement. Organised by ICLEI, this full-day workshop proposed a series of roundtables, allowing public authorities to gather information from specialists and exchange experiences with European counterparts.

The roundtables focused on topics such as Fair Public Procurement in catering and vending, how to minimise legal concerns and opportunities to engage in Fair Public Procurement.

Within this workshop, the Public Affairs project was presented, along with the Observatory on

Fair Trade and Public Procurement, and public authorities as well as Fair Trade Organisations showed interest in this networking tool.

More information on this event can be found at: <http://www.salon-europeen-commerce-equitable.org/Spotlight-on-Fair-Public.html>.



Upcoming

Fair Trade Towns Conference at Expo Zaragoza 2008

IDEAS will organise a one day conference at the Expo Zaragoza '08, on 5th September 2008. The aim of the conference is to share the achievements of the cities with a commitment to Fair Trade in Spain and other European countries. The international Expo itself is a good example of introduction of Fair Trade in public services and the collaboration of public, private and social sectors.

More information is available on:

www.ciudadjusta.org & www.expozaragoza.es



International Seminar on FPP in Italy

CTM-Altromercato will organise an International seminar in October 2008, within the Public Affairs project, to present the most successful experiences in FPP in Europe. Special focus will be given to the situation in new member-states and member-states where the introduction of

social and environmental standards in public procurement is still not very common.

More information will be made available at:

www.eftafairtrade.org/observatory &
<http://www.altromercato.it/en>

EcoProcura 2009 - Climate Neutral through Procurement

25-27 March 2009 - Reykjavik, Iceland

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability and Reykjavik City Council are pleased to announce the EcoProcura 2009 conference: Climate Neutral through Procurement. The aim of this conference is to exchange ideas, experiences, concepts and

opinions on how sustainable procurement can contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change. Registration will open in July 2008

Latest conference information is available at:
www.iclei.org/ecoprocura2009

Call for Volunteers

Translation: NL, FR, IT, ES, DE

We are currently looking for volunteers to translate content for our website from English into the following languages (and vice versa): Dutch, French, Italian, Spanish and German.

If you would like to collaborate with us, please send an e-mail to fair-procura@eftafairtrade.org with some information on yourself, your contact details and a brief CV.

For additional information on the Public Affairs project or on Fair Trade and Public Procurement, contact:

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