

Annual Report

2024



Image: © Fairtrade NAAPP

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FOREWORD

As my involvement with the Fair Trade Advocacy Office's (FTAO) Board of Directors came to an end in November 2024, I am delighted to present the organisation's 2024 Annual Report, which not only reflects the milestones that the Fair Trade Movement has collectively reached in 2024 but also serves as a reminder of the work that remains ahead.

Together with my fellow Board members, we have worked throughout 2024 to provide strategic direction, ensuring that the FTAO stays true to its mission while adapting to the challenges that a growingly polarised world presents.

A year in review

The year 2024 marked a pivotal moment in the FTAO's work, with the start of a new EU legislature following the European Parliament elections and shifts in power dynamics and political priorities. In this evolving landscape, the FTAO has deepened its commitment to ensuring that justice, equity, and sustainable development take a central stage in trade policies that impact people and the planet.

Throughout 2024, the FTAO's efforts have been supported by a growing collaboration with stakeholders who share a vision for trade justice, both within and beyond the Fair Trade Movement, including fellow civil society organisations, trade unions, responsible businesses, farmers' representatives, and young people. This year has demonstrated the increasing need for international collaboration to address the shrinking space for civil society. In this spirit, our collaboration with multilateral organisations and global partners, including embassies from nations such as Ecuador, Sri Lanka, and Kenya, has deepened. For instance, diplomatic envoys supported the Fair Trade Movement's call for a Global Green Deal and attended our annual Fair Trade Breakfast at the European Parliament.

The FTAO has remained at the forefront, pushing for crucial legislative changes within the EU, such as the introduction of the EU Forced Labour regulation, the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive and the Regulation on Deforestation-Free Products. In a year marked by farmer protests across Europe, the FTAO has also continued to closely engage with the European Commission to uphold the principles enshrined in the International Fair Trade Charter in its legislative proposals to strengthen the position of farmers in the agri-food supply chain.

The role of the Fair Trade Movement

Since I started my involvement with the FTAO in 2010, I have had the privilege to witness very deep transformations and milestones, and I can affirm that the Fair Trade Movement has been relevant in each of them. We have walked together through defining moments: from the adoption of the United Nations Guiding Principles in Business and Human Rights in 2011, to the rise of binding due diligence legislation, the global momentum behind the announcement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 and the prospects of a transformative EU Green Deal. But these positive steps have not come without setbacks. Today, we are witnessing a troubling political shift, marked by increasing calls for deregulation and the alarming rise of the far right across the EU. These developments are a stark reminder that we must remain vigilant, unwavering in our values and prepared for the critical work ahead.

Year after year, the annual Fair Trade Breakfast that the FTAO has organised at the European Parliament has reminded me that the Fair Trade Movement is always relevant, and that it has key contributions to make to EU policymaking. I am proud that we have been able to bring to EU decision makers the unique per-

spectives of artisans, mission-led businesses, smallholder farmers and civil society — those who are rarely heard, but who must be central to any just economic future. To bring all these voices to policymakers, the FTAO has been instrumental in uniting a diverse movement, and I am especially proud of the role the International Fair Trade Charter has played in making it possible, and of my contributions to this Charter.

Looking ahead

While I now step down from the FTAO Board, I remain deeply committed to this work in my role as President of the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO). I know challenging days lie ahead — for the FTAO and for all of us who believe in trade justice. But I am equally certain that this organisation will continue to rise to the moment, as it always has.

The FTAO is more than a policy office — it is a vital platform for voices too often silenced in global trade, and for those who know that an alternative economy is possible because they are already putting it into practice. By staying rooted in the values of solidarity, dignity and equity, it will continue to drive meaningful change, ensuring that trade truly works for people and the planet.

Sophie Tack

President of WFTO Board of Directors

Director Sensibilisation &
Plaidoyer at Oxfam-Magasins du monde

FTAO Board Member until November 2024





OUR PROGRESS

Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)

After several setbacks and a bumpy road, the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive was finally adopted by both the European Parliament in April and the European Council in May 2024. All the main policy recommendations developed by the FTAO and its partners were reflected in the adopted Directive, with strong references to purchasing practices, the recognition of Living Wage and Living Incomes as human rights, meaningful stakeholder engagement, and responsible disengagement bringing an end to cut-and-run behaviour by companies.

The Directive also enshrined that there should be accompanying measures to support implementation of due diligence. To shape this process, the FTAO developed a comprehensive [report](#) focused on supporting the implemen-

tation of the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive in global supply chains involving smallholders and their communities, and engaged with the European Commission and member states' development agencies about them. In collaboration with Transform Trade, the FTAO also published the first in-depth [report](#) on meaningful stakeholder engagement with smallholder farmers in due diligence, which will inform and shape future HREDD work.

Although the European Commission was due to move ahead on implementation of the CSDDD, for instance by publishing a public consultation on the guidelines to support the Directive's implementation, it instead in November 2024 announced its intention to simplify, cut red tape, and reduce the obligations





Image: © Fairtrade International

under key sustainability legislation, including the CSDDD. This setback would materialise in a series of Omnibus simplification packages, which will shape the advocacy priorities of the

FTAO throughout 2025, as we work to ensure the EU remains committed to the mandatory sustainable and responsible practices set out in key EU laws.

Embedding sustainability in our agri-food systems

In a year marked by farmer protests across Europe, the FTAO has closely engaged with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development to uphold the principles enshrined in the International Fair Trade Charter on its legislative proposals to strengthen the position of farmers in the supply chain. It has also reflected on

the notion of 'mirror measures' and developed [policy proposals](#) to ensure that any measure in the agri-food sector will raise sustainability standards while being inclusive and respectful with the needs of the weakest actors of the chain.

The CUES project

As part of its long-standing commitment to building fairer and more sustainable agri-food systems, since March 2024, the FTAO has been part of the CUES (Consumers' Understanding of Eating Sustainably) Horizon project consortium, which addresses the urgent need for a more sustainable food system that benefits the environment, society, and the economy. The FTAO, together with Heidelberg University, has

been focused on analysing policies at the EU, national, and regional levels aimed at promoting sustainable and ethical food consumption. Initial findings reveal a significant increase in sustainability-related policies during the 2014–2019 legislature, coinciding with the EU Green Deal, while earlier periods focused more on health.

Deforestation-free supply chains

In 2024, the FTAO has been focused on pushing for an effective, smallholder-inclusive implementation of the EU Regulation on Deforestation-Free Products, working in close collaboration with several coalitions including civil society organisations, farmers' representative associations and companies, as well as governments and EU Delegations. This includes monitoring the implementation and trying to better understand the impact the legislation on smallholder farmers, while trying to boost capacity-building efforts to facilitate implementation in partner countries, ensuring that farming communities, and particularly vulnerable actors, do not bear the full cost of implementation and compliance with EU rules.

During this period, the FTAO remained vigilant and responsive in the face of unexpected political backlash against the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), including proposals to delay its implementation and introduce significant changes to the legal text, none of which were ultimately adopted. In November, in response to the European Parliament's intention to introduce further amendments that could undermine the effective implementation of the EUDR, following the European Commission's proposal to extend the application of the law by one year, the FTAO urgently called on the three institutions to [work towards a compromise](#) in line with the original 2023 legislative text.



The EU Forced Labour regulation

In March 2024, the first ever European law prohibiting forced labour was adopted. The Forced Labour Regulation (FLR) marked a key milestone for the Fair Trade Advocacy Office and for the 27.6 million people globally impacted by forced labour. This groundbreaking legislation bans the import, sale, and export of products made with forced labour in the EU market. In its advocacy efforts, the FTAO managed to increase

the role of international collaboration within the Regulation and, along partners, achieved to have relevant references on remediation, responsible disengagement and accompanying measures. The latter being the point of focus for FTAO for the work to come. The legislation entered into force in December 2024 and will become applicable 24 months later (2027).

EU policies for fair and sustainable textile supply chains

Ahead of the European parliamentary elections, the Fair Trade Advocacy Office influenced the [Greens manifesto](#), by which unfair trading practices in the textile sector and public procurement were mentioned as key election priorities. Additionally, the work towards the elections included organising a panel discussion in April with Belgian candidates MEPs Sara Matthieu (Greens) and Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D) in the [Fair Fashion Fest in Ghent](#).

In October, building on its efforts for fair and sustainable textiles in the previous European Parliament mandate, together with a coalition of civil society organisations, the FTAO presented its [textile policy priorities for the 2024-2029 EU legislature](#), focusing on three key pillars: tackling overproduction and harmful practices, ensuring transparency in supply chains, and promoting honest messaging about clothing.



Image: © Township Patterns

Enhancing the position of farmers in the value chain

Evaluation of the EU Directive on Unfair Trading Practices

Ahead of the evaluation of the EU Directive on Unfair Trading Practices in the food chain, expected by the end of 2025, the Fair Trade Advocacy Office commissioned a series of research reports to assess the Directive's impact beyond EU borders, with case studies in [Rwanda](#) and [Ecuador](#). The reports aimed to explore the Directive's awareness and implementation in non-EU contexts, particularly among agri-food exporters trading with EU buyers.

Findings revealed that the implementation of the Directive on Unfair Trading Practices re-

mains largely unexplored among non-EU suppliers, with unfair trading practices persisting in cross-border commercial relationships. The research also highlighted concrete how practical barriers and the “fear factor” still prevents many exporters from potentially filing a complaint under the Directive. These research reports remain the key source of intelligence in shaping the FTAO's position ahead of the evaluation of the Directive on Unfair Trading Practices in 2025.



Image: © Mohamed Aly Diabaté - Fairtrade

The 'Fair Trade' definition

In December 2024, in response to the European Commission's proposal to implement targeted amendments to the Common organisation of the agricultural markets (CMO) regulation, introducing official definitions for terms such as "fair" and "equitable", the FTAO [outlined](#) the need to build on the highest existing standards upheld by the Fair Trade Movement for

decades. This is to ensure that the definition does not produce unintended effects, allowing large players who offer less advantageous conditions to supply chain actors to misuse the 'fair' label, misleading consumers and displacing economic actors who adhere to strict voluntary standards.

Advancing sustainable and fair public procurement

The Fair Trade Advocacy Office has continued to advocate for the need to review the EU Public Procurement Directive to include Fair Trade criteria and enhance SMEs participation. This continuous call gained momentum following the announcement in Ursula von der Leyen's 2024 Political Guidelines, which outlined the upcoming revision of the 2014 Public Procurement Directives. The revision was further confirmed in the mission letter of Commissioner Stéphane Séjourné.

In December 2024, the European Commission initiated an evaluation of the "effectiveness, efficiency, and continued relevance" of the EU Public Procurement Directives. In response, the FTAO began coordinating with the Fair Trade Movement to contribute to the public consultation and call for evidence, ensuring that Fair Trade perspectives are considered in the review process.

School Food 4 Change

Throughout the year, the FTAO and the partners from the [School Food 4 Change](#) project consortium have been working to ensure that all children in Europe have access to free, healthy school meals and food education through a [public petition](#) that has already collected over 100,000 signatures.

In February 2024, the School Food 4 Change project released its first Policy Brief, focused on tackling inequality through healthy and sustainable school food. The consortium also published

a [comprehensive guide](#) for school canteens to help them adopt innovative procurement practices for school menus. Aligned with the EU's Green Deal Farm to Fork strategy, School Food 4 Change complements several key EU policies, including the School Fruit, Vegetables and Milk Scheme, which encourages healthy eating habits, and the European Child Guarantee, which aims to combat social exclusion by ensuring children have access to nutritious food.



Promoting globally just EU policies

Global Green Deal

In February 2024, together with SOLIDAR Foundation, Fairtrade International, World Fair Trade Organization and World Fair Trade Organization Europe, the Fair Trade Advocacy Office launched the [Call to Action to transform the European Green Deal into a Global Green Deal](#) to make it more social, equitable, just and fair at the international level.

Throughout the year, the plea for a Global Green Deal has been a central focus of the FTAO's advocacy, leading us to collaborate closely with embassies from partner countries and maintain

ongoing dialogue with civil society and other key stakeholders. The FTAO held two conferences at the European Economic and Social Committee, bringing together European policymakers, third-country representatives, trade unions and civil society to discuss policy proposals to ensure this vision becomes a reality. In parallel, ambassadors from third countries supported the Global Green Deal approach, which was also endorsed by members of the [European Parliament's Fair Trade Working Group](#) and the [European Committee of the Regions](#).





Young Fair Trade Advocates (YFTAs)

The Fair Trade Advocacy has continued engaging with young audiences advocating for trade justice and just transition within and beyond the Fair Trade Movement. In April 2024, the Young Fair Trade Advocates, a group of young activists coordinated by the FTAO, launched the [#BiteSizedChange](#) social media campaign, which explores how youth is driving positive change in Europe's food systems and what needs to change ahead of the 2024 European Parliament elections to build a truly fair and sustainable future for all. Through a series of short videos and factsheets, it explores ethical food choices, agroecology, the impact of pesticides, global food systems,

and the need for stronger advocacy to ensure food justice for all.

Building on their commitment to engaging with decision-makers and fostering dialogues with artisans, producers and farming communities worldwide, the YFTAs actively brought youth voices to the international stage. These included participating in the [Fair Fashion Fest in Ghent](#), the [Making Agricultural Trade Sustainable \(MATS\)](#) conference, the [EESC Civil Society Week](#), the [International Fair Trade Summit in Cape Town](#) (South Africa), or at the [World Food Forum](#) held at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome (Italy), among others.



Image: © Fairpicture - Tatiana Fernandez Geara

OUR EVENTS & KEY MILESTONES



01.2024

**Signing of Framework
of Cooperation with
actors in Sri Lanka**



On 10 January 2024, the Fair Trade Advocacy Office signed the groundbreaking Framework of Cooperation Agreement with the Sri Lankan Export Development Board, Fairtrade Network of Asia and Pacific Producers (NAPP), and the World Fair Trade Organization Asia (WFTO Asia). A historical milestone that aims at strengthening Fair Trade practices, foster sustainable development, and promote ethical trade in the region.



01.2024

A just transition for all: why the European Green Deal needs to go global

On 23 January 2024, SOLIDAR and the Fair Trade Advocacy Office hosted a panel at the European Economic and Social Committee to discuss the case for a Global Green Deal. The event gathered EU policymakers, including European Commission officials and Members of the European Parliament, to explore how the principles of the European Green Deal could be expanded globally through a Global Green Deal to foster a just transition worldwide. The event concluded a long process of consultations with diverse civil society, business, and trade union organisations to agree upon a range of policy demands to the EU decision-makers of the next legislative period (2024-29).

02.2024

Side session “Meaningful stakeholder engagement with Smallholder cotton farmers” at the OECD Forum on Due Diligence in the Garment and Footwear sector

On 20 February 2024, the Fair Trade Advocacy Office and Transform Trade hosted a webinar as part of the side sessions of the OECD Forum on Due Diligence in the Garment and Footwear sector. This session shared findings from field research conducted among smallholder cotton farmers in India. Participants gained an overview of their livelihoods and roles in global supply chains, heard directly from farmers on how they wish to be involved in corporate due diligence processes, and received recommendations to strengthen meaningful engagement in the textile sector.





02.2024

Building inclusive policies for sustainable and fair trade: A forum for action and commitment

On the 28th of February, the Fair Trade Advocacy Office and Fairtrade International hosted an event in the context of the International Institute for Sustainable Development Trade and Sustainability Hub that ran in parallel with the 13th World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Abu Dhabi. The event featured contributions from a Fairtrade cotton producer, a representative of the Ecuadorian government, and a speaker from the International Trade Center, and focused on the need to build inclusive policies that support sustainable and Fair Trade.



04.2024

“Fair prices for agri-food products: EU rules that make a difference” event at the European Parliament

In April 2024, the Fair Trade Advocacy Office held a panel discussion at the European Parliament, hosted by MEPs Paolo De Castro, Jordi Solé, and Diana Riba i Giner, exploring how EU rules can help ensure fair purchasing prices in the agri-food sector. The discussion looked at national and regional cases, such as the Market Price Observatories in Catalunya (Spain), and included insights from Spanish national experts and regional government representatives.



06.2024

European Parliament elections

The 2024 European Parliament elections marked a key milestone in the Fair Trade Advocacy Office’s work throughout the year. Aiming to shape the political agenda, the FTAO launched a series of [policy proposals](#) calling on EU decision makers to commit to foster a global just transition which favours the interests of the people and the planet and sets fairness as the condition for all trade relations.



09.2024

Learning about due diligence implementation from cooperatives in El Salvador and Honduras

In September 2024, the Fair Trade Advocacy Office participated at Fairtrade International’s Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence working group in El Salvador and Honduras. The session included field visits to CAFESCOR and COREBRISOR, two cooperatives in Honduras which are implementing ambitious due diligence projects, who shared the challenges and successes they have experienced.



Image: © Bryan Nicola Maxwell

11.2024

The Fair Trade Advocacy Marathon & the European Parliament's Fair Trade Breakfast 2024

In 12-13 November the FTAO hosted its annual Fair Trade Advocacy Marathon bringing together advocates, producers, policymakers, and businesses to discuss key topics such as sustainable public procurement, living incomes, and advancing systemic change. The occasion included the annual Fair Trade Breakfast at the European Parliament, hosted by the European Parliament's Fair Trade Working Group and its Chair, MEP Bernd Lange (S&D). The Embassy of Sri Lanka to Belgium co-hosted this year's event and shared with the nearly 100 participants a selection of fair trade products from Sri Lanka.

12.2024

Global Green Deal: How the EU can lead a Fair and Just Transition Worldwide

With the new European Commission in full swing, on 5 December 2024, SOLIDAR and the Fair Trade Advocacy Office hosted two policy roundtables to explore how new EU decision-makers could address the global dimension of the European Green Deal to enhance its efficiency, in the mutual interest of the European Union and its partners. The event, hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee, brought together civil society, EU decision-makers, policy experts, trade unions and representatives from partner countries to discuss the adoption of a Just Transition strategy to guide EU external action and the continued reform of EU trade policy for greater fairness and sustainability.



Image: © Fairpicture - Tatiana Fernandez Geara

OUR DONORS

Fair Trade Advocacy Office would like to thank all the organisations and institutions that financially support the work of the FTAO.



The **European Climate Foundation** supports the FTAO's work on trade policy and the engagement with youth through the Young Fair Trade Advocates program.



Laudes Foundation supports FTAO in our work for a fair and sustainable textile sector, the coordination of the textile coalition as well as in our work for an effective CSDDD Directive.



The **Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer** pour le Progrès humain supports the FTAO through core funding dedicated to enhancing the FTAO's capabilities to promote EU policies that are favourable for Fair Trade.



Brot für die Welt supports the FTAO in our work for an effective CSDD Directive that brings positive outcomes for small-holder farmers around the world.



The **European Commission**, through a Financial Framework Partnership Agreement with Fairtrade International, supports FTAO's work in empowering Producer Organisations' advocacy capacities at EU level. The European Commission, through Horizon projects, supports FTAO and consortium partners' work in Consumers' Understanding of Eating Sustainably (CUES); and School Food for Change.



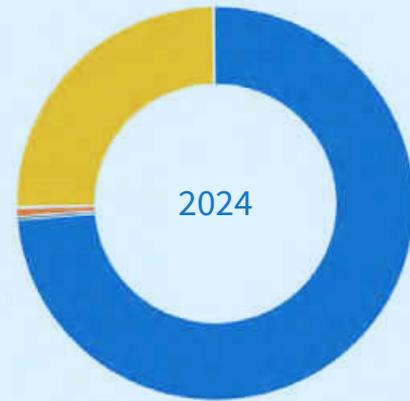
Humanity United Action supports the FTAO's work on the fight against unfair trading practices in the agri-food sector, notably by impacting on the review of the EU UTP Directive.

FINANCES

Fair Trade Advocacy Office would like to thank all the organisations and institutions that financially support our work.

Income

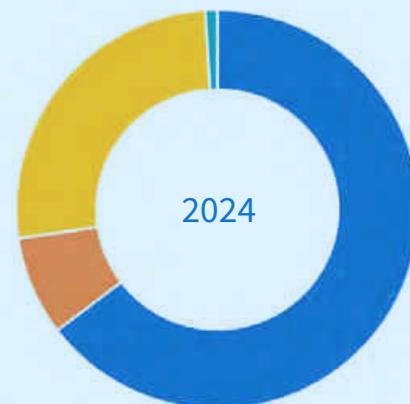
	2023	2024
Sales	€ 9,000	€ 6,888
Donations	€ 202,905	€ 212,905
Grants / Awards	€ 433,256	€ 624,975
Miscellaneous Income	€ 1,895	€ 1,618
Total	€ 647,056	€ 846,385



- Sales
- Donations
- Grants / Awards
- Miscellaneous income

Expenditure

	2023	2024
Staff	€ 428,953	€ 494,953
Office	€ 44,413	€ 61,507
Fundraising	€ 0	€ 0
Activity	€ 180,524	€ 201,945
Other	€ 538	€ 7,318
Total	€ 654,428	€ 765,722



- Staff
- Office
- Fundraising
- Activity
- Other

OUR TEAM

Managing Director – Jorge Conesa

International and Institutional Relations Manager –
Virginia Enssle

Finance Manager – Anne Revell

Senior Policy & Project Coordinator – Alena Kahle

Senior Policy & Project Officer – Paola Plaku

Policy & Project Officer – Isabel Garland

Communications Officer – Michelle Barrientos

Junior Advocacy Officer – Simon Guérin Sanz

Junior Advocacy Officer – Vania Rose Luna

Strategic Director – Eric Ponthieu (until December 2024)

Senior Policy & Project Officer – May Hylander (until July 2024)

Junior Advocacy Officer – Julia Wild (until January 2024)

Junior Advocacy Officer – Viola Carboni (until February 2024)

Junior Communications Officer – Lisa Grötzner (until
August 2024)

Junior Finance Manager – Inesa Mghebrishvili (until
August 2024)





Image: © Rosa Panggabean - Fairtrade - Fairpicture



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