

Annual Report

2025



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FOREWORD

The past year has confirmed that progress towards fair and sustainable trade cannot be taken for granted.

Across Europe, political and economic uncertainty has increasingly shaped debates on trade, sustainability and corporate responsibility. Measures that appeared to signal stronger ambition, from due diligence requirements to deforestation regulation, are now being revisited. The direction of travel is not always clear, and the risk is that sustainability becomes disconnected from the realities faced by farmers and workers around the world.

Yet this moment also offers an important opportunity: to refocus discussions on what truly delivers impact, to strengthen collaboration across sectors and to ensure that the transition towards sustainable trade is grounded in fairness, practicality and shared responsibility.

Too often, those most affected by global trade rules and sustainability demands are the least heard in shaping them. As a movement, we aim to change this. Producers should not be passive recipients of policies and market expectations, but heard partners with expertise, agency and solutions of their own.

As a founding member, Fairtrade is proud to support FTAO's work in ensuring that the perspectives of farmers and workers are represented in European policymaking. Over the past year, the FTAO has continued to shape key debates on the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), unfair trading practices, sustainable textiles, organic regulation and living incomes. It has also brought together more than 100 stakeholders in Brussels to advance discussions on living incomes and living wages, while continuing to advocate for implementation pathways that are workable and inclusive for smallholder farmers.

These efforts matter because fairer trade is no longer theoretical. It already exists in practice across countless producer organisations, businesses and partnerships around the world. The challenge now is not whether fair trade works, but how to scale it until it becomes norm.

For this, we must remain bold and unequivocal in defending our movement's vision. In a context of increasingly polarised and fragmented debates, simplistic narratives and short-term political interests, the risk of weakening hard-won progress on sustainability and human rights increases. Our movement cannot afford to become quieter at the very moment when clarity and conviction are most needed.

We all share the ambition of sustainable livelihoods. The real challenge lies in deciding what is truly impactful, how to align policies with realities on the ground and how to ensure that transitions towards sustainability are fair, inclusive and economically viable for those at the start of the supply chain.

The Fair Trade Movement remains deeply relevant in this moment. But relevance alone is not enough. Our voice must continue to be clear, credible, coordinated, strong and impossible to ignore.

Marika Runneboom de Peña

Interim CEO

Fairtrade International





OUR PROGRESS

Shaping the implementation of the Forced Labour Regulation

Our push for a rights-based implementation of EU rules against forced labour

With the entry into force of the EU Forced Labour Regulation (EUFLR) at the end of 2024, the FTAO's work in 2025 has focused on supporting the European Union in developing robust accompanying measures to ensure effective implementation of the Regulation and eradicate forced labour from EU supply chains.

Drawing from the Fair Trade Movement's experience in responsible supply chain governance, we have engaged with the European Commission in the development of the Guidelines that will shape the implementation of the EU rules on forced labour.

Alongside Fairtrade International, we also developed a [framework](#) of accompanying measures that places rights-holders at the centre, targeting the wide range of actors that need to be actively involved in global efforts to eradicate forced labour from global value chains. Throughout the year, we maintained a close collaboration with civil society and private sector partners committed to driving change on the ground and will keep following the development of this crucial regulation as it enters into force in 2027.





Image: CLAC

Building truly sustainable agri-food supply chains

An EU Organic Regulation that truly works for farmers and cooperatives

Rising costs and rigid eligibility rules have made the EU Organic certification increasingly inaccessible, particularly for smallholder organisations in partner countries supplying the EU market.

Since the 2022 Organic Regulation took effect, the Fair Trade Advocacy Office (FTAO) had been demanding targeted measures to prevent the Regulation's unintended spillover effects on smallholder producer organisations, warning of risks to the sector's long-term viability, with Fairtrade International surveys showing 69% struggling with compliance and 20% not renewing certification due to high complexity and costs.

With the intention to prevent trade disruptions, simplify regulations for producers, including smallholder group certification and harmon-

ise inspection standards, the European Commission announced its intention to introduce targeted amendments to the Organic Regulation. The widely welcomed legislative proposal, released in December 2025, addressed key demands long raised by the Fair Trade Movement and has the potential to remove critical barriers, helping to maintain organic supply chains for products such as cocoa, coffee, fruit and spices.

In the upcoming year, the FTAO will focus its efforts on ensuring swift adoption of the European Commission's proposal and that final amendments introduced by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU fully address the structural challenges faced by organic farmers and producer organisations, particularly in third countries supplying the EU market.

The CUES project (Consumers' Understanding of Eating Sustainably)

In 2025, the FTAO has been pleased to continue our work as 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. This year, in close partnership with Heidelberg University, we have been developing a mapping of food consumption-related policies, which will be published in 2026. As part of this process, we have analysed policies

at the European Union, national and regional levels, that promote sustainable and ethical food consumption. Our preliminary findings point to a clear shift in how consumers have been considered in EU policymaking since 2015, while health concerns used to be the dominant priority, sustainability has become an increasingly important driver, especially during the 2014–2019 legislature, in parallel with the EU Green Deal.

Upholding robust corporate sustainability due diligence

A defining year for the future of corporate accountability

Ensuring a rightsholder-centered implementation of the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), adopted in the previous year, was a key priority for the Fair Trade Advocacy Office in 2025.

However, the introduction of the European Commission's Omnibus I Package on sustainability regulations significantly shifted the focus of our advocacy work. In February 2025, the European Commission proposed simplifying due diligence requirements under the banner of boosting EU competitiveness, threatening key provisions of the Corporate Sustainability Due

Diligence Directive and its ability to hold companies accountable for their impact on human rights and the environment.

Throughout the year, the FTAO worked closely with the Fair Trade Movement and a broad coalition of civil society organisations in Brussels and beyond to defend the Directive's transformative potential and alignment with international standards such as the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct. Despite efforts, by the end of 2025, the co-legislators had narrowed its scope to companies with more than 5,000 employees and EUR 1.5



billion in turnover, excluding most companies shaping global value chains and limiting the law's original ambition. The FTAO remains concerned that this revision missed the opportunity to strengthen essential safeguards, against irresponsible disengagement in particular. However, because of widespread mobilisation, including by the FTAO, co-legislators retained a risk-based approach, ensuring that companies focus their efforts on risks where they are most severe – critical if there is to be progress for in-

stance towards living incomes and living wages.

In 2026, we will continue to closely monitor the implementation process and advocate for stricter provisions on stakeholder engagement and responsible disengagement during EU Member States' transposition, ahead of the Directive's enforcement in July 2029, and for implementation guidelines that are made with rightsholders' needs at the core.

Promoting deforestation-free supply chains

An EUDR that aligns forest protection with smallholder inclusion

Throughout the year, the Fair Trade Movement continued to support the objectives of the EUDR as a key instrument to strengthen forest protection and sustainability in EU supply chains, while advocating for fair and inclusive implementation. To accompany these efforts, the FTAO engaged with Members of the European Parliament and the European Commission to help advance the establishment of meaningful partnerships with producing countries, recognising these as essential to effective implementation and equitable compliance with the Regulation.

Together with coalitions of producer representatives, companies and civil society organisations, the FTAO called on the EU to ensure transparent allocation of implementation costs,

strengthen shared responsibility across the supply chain and provide dedicated support for smallholder producers and their organisations.

Despite these efforts, the end of 2025 saw the EU adopt another one-year postponement of the implementation of the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), delaying its application to December 2026, citing continued technical and administrative readiness challenges. Ahead of the entering into force of the regulation, the FTAO will continue engaging with EU institutions, producer organisations and supply chain actors to help ensure that forest protection goes hand in hand with safeguarding market access and the livelihoods of farmers and workers worldwide.





Image: Fairtrade NAPP

Advancing fair and sustainable public procurement

Towards the revision of the EU Public Procurement framework

The upcoming revision of the Public Procurement Directive, for which the European Commission is expected to publish a proposal in summer 2026, was a central focus of the FTAO's advocacy throughout the year, with the ambition to shape a legislation that harnesses public spending as a driver of public good, with respect for labour rights, fair competition for responsible businesses and alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In 2025, the Fair Trade Movement put forward key recommendations to strengthen strategic public procurement, ensuring that this substantial public spending rewards business models that generate positive social and environmental impacts. To build momentum ahead of the legislative proposal, the FTAO worked closely with public authorities and civil society partners through the Network for

Sustainable Development in Public Procurement, the EU Food Policy Coalition, and the International Working Group for Ethical Public Procurement, platforms that bring together procurement authorities, experts, academics, trade unions and civil society organisations from across Europe.

Within the EU institutions, the FTAO closely engaged with the European Parliament's Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) in the framework of the consultations for the Committees' Own-Initiative Report (INI), as well as other relevant committees, setting out the Parliament's expectations ahead of the revision of this key legislation. The FTAO also participated in formal and informal consultations with the European Commission, ensuring the voice of the Fair Trade Movement was heard at every stage of the process.

The SchoolFood4Change project

In 2025, the [SchoolFood4Change](#) project came to an end after four years of close collaboration across 35 cities and regions in 22 European countries. The project showed how school meals can drive healthier, climate-friendly diets, reaching 4,000 schools and more than 1 million children across Europe, with its impact now extending beyond European borders through project multipliers. It also generated valuable evidence and practical pathways for lasting change by showing how cities and schools can use public procurement to embed

strong health, social and environmental standards into tenders, ensuring that more sustainable food reaches students' plates. Although the European Commission project funding has come to an end, many of its approaches were designed for lasting impact, combining social, economic and environmental benefits with the sharing of good practices and lessons learned from local and regional governments committed to embedding fair and sustainable procurement for the mid and long term.

Strengthening EU policies for fair and sustainable textiles

Rightsholders at the heart of EU textiles policy

As a member of the European Commission's Ecodesign Forum, the FTAO has been closely following the development of the EU Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) over the course of the year. To inform our contribution, we have gathered [insights](#) from across the Fair Trade Movement and beyond, ensuring that our input reflects the experience of actors at every stage of the textile supply chain. This has involved working closely with representatives of social enterprises, manufacturers, artisans, smallholder cotton farmers, producer networks and suppliers to deepen our understanding of the Regulation's potential impact on the ground and to help shape our feedback on the delegated act for textile apparel expected in 2027.

In parallel, the Fair Trade Advocacy Office partnered with Change Alliance India to conduct multi-stakeholder consultations across India's textile supply chains to better understand how

the incorporation of human rights and due diligence legislation is impacting textile workers, farmers and communities in India. The key findings were consolidated in a [publication](#) providing an overview of Business and Human Rights (BHR) and Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) practices in the country, highlighting practical steps to implementation, gaps in ensuring living wages and incomes and the need to better protect workers, farmers and communities.

In December 2025, the FTAO launched its new [Textiles Advocacy Strategy Group](#) to ensure that global rightsholders and sustainability experts help shape our EU advocacy priorities for a fairer textiles sector. Bringing together experts working with cotton producers, academics and sustainable SMEs, the Group creates a structured channel to reflect realities on the ground in the FTAO's annual and long-term strategy around textiles.



Enhancing the position of farmers in the value chain

A stronger Unfair Trading Practices Directive

The EU debate on unfair trading practices (UTPs) in the agri-food sector entered a crucial phase in 2025. The European Commission's evaluation of the UTP Directive confirmed many of the concerns the Fair Trade Movement has long raised. Despite the existing framework, farmers both within and outside the EU continue to face unfair commercial conditions, including sales below production costs, limited protection for non-EU suppliers and a persistent fear of retaliation.

The FTAO welcomed the Commission's assessment as an important basis for closing the remaining gaps ahead of the Directive's revision and engaged actively with EU institutions over the course of the year to leverage insights from field research commissioned jointly with Oxfam in Rwanda and Ecuador, which confirmed a widespread lack of awareness of the protections enshrined in the EU Directive. This included taking part in formal and informal consultations with the European Commission's Directorate-General

for Agriculture and Rural Development, as well as the Directorate-General for International Partnerships and EU Delegations around the world. The FTAO also co-endorsd a letter from members of the European Parliament's Fair Trade Working Group calling on Commissioner Christophe Hansen to ensure that the revised Directive upholds the rights of non-EU agri-food suppliers.

In 2025, the FTAO also worked to ensure that the Commission's proposed new rules to enhance cooperation among enforcement authorities responsible for the enforcement of Directive, included specific measures allowing improved coordination in cross-border cases.

Throughout this year, the FTAO worked hand in hand with a broad coalition of partners, civil society organisations, farmer associations and responsible businesses, within and beyond the Fair Trade Movement, committed to realising the full potential of the EU Directive as a tool for fairer supply chains.

An ambitious definition of “fair”

In 2025, EU co-legislators continued discussions on targeted amendments to the Common Organisation of the Markets (CMO) Regulation, including a proposed definition of the conditions under which the terms ‘fair’ and ‘equitable’ may be used.

Throughout the year, the FTAO advocated strongly for definitions to be grounded in verifiable methodologies and backed by credible control systems, recommending that EU initiatives draw on the experience of the Fair Trade Movement, the vision set out in the International Fair Trade Charter, as well as existing legislative developments at EU level, including the French legal definition of ‘fair trade’. The FTAO also warned that the lack of precision in the definition could risk opening the door to ‘fairwashing’, misleading consumers and undermining the capacity of farmers to harvest the benefits of fair trade. If inadequately de-

fined, the legislation could create a worse outcome than having no legislation at all.

Despite sustained efforts and close collaboration with Members of the European Parliament, the text adopted in plenary failed to incorporate specific mention to the need for ‘remunerative’ be proven through verifiable methodologies and that the same rules apply to both EU and imported products.

While inter-institutional negotiations are expected to reach an agreement on these specific amendments in 2026, a broader reform of the CMO is expected in the coming year. The FTAO will continue to engage in the process to ensure that EU legislation helps end structural abuses in agricultural markets and ensure that ‘fair’ does not become a shield for those who continue to exploit the farmers they claim to support.



Image: No Logo Fairtrade Foundation

Young Fair Trade Advocates (YFTAs)

The FTAO continued collaborating with young audiences on trade justice and just transition throughout 2025, both within and beyond the Fair Trade Movement. In January, a group of Young Fair Trade Advocates (YFTAs) travelled to Ghana alongside an FTAO delegation to witness first-hand the impact of climate change in cooperative farming and the ways cocoa farmers are overcoming challenges through community engagement. The delegation of YFTAs conducted a series of interviews with farmers and cooperative members, from Accra to the Eastern, Ahafo and Ashanti regions, they saw how cooperatives create tangible benefits for their members and surrounding communities.

To mark World Fair Trade Day 2025, the YFTAs launched the [video series](#) *Seeds of Resilience*:

How cocoa farmers in Ghana are leading the way in climate change mitigation and adaptation. The series amplifies the voices of cocoa farmers showcasing how they are adapting their farming practices and developing innovative solutions to address the growing impacts of climate change.

Over the course of the year, the YFTAs also participated in the annual European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) youth event, presented the *Seeds of Resilience* video series at the 18th International Fair Trade Towns Conference in Edinburgh, and met with the Presidency of the EESC's Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment Section, alongside fellow youth environmental and agricultural organisations.



Image: Fairtrade NAPP



OUR EVENTS & KEY MILESTONES



06.02.2025

**Fair Prices for Farmers
around the World:
How the Unfair Trading
Practices Directive Can
Make a Real Difference**



Together with Oxfam Belgium, we co-organised an expert discussion at the European Parliament on strengthening the Unfair Trading Practices Directive. The FTAO presented new research commissioned alongside Oxfam looking at the implementation of the Directive in non-EU countries. Hosted by MEPs Annalisa Corrado and Cristina Guarda, the event gathered policymakers, civil society and farmers' representatives from EU member states. Speakers highlighted that going beyond minimum rules, such as banning below-cost buying is both feasible and necessary.



20.05.2025

**Bridging Policy and Practice:
Advancing Living Incomes &
Living Wages in Agricultural
Supply Chains**

We brought together over 100 stakeholders in Brussels to advance living incomes and wages in agricultural supply chains. Co-organised by Fairtrade International, Fairtrade Belgium the Fair Trade Advocacy Office at the European Economic and Social Committee, the event connected policymakers, businesses and producer representatives from Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire to move beyond rhetoric towards tangible progress. Belgian Minister Jean-Luc Crucke reminded participants: "Fair trade is not a luxury. It is a human right."



25.06.2025

**Ecodesign Hands-on:
Voices from Social Enterprises**

Alongside the World Fair Trade Organization-Europe, we convened policymakers, Fair Trade pioneers and social enterprises to explore the risks and opportunities within the EU's evolving textile sustainability framework. Hosted by MEP Rasmus Nordqvist and as an official partner event of EU Green Week 2025, the discussion highlighted the vital role of inclusive, fair and circular business models in the textile sector and spotlighted voices from social enterprises already leading the way in sustainable production.



15.07.2025

The strategic value of sustainable public procurement in the EU

Co-organised with Swedwatch and hosted by MEP Pierfrancesco Maran at the European Parliament, this discussion focused on how the revision of the EU Public Procurement Directive can better support sustainability, social rights and SME access. Case studies from Barcelona and Italy showed practical progress, while research confirmed limited uptake of social clauses. The session also highlighted that EU procurement has been linked with severe labour rights violations and how the upcoming revision of the Directive can be crucial to ensure truly fair and sustainable supply chains.

15-17.07.2025

III Fairtrade Cocoa Forum

The III Fairtrade Cocoa Forum in Lima, Perú, brought together cocoa producers, exporters, importers and industry experts. The FTAO's Managing Director, Jorge Conesa, moderated an expert discussion on the opportunities and implications of the EU Organic Regulation for producers and market access. The discussion underscored the importance of inclusive dialogue across the sector.





09-10.09.2025

National Fairtrade in India Conference & Recognition Event

The conference, co-hosted by Fairtrade India and Fairtrade NAPP gathered over 150 stakeholders to discuss sustainable agriculture, resilient supply chains and ethical markets. The FTAO's Managing Director, Jorge Conesa, presented updates on EU sustainability regulations, highlighting both challenges and opportunities for Fairtrade producers and MSMEs and also joined a panel discussion on strengthening producer voices in a just transition.



05-06.11.2025

Fair Trade Advocacy Marathon

On 5–6 November, the FTAO hosted its annual Fair Trade Advocacy Marathon, bringing together the wider Movement to work on shared priorities and inform our advocacy at EU level amplifying the voices of smallholder farmers, producers and workers in EU policymaking. We were honoured to welcome colleagues from across Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa, alongside civil society organisations and Fair Trade allies.

06.11.2025

Fair Trade Breakfast at the European Parliament

More than 70 participants from EU institutions, civil society, embassies and the Fair Trade Movement joined the annual Fair Trade Breakfast at the European Parliament alongside the Parliament's Fair Trade Working Group and its Chair, MEP Bernd Lange. Marking the United Nations International Year of Cooperatives, the event highlighted the role of cooperatives in advancing living incomes and living wages.





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.



The **Sustainable Agricultural Supply Chains Initiative (SASI)** and the **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)** support our work promoting the effective implementation of living incomes at EU level, advance socially responsible public procurement and address unfair trading practices.





FINANCES

£15 Fair Trade Advocacy Office would like to express its gratitude to all the organisations and institutions that have provided financial support for our work throughout 2025.

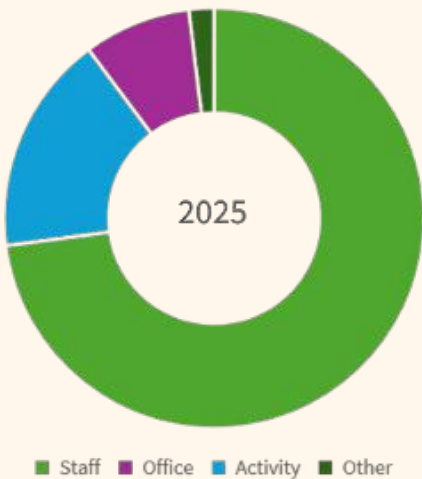
Income

	2024	2025
	EUR	EUR
Sales	6.888	-
Donations	212.905	203.247
Grants / Awards	624.975	523.501,70
Miscellaneous Income	1.618	3.493,12
Total	846.385	730.242



Expenditure

	2024	2025
	EUR	EUR
Staff	494.953	574.097
Office	61.507	65.062
Activity	201.945	133.155,22
Other	7.318	15.241,63
Total	765.722	787.556





OUR TEAM

Managing Director – Jorge Conesa

International & Institutional Relations Manager – Virginia Enssle

Finance Manager – Anne Revell

Senior Policy & Project Coordinator – Alena Kahle

Senior Policy & Project Officer – Paola Plaku

Communications Officer – Michelle Barrientos

Junior Advocacy Officer – Mia Waters Bares

Policy & Project Officer – Isabel Garland (until July 2025)

Junior Advocacy Officer – Simon Guérin Sanz (until January 2025)

Junior Advocacy Officer – Vania Rose Luna (until April 2025)





Image: No Logo Fairtrade Foundation



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