



PRESS RELEASE

European Parliament supports Fair Trade

Strasbourg, 6 July 2006

At today's plenary session, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on Fair Trade and Development with an overwhelming majority. The text calls on the European Commission to come forward with a recommendation and step up public support for Fair Trade. "This resolution responds to the impressive growth of Fair Trade, showing the increasing interest of European consumers in responsible purchasing," said the rapporteur, MEP Frithjof Schmidt, during the plenary debate. "Sales of Fair Trade products in Europe have grown by 20% since 2000. As the EU is by far the largest market for Fair Trade products, accounting for 60 to 70% of worldwide sales, it should lead the way in supporting Fair Trade".

Peter Mandelson, EU Commissioner for External Trade, responded that the resolution will be well-received in the Commission. "Fair Trade makes the consumers think and therefore it is even more valuable. We need to develop a coherent policy framework and this resolution will help us."

The text includes a number of concrete proposals for promoting Fair Trade. Providing 'Aid for Trade' would help more small producers from developing countries to become part of the Fair Trade movement and help existing producers expand their capacity. The report also proposes to support the integration for Fair Trade criteria into public tenders and purchasing policies.

"We want fair prices for all farmers", said Linda McAvan, British MEP and shadow rapporteur for the Socialist Group in the European Parliament (PSE). "In the meantime Fair Trade deserves all our support because it offers producers a decent living and enables them to send their children to school." Fiona Hall, liberal MEP, added: "Fair Trade is a success story. In the UK 3 million Fair Trade hot drinks are consumed every day. But it is less present in some Member States than in others. We need to support campaigns to raise awareness about Fair Trade, particularly in countries where it is still small."

The international Fair Trade movement welcomes today's vote as a long-awaited signal to increase public support to Fair Trade which has been repeatedly recognized by European Institutions for its proven impact on sustainable development and poverty reduction.

Link to the resolution as voted in the European Parliament:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/omk/sipade3?PUBREF=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A6-2006-0207+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&L=EN&LEVEL=0&NAV=S&LSTDOC=Y>

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