

Minutes of the WFTO-Europe Board meeting, 28-29 January 2015, Paris.



Present: Giorgio Dal Fiume (President), Emilie Durochat, Tadeusz Makulski (Secretary), Sophie Tack, Marijke Visser, Gabriella D'Amico (via Skype), Bertil Hogberg (Treasurer – via Skype) and Francesca Giubilo (Coordinator).

28th January	ISSUE
12.00-12.30	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approval Agenda 2. Appointment of the Chair of the Board meeting 3. Approval minutes of previous Board meeting
12.30-13.15	4. Update and news from the countries
13.15-14.15	<i>Lunch</i>
14.15-15.15	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. News from the Office, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Update on the first year of GS implementation
15.15-16.15	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. 2014 Balance and accounts 7. 2015 Budget
16.15-17.00	8. The Communication Strategy
17.00-18.00	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Toward the 2015 WFTO-E AGM: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organisational and content aspects ● Fully align WFTO-E to WFTO (revision of Bylaws) ● Toward a new WFTO-E representative in WFTO Global Board?
18.00-19.00	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Follow up of WFTO-E questions to Global: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “first buyer issue”: feedback from Global on WFTO-E last proposal ● “update of the Charter of FT principles”: agree on the WFTO-Global’s request to contribute in the organisation of a workshop on this issue at the 2015 Global Biennial Conference
20.00	<i>Dinner</i>
29th January	ISSUE
9.00-9.30	11. Next Board meeting dates
9.30-10.30	12. The Milan World Fair Trade Week (23rd-31st May 2015) and the “Milan EU project” which we are partner
10.30-11.30	13. WFTO-E Market access strategy
11.30-13.00	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. The “Fair Trade public recognition” issue: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is the situation at international level? ● What we (single Board members) think about it? ● Do we need to position ourselves in front of this issue?
13.00-14.00	<i>Lunch</i>
14.00-14.45	15. Following of the debate about “the Fair Trade public recognition issue”
14.45-15.30	16. How to proceed towards a “WFTO-E 3 years Strategic Plan”
15.30-16.00	17. AOB
16.00	<i>END OF THE MEETING</i>

28th January

1. Approval Agenda

The agenda was approved without any additional comments.

2. Appointment of the Chair of the Board meeting

Sophie was appointed to be the Chair of the meeting.

3. Approval minutes of previous Board meeting

The minutes of the Board meeting held the 24th of October and the 1st of December via Skype were approved without any comments.

4. Update and news from the countries

Poland: The Coalition for FT in Poland is now a real organization and is accepted by FLO as the FMO. Therefore, the Coalition will receive financial support from FLO to support certification mark and will also have a positive impact on the FTT campaign. Thanks to the cooperation of PFTA in the elaboration of their Constitution, the Coalition has a broader approach to FT. Regarding the FTT campaign, so far almost 40 schools and 2 towns are involved in the campaign. Poznam is quite important in this sense. This city renewed the certificate last year and launched several activities for the campaign. Tadeusz also shared the International Report on the FTT Campaign 2014, showing a different trend in the last 2 years. While in 2013 FT USA was the major donor together with FLO LI from different countries also with WFTO-Europe and Global in 2014 WFTO-Europe and FT USA kept contributing as well as FLO LI, but WFTO Global no. Some problems at political level were also stressed: at international level, there is no support or participation from Fairtrade International which is not working within the FTT steering committee. The steering committee is the international body of the campaign strictly connected to the coordinators of the grassroots campaign on country level. The committee provides background documents, meets in general meetings and is a space for dialogue. FLO initially supported the committee, however no budget was allocated to this body and the main question for the committee is now how to re-approach FLO as well as how to include other stakeholders. As a reaction to this last point, some Board members stressed the importance of having a “big tent” approach and some concerns regarding the willingness of having FLO more active in the steering committee for its already strong presence in the market.

Italy: Although the overall situation in the country is not improving, the financial asset of CTM altromercato seems to be quite stable and the sales in 2014 knew a slight increase compared to the forecast budget. Regarding the World shop, though they are quite stable due to the sales in the mainstreams, the situation is however becoming worse. For 2015 CTM expects a slight increase of sales. Agices and all the other partners are working hard to overcome this period. In the second half of 2014 the new label “equogarantito” was launched in order to raise awareness about FT in Italy and strengthen its link with WFTO.

Belgium: Oxfam Magasins-du-Monde (Omdm) is now in the middle of a big reflection for 2020. This is strictly linked to the 3-year subsidies received for educations until the end of 2016 and the need to adapt a little bit their priorities and programmes to apply for a second round of funding. The reflection mainly follows 3 mainstreams: 1. which movement to be in 2020, 2. which economic model to support, 3. which vision of the society to have. These big reflections imply a lot of work

with volunteers. In addition to it, Omdm is planning the campaigns for next year and is also restructuring its organisation, with for instance a new department in campaign. In terms of campaign, at the end of 2014, 3 producers were invited to present the work on handcrafts and gender and, as a follow-up of this activity, a workshop on this topic will be organised during the conference in Milan. In spring a campaign on access to land linked to food will be launched, while the programme for 2016 is to keep working on handcrafts and gender and then more in cotton. Recently Oxfam International launched a new report on inequality (report of Oxfam international), This research was strongly attacked by a French journalist, who denounced the way in which Oxfam calculated the number of the poor people. Nevertheless the huge polemic created by this denounce, the main outcomes of the report, warning that 1% people got half of the global wealth, was not contradicted at all. Regarding the financial situation of the organisation, food sales are going down while crafts up. Overall Belgium has a new governments with national and socialists and following several strikes organised in December, is now negotiating with syndicates several reforms. Beginning of February, Sophie informed the other board members that she will be attend the meeting organised by DAWS on the Fairtrade finest programme in order to know better about their project to launch a new international certification schemes for crafts.

France: In 2014, there has been around 10% of growth of FT in France. Plate-forme Commerce Equitable (PFCE) is now finalising the new edition of the "Guide to Fair Trade labels", which will be published soon and translated most likely in English in April. Once finalised, Emilie will speak and present WFTO system to the auditors. Emilie shared also with the Board members some concerns regarding the decision of FI to certify the carbon credit and to officially launch this new standard mid-2015, just after the COP 21 in Paris, creating in this way a huge risk of image. In order to know more about this topic, PFCE participated to a consultation with FT in September 2014 and organised a debate in January 2015. According to this new proposal, companies could be able to say in their CSR report that they have financed a carbon compensation programme. The Plate-forme is also working on a study on pre-financing, whose main outcome is to create a practical file with gathers all the financial tools available in Europe for producers to facilitate pre-finance mechanisms (the study analyses around 12 financial institutions in Europe and gives a clear analysis on how they finance). This study will be finalised soon in French, shared with the other countries and translated in English and Spanish in 2015. With regard to the Report "Who's got the power" the PFCE has just finalised pedagogical tools (a short video, games) to raise awareness on the topic. These tools should be launched beginning of March 2015. Last but not least, Emilie informed the others about a big programme launched 2 years ago by the French Development Agency to support FT projects in Western Africa. This project was supposed to be led by Fairtrade Africa. However after 2 years of difficulties to launch the programme the Agency finally decided to stop this programme and to ask the PFCE to become the manager of the project, whose aim is to identify producers and handcrafts organisations that need some support on capacity building. As soon as this programme will be confirmed, Emilie will send additional information and ask for support in the identification of producers organisations in Western Africa.

Netherlands: In 2014 there was a positive trend of FT sales for worldshops, especially during Christmas time. The turnover of importers was also good. In Culemborg there are now 2 centres: Fair plaza and Centrum Mondial. Regarding the Fair Price Fair Wages working group at Global level, Marijke confirmed to be part of it together with Bertil and that she will report soon on the main topics discussed.

5. News from the Office, including update on the first year of GS implementation

The Coordinator presented quickly the general update shared with the Board members beforehand. Without going into the details, she gave some figures regarding the membership situation as of December 2014 as well as some feedback on fundraising, Human resources and main topics discussed at Global level.

- **Membership:** WFTO-E counts 77 members as of December 2014 (55 FTOs, 16 FTSO, 6 FTN)
- **Global topics:** A new MoA with WFTO Global regarding the decentralisation fees was signed beginning of January and the biannual report was also sent to Global for consideration.
- **Fundraising:** the proposal submitted in September 2014 to the “Fonds Venture Philantropy” was unfortunately not successful, whereas the one on the European Year for Development (EYD) submitted the 26th of January to Concord is still under consideration.
- **Project management:** the audit report for the 2nd year of activity of the Vote4FT project went well. WFTO-E was the first organisation to go through the audit and to send the report to FI.

6. 2014 Balance and accounts

The Coordinator shared with the Board the first figures on the accounts and balance 2014 in the Belgian format as elaborated by the bookkeeper. The figures are still provisional but they already showed a surplus of around 1500€ net for 2014. Considering the bad situation presented to the members in the AGM last year, this result was much appreciated.

In terms of membership fees, 72 members out of 77 paid their fees in 2014, showing an increase commitment towards the organisation.

On a side note, the Coordinator however stressed the delay of the EC payment for the Vote4FT project and the hope to receive it within the month.

Once figures are finalised, the Coordinator will share them with the Board for final approval and will ask to the auditor to express a favourable opinion on the financial asset of the organisation, based on the audit carried out on the Vote4FT project.

7. 2015 Budget

The coordinator gave an update on the budget foreseen for 2015, which includes now the 2 years EC project focused on the Milan WFTW, the Vote4FT (its 3rd and last year of activity) and the eventual project on the EYD, whose result should be available end of February.

WFTO-E office will then manage in 2015 2/3 projects that could allow the balance to be kept positive.

8. The Communication Strategy

Starting from a short PowerPoint presentation, the Coordinator gave an overview of the WFTO-E mission and the main objectives to be reached in the next 3 years: identity, engagement, and enlargement. Based on this overall pictures, she circulated a detailed document, elaborated by the sub-committee on Communication (Francesca, Tadeusz and Emilie), including an analysis on the main stakeholders and communication tools. According to each target group, either internal or external, a clear description of needs, outcomes per year were presented.

The Board welcomed the document and gave some inputs on the way ahead. The Board shared some ideas on the overall goal and encouraged the Coordinator to better define priorities and action plans per target group. Additional comments on the document will be sent to the Coordinator by the 9th of February and based on them; a new document will be presented and discussed by the Board in the next meeting on the 23rd of February. Main objective is to present to the AGM the agreed strategy and the action plan for the 1st year.

9. Towards the 2015 WFTO-E AGM:

The WFTO-E AGM will take place the 26th of May from 3pm to 6pm in Milan and it will be mainly focused on legal requirements and global issues.

Hence, the Coordinator will send to the members one month in advance all the documents to be approved/discussed during the AGM. Francesca also reminded that in addition to the legal and decisions, the agenda will also include:

- the formal approval of the role of Bertil Hogberg as Board member (he was co-opted in October by the Board),
- the election of a new Board member (the mandate of Tadeusz will terminate),
- the election of the new “Global Board member presented by the region” (Malcolm will end his mandate in April 2015).

As agreed in the last face-to-face meeting in October, the Coordinator presented to the Board a proposal for the revision of the bylaws. This will allow WFTO-E to fully align to WFTO with regard in particular the distinction between provision and “registered/guaranteed” members. As already anticipated in the last AGM, WFTO-E doesn’t have so far this distinction and this situation creates due to the two different procedures for the 2 organisations.

Overall, the Board approved the changes suggested by the Coordinator and double checked already by the Chief Executive at Global. They just suggested mentioning more clearly the linkage between the fees and the right to vote.

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As a next step, the coordinator will present a formal version of the revision to be approved by the Board together with all the other documents for the AGM in a specific meeting on the 21st of April.

WFTO-E representative: the Board discussed about the future Global Board member to be presented by the region. Everyone agreed that someone from the Board would be the best person to take up this role and report on it. Having already Rudi in the Global Board, Italian and from the same organisation, Giorgio expressed his willingness not to candidate himself, stressing however his availability to take up this role if no other candidatures will be presented. Sophie was encouraged to think about this role and to discuss it internally within her organisation. In order to help the Board to take this decision, the Coordinator shared with the others the “job description” and the main role of this person, as stated in the global constitution.

10. Follow up of WFTO-E questions to Global:

- “first buyer issue”: feedback from Global on WFTO-E last proposal

The coordinator quickly gave an overview of the main steps took by the WFTO-E Board on the issue and mentioned the letter that the Board sent to Global on the 3rd of November raising up some questions and suggestions on the topic.

Considering the lack of a formal answer from Global and the fact that some contracts have already been signed, the Board decided to write a new letter to the Global Board complaining for this decision making process. Everyone agreed to send the letter within the week in order to allow the Global Board to discuss it during their meeting starting on the 7th of February.

- “update of the Charter of FT principles”:

This issue was better discussed and deepened on the 29th of January. It was mainly linked to the request from Global to organise a workshop during the Biannual Conference in Milan on the update of the Charter of FT principles.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This topic was initially raised by the FTT, which wanted to have a clear definition of what is FT in the elaboration of their guidelines. WFTO-E Board took up this topic, identifying a need for Global and FI to update the charter, which does not take into account the different certification schemes now present at European level and is indeed outdated. Based on it, the Board wrote a letter to Global asking them to start a fruitful discussion with the main actors. To this aim, the next Conference in Milan seems to be a perfect occasion to open this debate and Global formally proposed WFTO-E to organise a workshop on this issue.

Taking the above information into account, the Board stressed the crucial role that WFTO Global needs to have in the debate in terms of content but at the same time agreed to support WFTO in the organisation of this workshop and in the preparation of some introductory documents on:

- why are we opening the issues of defining what are FT products (charter, history of FTT campaign guidelines and letter to Global to take up this process)

The Board also agreed to set up a more detailed discussion with Global to have a clear division of responsibility. Moreover, everyone agreed that the PFCE guidelines on international certifications schemes should be part of this debate.

29th January

11. Next Board meeting dates

The Board agreed in the next Board meeting dates:

- 23 February (10-12 am): on communication strategy and Charter of FT principles
- 17 March (3-5 pm): on communication strategy and Charter of FT principles
- 21 April (3-5pm): to approve documents for the AGM.

12. The Milan World Fair Trade Week (23rd-31st May 2015) and the “Milan EU project” which we are partner

The Board mainly focused on two issues:

- How to promote the WFTW and encourage European members to attend the event?
- Round table on the respective plans for the participation.

The President gave an overview of the main events:

1. WFTO Biannual Conference (24th – 27th of May) in the Klima hotel. Early Registration by the 1st of March.

2. FT Fair (28th to 31st of May). There will be 200 stands and ideally 1000 producers. Also social economy organizations will be present. Apart from the 1st day b-to-b the other days are open to the public.
3. FT fashion show (26th of May)
4. FT cooking
5. International FT Symposium (3 days from Friday to Sunday). Main responsible is the Polytechnic of Milan. Last day will be inside the Expo. Entrance fee is 300€.

Considering the low registration of European members, the Board raised some concerns regarding the high level of the Conference fees and decided to share this feeling with Global in a specific letter.

While the travel expenses and the per diem for Board members will be most likely covered by WFTO-E, the general problem regarding the attendance at the Conference and at the European AGM was assessed. The Board so decided to circulate a short survey to the members to evaluate the interest of the members in the WFTW and their plans for Milan. Moreover, the Board also agreed to circulate a letter on the WFTW and the AGM soon to encourage the members to participate.

Regarding the participation of the Board members, the majority confirmed its plan to arrive the 24th of May. A face-to-face Board meeting will be then organised the 24th before dinner to discuss AGM and Global issues.

13. WFTO-E Market access strategy

Based on a first draft circulated beforehand, Marijke shared her reflections on the main problems of the market access, especially for the worldshops.

Before going into the details, the Board agreed to define better the main purpose of this research and to focus on two main mainstreams: how the GS and the label can contribute to the market access. In line with this, the analysis of the WFTO label and its positioning, the domestic FT, the Charter of FT principles are important topics to be considered.

14. The “Fair Trade public recognition” issue:

The Board members shared information on the current situation in their countries and how FT is perceived by the national laws:

Italy: the discussion started in 2006 when most of the members were not in favour of a public regulation on FT due to the high risk of political manipulation on what is FT. The organic regulation is in this sense seen either in a negative side, or in a positive when considering the promotion of the organic products thanks to the EU recognition. In Italy the process of FT recognition at national level has already started and FT actors want to be recognised as part of the economy while stressing their difference from the others. Agices, Assobotteghe and Fair Trade Italy signed a proposal to ask the Parliament to recognise FT organisations.

France: the French context is quite different from the others. There is no debate around this topic since everything needs to be part of a legal framework in order to be promoted and effective. The process to recognise what is FT within the French law and which labels are FT started 15 years ago. The legal definition of FT is connected with the PFCE. In 2005 there was the first law defining what is FT (North-South FT). In 2014, a new discussion on FT definition for North-North relationship was launched. The PFCE agreed to extend this definition, but protecting what is FT in terms of price, traceability, producers organisations. Now the “decret d’application” with the clear

definition/criteria of North FT is ready. Moreover, France is also in the process of recognising publically some private FT labels. This could support municipalities to do tender in favour of FT labels which will be perceived as public. In this sense, French authorities and FT actors worked together to define what is FT standard labels.

Belgium: FT actors and politicians started this discussion that was at one point suspended. This topic was also raised within the Belgian Fair Trade Federation, worrying about the borders and the different legislations that there might be in several countries.

Poland: politicians ignored FT and they don't care about this topic. The European level is, in this sense, extremely important.

NL: there is no public regulation but a bottom-up approach.

15. Following of the debate about “the Fair Trade public recognition issue”

After this first session, the Board agreed that this topic should be discussed also within the FTAO and recognised in the public procurement directives a first opportunity to encourage national entity to do something more in support of FT.

In the future weeks, the Board agreed to work with the FTAO to encourage members to advocate for the transposition of the public procurement directive at national level.

16. How to proceed towards a “WFTO-E 3 years Strategic Plan”

The Board agreed to dedicate one full day to discuss about the strategy of the organisation for the next 3 year in a face-to-face meeting in October. This would allow the Board to present something to the members early 2016 and to approve the strategy in the next AGM in 2016.

17. AOB

- Youth ambassadors: The Board briefly discussed about the proposal from WFTO Asia to have some youth ambassadors. They welcomed the proposal, although the majority would rather push for a bottom-up approach which will take into account the youth platform and movement on FT already present in Europe.
- WFTDay, the Board started sharing some of their plans to celebrate this important annual moment.

END.