

Minutes of the WFTO-Europe 2015 AGM

26 May 2015, 14:30-18:00
Klima hotel, Milan, Italy

1. Introduction

Welcome and introductory words by Giorgio Dal Fiume (President of WFTO-Europe).

2. Quorum: Members present or represented by proxy

Since there were 72 registered members and 42 members were present or represented (inc. 26 present and 16 proxies), there was a quorum. The following members were present or represented:

Altraqualità (IT), ARGE Weltläden (AT), Artisan Sel (FR), Association Romande des Magasins du Monde (CH), Associazione Botteghe del Mondo (IT), AGICES (IT), BAFTS (UK), Centrum Mondiaal (NL), Coordinadora Estatal del Comercio Justo (ES)*, CTM Agrofair (IT)*, CTM Altromercato (IT), Dwp eG (DE), Ecoffins (UK)*, El Puente (DE), EFTA (NL), EZA Fairer Handel GmbH (AT), FairMail Cards B.V. (NL)*, Fair Trade Czech Republic (CZ)*, Fair Trade Denmark (DK)*, the Fair Trade Furniture Co Ltd (UK)*, Fair Monkey Ekonomisk Förening (SE)*, Fair Trade Scotland Ltd (UK)*, Fair Seeds (DK)*, Fédération Artisans du Monde (FR), Fundacion Adsis - Equi Mercado (SP)*, Fundacion COPADE España (SP), GEPA The Fair Trade Company (DE), IM Swedish Development Partner (SE), La Maison Fair Trade AB (SE)*, Libero Mondo scs. Arl. (IT), Oxfam Intermón (ES), Oxfam-Magasins du Monde (BE), Plate-Forme pour le Commerce Équitable (FR)*, Polish Fair Trade Association (PL), Stichting Sawa Hasa (NL)*, Shared Earth UK Ltd. (UK), Shared Interest Society Ltd (UK), The House of Fair Trade (SE), The Swedish Association of Fair Trade Retailers (SE)*, Tuyu BV (NL), Tahoua Import (NL)*, Weltladen-Dachverband e.V. (DE).

* = Voting by Proxy

3. Election/Appointment of the Chair and Secretary

The Board proposed Bertil Högberg as Chair and Francesca Giubilo as Secretariat. Approved unanimously.

4. Election/Appointment of the Voting Committee

Malcolm Curtis (Shared Interest Society Ltd), Klaus Woeldecke (Weltladen-Dachverband e.V.) and Francesca Giubilo volunteered to be part of the Voting Committee. Approved unanimously.

5. Agenda

The Agenda was approved unanimously.

6. Approval of the Minutes from the 2014 AGM, in Elspeet (The Netherlands)

Approved unanimously, without any comments.

7. Presentation of 2014 Accounts and Balance

WFTO-Europe Treasurer Bertil Högberg with the support of the Coordinator presented the Accounts and Balance 2014. The Treasurer stressed that WFTO-Europe's main sources of income in 2014 continued to be membership fees, whose differences over the past 2 years reflect mainly the increase of membership fees for 2013 due to the alignment process, where all Global members based in Europe automatically became European members. As a second point, the Treasurer highlighted that the budget in 2014 also relied on external funding, including grants from the European Union and from the Belgian Technical Cooperation. 2014 was the most important year for the EC project "Advocating for EU Fair Trade Policies" due to the EP election in May, and this intense activity was reflected in the higher level of external funding received for the implementation of activities linked to the project in 2014.

With regard to expenses, Bertil Högberg underlined that core costs of the organization continued to be human resources and networking fees. The Treasurer finally pointed out the good management of finance in the organization, which counts on the support of an accountant from 2014. In order to fulfil the requirement of the EC grant, the organisation successfully passed the audit of the project and also received the favourable opinion of the auditor on the 2014 overall accounts and balance.

8. Approval of 2014 Accounts and Balance; Discharge of the Board of Directors.

The 2014 Accounts and Balance were approved unanimously, without changes. The AGM discharged the Board of Directors of their responsibilities.

9. Presentation and discussion of the Annual Report 2014/15 and of the Work Plan 2015/16

Both of the documents were presented by the President with the support of the Coordinator. While Giorgio Dal Fiume mentioned the main achievements of the 2014 in terms of activities, Francesca Giubilo went through the Annual Report more in details, highlighting the new structure of the report, which will be published for the first time, once approved. The AGM welcomed the report and congratulated the WFTO-Europe Board and staff for the great document realised.

Concerning the Work Plan, the Coordinator stressed the new format of the document, including a column on timing and main responsible per action. This will allow members to assess the implementation of the work plan during the year. The presentation of the Work Plan was followed by an open discussion with the members, who asked for more clarifications on the role of the Region in the implementation of the Guarantee System. A proposal to list all the unverified suppliers of the European Fair Trade Organisations was also brought up by Birgit Calix from EZA (AT) and taken into account for the final vote. As a final note, the Coordinator encouraged members to communicate more about their own campaigns and activities, in order to create more synergies and coordinate better the work at European level, for instance for the World Fair

Trade Day. Market access was also stressed by the members as an important area to be better explored, via also the European Committee on Worldshops and Retailers.

10. Presentation of the 2016 Provisional Budget (incl. fee for 2016)

Bertil Högberg presented the 2016 Provisional Budget, stressing the need to fundraise to cover for core expenses and to make the organisation more sustainable in the future. No increase of membership fees were foreseen for 2016. Despite this, one member particularly stressed the importance of considering this aspect for the following AGM to give more support to the organisation and allow WFTO-Europe to provide more services for the members.

11. Presentation of the Communication strategy

Tadeusz Makulski together with Francesca Giubilo gave an overview of the 3-year communication strategy presented to the members and whose main goal is to make WFTO-Europe the main referent of Fair Trade in Europe. They thanked Oxfam-Magasins du Monde and Plate-Forme pour le Commerce Equitable for the training session provided on communication, and stressed how this document is only a first step of an overall strategy that will be presented the following year. Although the general satisfaction, some of the members pointed out that the strategy was very ambitious and asked for more clarifications regarding the overall goal of the strategy and the connection with the Fair Trade Advocacy Office (FTAO) and WFTO Global. Following up on these remarks, the Board and the Coordinator affirmed that the implementation of the strategy had already started and that every year, based on the overall assessment of the previous one; the plan will be revised accordingly to make it more and more realistic. Regarding the overall goal, the Board also explained to the members its vision of WFTO-Europe and its wish to see the organisation being recognised as an important actor in Europe on Fair Trade. This is fully in line with WFTO Global main goals and will also give more power to the FTAO to carry out its own advocacy activities.

12. Presentation of the revision of the Bylaws

The President and the Coordinator presented the revision of the bylaws as a normal consequence of the alignment process agreed in 2013. The changes will allow WFTO-Europe to fully align the policy regarding the “registered” members and so those who are entitled to vote, to WFTO Global. No objections or comments were raised up on this issue by the members.

13. Presentation of Bertil Högberg, Board member co-opted in October 2014, and the new candidates to the Board of Directors

Bertil Högberg, co-opted by the Board in October 2014, and Tadeusz Makulski, who officially proposed his candidature for the second and last mandate as Director, presented themselves.

14. Presentation of the European candidate to the WFTO Global Board of Directors

Sophie Tack was officially presented as the European candidate to the WFTO Global Board of Directors.

15. Presentation and discussion of WFTO-Europe positions and comments (incl. possible proposed amendments) on Global documents and issues to be discussed in WFTO Global AGM (May 27)

Four main points were raised up either for information or for approval, on Global documents and issues:

- **Decentralisation fees:** Giorgio Dal Fiume and Francesca Giubilo informed the members about the ongoing discussions with Global and the other four Regions regarding the 100€ per member that each Region receives from Global to perform membership and monitoring tasks on behalf of WFTO Global. Looking at the huge workload that these tasks consist on, members were informed of the common decision of all the Regions to ask for an increase of this fee to Global. Further discussions will take place in the following months.
- **Advocacy:** Taking into account the WFTO advocacy strategy to be voted by the Global AGM, Sophie Tack stressed the importance of having such a document and the need for the Advocacy and Campaigning Committee to then develop a concrete work plan to implement it.
- **Country network:** Giorgio Dal Fiume shared with the members the outcome of the “closed” workshop on Fair Trade network: a resolution/recommendation to ask Global to set up a Working Group to explore the relevance of the country network in the Global structure. Considering the complexity of the topic for European actors, WFTO-Europe did not agree on a common position on it.
- **Resolution on gender:** Patrick Veillard from Oxfam Magasins-du-Monde and also member of the Global Working Group on Gender, informed the members about a resolution that the workshop on gender decided to present at the Global AGM asking for an Action plan to implement gender policies across the Regions.
- **Resolution/recommendation on “domestic” Fair Trade:** Following up the workshop on “domestic” Fair Trade, Andrea Fütterer from GEPA stressed the importance of the topic and the need for WFTO-Europe to ask Global to take a big leap towards a clear position of WFTO on this issue.

16. Important decisions/votes:

a) Approval of the 2016 Provisional Budget (incl. fee 2016)

Approved unanimously.

b) Approval of the Work Plan 2014/15

The AGM approved unanimously the additional sentence “to list all the unverified suppliers of the European FTOs” in the first chapter of the Work Plan, focused on Credibility and Identity. The whole Work Plan, including the additional point, was approved unanimously.

c) Approval revision of the Bylaws

Approved unanimously.

d) Ratification of Bertil Högberg as Board member and nomination of Board of Directors

Members unanimously approved Bertil Högberg - who had been co-opted as the 7th Board member in October 2014 - as a new Board member. Members unanimously approved as well the candidature of Tadeusz Makulski, who re-applied for the position of Director in the WFTO-Europe Board for its second and last mandate.

e) Approval of the European candidate for the WFTO Global Board of Directors

Sophie Tack was approved unanimously.

f) Approval of WFTO-Europe positions and comments on Global documents and issues

WFTO-Europe agreed to support the resolution on gender and to present a new resolution/recommendation on “domestic” Fair Trade, aimed at setting up a Working Group to follow-up on this topic.

17. Any Other Business (AOB).

None.

The Chair thanked members and officially closed the AGM.

END.