



Event: “Fair wins! How producers and traders can benefit from trade with fair products”

Date: Tuesday 18th February, 2014

Welcome speech by Eckhard Bock, Berlin Senate Department for Economics, Technology and Research

Mrs Laufer; Members of Berlin Parliament; Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the State Office for Development Cooperation I would like to welcome you to the Senate Department of Economy, Technology and Research.

The Berlin State Office for Development Cooperation – abbreviated LEZ – has supported initiatives and activities on the subject of fair trade over a long period of time. Since the new development policy guidelines were approved by the Berlin Senate in 2012, we have been focusing not only on consumers buying fair products and on global learning, but also on enterprises, skilled crafts and the business sector.

In this area, the Berlin Chamber of Small Business and Skilled Crafts (HWK Berlin) with the CSR advising office is a major and competent partner.

Furthermore, the chamber of commerce and other associations are regularly active in promoting CSR venues. For 10 years, the Stiftung Warentest has carried out practical enquiries and testing on products, especially concerning the social responsibility of companies and reports in detail on production methods in the South.

With regards to this, there is a common and important topic: Sustainability and social standards are meaningful – companies which are innovative, up to date and apply latest developments, like to show their products. Additional achievements should be appreciated and rewarded.

This is not usual however, even though there are plenty of good approaches. Fair Trade is not a small business any more – Fairtrade products can be found on the shelves of big markets and customers are more and more conscious of Fairtrade products.

The European Union supports fair trade and has introduced legislation as recently as January 2014:

“Criteria and conditions relating to trading and its conditions can for instance refer to the fact that the product concerned is of fair trade origin, including the requirement to pay a minimum price and price premium to producers. Contract performance conditions pertaining to environmental considerations might include, for example, the delivery, package and disposal of products, and in respect of works and services contracts, waste minimization or resource efficiency.” PE-CONS 74/13 S. 67

The European Guidelines must be implemented in national law. Hopefully these positive aspects are seen and applied in national parliaments.

Together with actors from the three countries - Denmark, Austria and the Czech Republic - we are involved in the project TriNet-Global, which is financially supported by the EU. We want to support and enhance networking with local authorities, the business sector and universities.

Besides enhancing networks, we are supporting fair trade activities and CSR approaches at universities. During a study tour to Ghana two weeks ago, the project partners had the opportunity to see fair production sites, including cocoa farming, banana plantations, fruit production and weaving of fair baskets.

Fair trade and fair production was impressive, because the farmers and workers could decide on premium payments by themselves in a democratic way and could choose whether they wanted to build schools or give the money to other social institutions e.g. hospitals. The guarantee alone, that at least a part of the production is to be sold on fair conditions, could lead to better working conditions. Even companies in banana plantations, which did not commit to fair trade, were forced to adjust working standards.

It has to be seen, that only 30% of the total amount of cocoa production in the world largest fair cooperative goes to the fair market to England – it is still possible to motivate other companies to buy more Fairtrade cocoa. In comparison to Great Britain, Germany is still lacking behind. This is one reason for the activity of INKOTA in Berlin, an NGO that supports the initiative “Make Chocolate Fair”.

In other countries and economic branches there is still plenty to do:

We know that there is still a long way to go in order to implement sustainable standards and fair working conditions. An example where implementation is required is textile production in Southeast Asia. Implementing environmental standards would improve working conditions dramatically, for example in production and colouring processes.

The population living near to production sites would benefit from higher treatment standards of water and air pollution, since a clean environment is most important for a healthy livelihood. Not only do we need high tech solutions, but adequate and financial frameworks regarding approaches must also be developed.

We are therefore delighted, that the Berlin Chamber of Small Business and Skilled Crafts with its centre for technological competence supports innovative activities and fosters international cooperation and the exchange of practical knowledge.

There are two other activities in Berlin I want to mention:

The Senate Department of Urban Development and Environment and the Senate Department of Economy, Technology and Research have announced that they will voluntarily realise sustainability standards in public procurement even below the threshold value of 10 Td.€. It is in the interest of the Senate Department of Economy, to support sustainability standards also in the public procurement directly.

Secondly: The Import Shop Fair „Bazaar Berlin“ - a Fair Trade Market - will be established. The fair will take place on 12-16.11.2014. Aside from an area for commercial fair trade companies, there will be also a place for global learning and education next to it. Pupils can receive information on global learning and fair trade. This opportunity takes the tradition of BENBI into account, which were organized parallel to the Import Shop Fair in the past. This activity will be carried out by EPIZ, which is engaged by Engagement Global. It is estimated that along with 35 fair trade exhibitors, there may be approximately 10 global learning stands. I am glad, that Mrs Maabrook from the Fair Berlin is here and that she is supporting these activities directly.

We want to support international cooperation and with this also development policy goals, while fair trade and Fair Trade Towns are promoted. We have experienced a very good response at our meeting in this room on 5.2.2014, where we discussed communal development cooperation with district politicians and NGOs. At this event we broadened understanding for fair activities in districts.

When we hear positive examples from skilled craftsmen engaged in fair trade today, we should encourage them to continue their activities and encourage others to follow the example.

I look forward to your contributions and hope that we will exchange experiences on a regular basis. Thank you for your attention.



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