



# ***LOCAL FAIR TRADE IN BELGIUM AND EUROPE***

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# I. INTRODUCTION: DAIRY PRODUCERS CLAIM THEIR PLACE IN THE DEBATE ON FAIR TRADE

Flashback: 2009, the milk crisis is in full swing in Europe. Shocking images strike the mind. In Belgium, millions of litres of milk are being dumped on the meadows by farmers on the verge of bankruptcy.

The reason? Prices offered to farmers were below production costs. Nothing has changed today. Farmers in our regions are therefore also demanding a fair price and trade. Belgian consumers are in favour of it. According to the Fair Trade Barometer 2020 published by the Trade for Development Centre, 73% of people living in Belgium consider that fair trade should also include products from Belgian or European farmers.

So a kind of trade that is well known to the Belgian public, but confined to South-North trade, is interfering in the debate on our agricultural policies.

The fair trade approach now applies to different Belgian and European producers who consider their farm as a living ecosystem and who offer high-quality, healthy and nutritious products that respect raw materials and consumers.

We are witnessing a four-fold movement: at the same time the appearance of specific local fair trade actors, such as Fairebel or the label Prix Juste Producteur, the emergence of local initiatives by the "historic" fair trade organisations, the opening of different international labels to local fair trade and the launch of the 'Biogarantie Belgium' label that has adopted certain fair trade criteria.

The following pages aim to bring together, in a non-exhaustive way, some initiatives present in Belgium (most of them members of BFTF, the Belgian Fair Trade Federation) and in Europe whose practices could be qualified as local fair trade. The document ends with a typology of actors, a transversal analysis of similarities and differences in terms of production processes, price fixing, etc., as well as a few points of attention, such as the multiplication of labels, a blurred image of fair trade, the possible need for legislation, the need to take into account animal welfare or the cohabitation of "Southern" and "Northern" products.

*Samuel Poos*

## II. LOCAL FAIR TRADE IN BELGIUM

### LOCAL INITIATIVES OF ORGANISATIONS SPECIALISING IN SOUTH-NORTH FAIR TRADE

#### *Paysans du Nord and Open Food Network at Oxfam-Magasins du monde*

##### Paysans du Nord

Since 2013, Oxfam-Magasins du monde (world shops) has been offering consumers a range of sustainable agricultural products from various Belgian and European suppliers under the name Paysans du Nord<sup>1</sup> (farmers in the north): Ethiquable, Libera Terra in Italy, etc. These products complement the existing range of fair trade products.

"The idea has been running for a long time now and several world shops have been operating for years as depots for organic vegetable basket subscriptions," says Sophie Tack, head of awareness campaigns and partnerships.



##### Paysans du Nord Charter<sup>2</sup>

Oxfam-Magasins du monde's 'Paysans du Nord' Charter, which applies to European products, includes basic criteria (conditions for exclusion) and evolving ones.

Through this initiative, Oxfam-Magasins du monde intends to participate in a process of democratisation of the economy and food sovereignty in the interests of farmers and consumers.

<b>Producers and method of production</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small-scale family farms that generate mainly local employment</li> <li>• An agricultural approach that aims to feed the local population</li> <li>• Low-intensity, non-industrial agriculture</li> <li>• An agro-ecological production system</li> <li>• Respect for decent working conditions corresponding to national legislation in force or the minimum standards established by the ILO, whichever is the higher standard</li> </ul>
<b>Producer organisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The collective organisation of producers, who apply cooperative values</li> <li>• A transparent organisation that guarantees the traceability of production</li> <li>• A commercially independent organisation</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.oxfammagasinsdumonde.be/blog/2013/09/16/les-apports-de-la-demarche-paysans-du-nord-au-commerce-equitable-doxfam-magasins-du-monde/#.X3B0F-exVPY>

<sup>2</sup> Charte Paysans du Nord, Oxfam-Magasins du monde approach to promoting farmer agriculture.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The involvement of producers in a collective quality approach, which they control, to enhance the value of their production</li> </ul>
<b>Products</b>	<p><b>Fresh products</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only fruit and vegetables in fresh baskets in the shops</li> <li>Compliance with the FASFC standards for the storage of products in world shops</li> <li>The local teams are the direct contacts of the producers</li> </ul> <p><b>Processed products</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Processed products are stored and distributed centrally.</li> <li>The sale of processed products does not lead to competition between producer organisations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complementarity between products from the North and the South</li> <li>- Priority to local products over European products</li> </ul> </li> <li>In mixed processed products, ingredients that can be fair trade must be fair trade ingredients</li> <li>The products are primarily processed by producer organisations</li> </ul>
<b>Commercial relationship/partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fair prices are guaranteed for producers</li> <li>Access to pre-financing is provided to producers</li> <li>Oxfam-Magasins du monde's long-term contractual commitment to producers</li> <li>Oxfam-Magasins du monde provides transparent information to producers and consumers</li> <li>Evolutionary criterion: Oxfam-Magasins du monde would like producers to initiate local projects to serve the local farming sector</li> </ul>
<b>Supply chain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The value chain includes a limited number of operators</li> <li>Traceability of production is guaranteed</li> <li>The environmental impact of product packaging and transport is limited</li> <li>Evolutionary criterion: a guarantee system involving all the stakeholders could be used in the future to give credibility to the approach</li> </ul>
<b>Criteria specific to indirect suppliers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indirect suppliers are part of the social and solidarity economy</li> <li>Indirect suppliers are organisations that respect workers' rights</li> <li>Indirect suppliers are economically viable organisations</li> <li>Indirect suppliers are transparent organisations</li> <li>Evolutionary criterion: Indirect providers are democratic organisations</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement towards Oxfam-Magasins du monde</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indirect suppliers can provide information on the supply chain</li> <li>Indirect suppliers allow Oxfam-Magasins du monde to contact and conduct direct actions with partners</li> <li>Indirect suppliers comply with contractual conditions</li> <li>Indirect suppliers have a system for monitoring and evaluating producers</li> <li>Evolutionary criterion: Indirect suppliers will be encouraged to use an external and independent guarantee system</li> </ul>

### Open Food Network Belgium



Since 2018, Oxfam-Magasins du monde also facilitates the Open Food Network Belgium<sup>3</sup>, a cooperative platform of producers and consumers.

"Sellers (farms, cooperatives, joint buying groups) can set up an online platform to facilitate the daily management of orders. The platform is intuitive, flexible and the Open Food Network community is ready to support them. Buyers (community canteens, retailers, consumers) can buy products online via the list of open suppliers or via the interactive map. This has the advantage of being completely transparent as buyers have an overview of all suppliers and a description of the products." <sup>4</sup> As of 16 June 2020, the platform had 213 producers, 95 suppliers, 672 buyers and 4076 orders.

### Miel Maya Honing



During the 2019 edition of Fair Trade Week, Miel Maya Honing<sup>5</sup> launched a box of world honey. What is special about this box is that it is composed of two jars of organic and fair trade honey from the South and a jar of Belgian honey.

Five beekeepers supply honey for these boxes and represent, with the exception of Luxembourg, all the provinces in Wallonia. The "Cafetal" and "Wildflower" honeys come from cooperatives located in Chiapas, in the south of Mexico, and Gran Chaco, in the very north of Argentina. The Walloon honeys have not been mixed: the beekeeper who filled the jar is identified on the box. The imported honeys come from certified organic and fair trade cooperatives.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.openfoodnetwork.be/>

<sup>4</sup> Magasins du monde-Oxfam, presentation of the Open Food Network: <https://www.oxfammagasinsdumonde.be/acheter-equitable/open-food-network-belgium/#.Xui5a3uxVPY>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.maya.be/>



<sup>6</sup> See the interview of Benoît Olivier, director of Miel Maya Honing, conducted by the Trade for Development Centre: <https://www.tdc-enabel.be/en/2020/06/12/miel-maya-honing-for-a-sustainable-and-fair-happy-culture/>



## Oxfam Fair Trade

Oxfam Fair Trade and Oxfam-Wereldwinkels - both part of Oxfam Belgium – look beyond borders when it comes to the fight for fair trade. The challenges faced by agricultural producers here and elsewhere are indeed very similar: climate change, price volatility, income insecurity and even food insecurity. This is why products from European farmers are also part of Oxfam Fair Trade's range of fair trade products, which has developed a framework for partnerships with producers in the "North".

### Framework for Partnerships with Northern Producers

 <p><b>Guidelines for partners</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The partner is preferably a social economy organisation with collective action.</li> <li>• The partner shares Oxfam Belgium's policy analysis and mission.</li> <li>• The partner practises sustainable, small-scale agriculture or buys from suppliers who respect these principles.</li> <li>• The partner is independent on the market. The organisation does not enter into exclusive contracts, creates as much added value as possible within the organisation and avoids subcontracting where possible.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Guidelines for the production process</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traceability is the basis of a sustainable chain. The partners therefore trace their chain as far as possible.</li> <li>• The partner does not use genetically modified organisms (GMOs).</li> <li>• The partner minimises the environmental impact. This means that they choose organic farming and agro-ecology, a green packaging policy, renewable energies and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.</li> <li>• The partner respects animal rights.</li> <li>• The partner opts for a short chain (local employment, bringing in production from local sources) and respects the existing balance of local markets.</li> <li>• The partner respects the working conditions prescribed by Belgian legislation, relevant European regulations and ILO conventions.</li> <li>• The partner applies the principle of non-discrimination to all its activities.</li> </ul>

Since 2018, Oxfam Fair Trade has been working with De Drie Wilgen to create a 100% fresh, sustainable and fair-trade Belgian **apple juice** from orchards converting to organic farming. The price Oxfam pays for this apple juice is a fair price, agreed with the fruit growers. A correct minimum price is guaranteed at all times.

In 2019, Oxfam Fair Trade launched the Fair Trade **beers** JUSTE<sup>7</sup>. These beers are brewed by the Brasserie des Légendes in Ath with organic

barley and hops. Much of the barley is grown near the brewery. Master brewer Pierre Delcoigne and his father select old varieties that do not require pesticides. The hops are also grown in Belgium. The beers therefore bear the label "Belgian hops". The beers also carry the "Fairtrade" label, because Belgian ingredients are combined with Fairtrade-certified ingredients: jasmine rice from Thailand, cocoa beans from Peru and quinoa from Bolivia.

### *Ethiquable*

In 2011, prompted by the Confédération Paysanne, an agricultural union, Ethiquable pledged to support French farmers within the framework of the "Paysans d'ici" charter based on the South-North fair trade model. Even if this charter is today integrated into the "bio-équitable en France" label (see below), it is still used as a reference by Ethiquable Benelux for "North" products, outside France, sold under its terra etica<sup>8</sup> brand: pasta from ancient varieties of Sicilian wheat, specifically Belgian products such as jams and syrup from Liège, etc. "*Consumers are showing a growing interest in local products and we need to encourage contacts with local farmers so that organic and fair trade products can take the place of conventional products on their plates,*" says Vincent De Grelle, co-director of Ethiquable Benelux.<sup>9</sup>



Jan Hellemans (De Drie Wilgen) © Oxfam Fair Trade



Master brewer Pierre Delcoigne (right) and his father (left) (Brasserie des Légendes)



Pasta and mackerel jam from the brand terra etica

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.oxfamfairtrade.be/en/products/food/other-drinks/beer/juste-blond-beer-33-cl/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.terraetica.be/>

<sup>9</sup> Read a Trade for Development Centre interview with Vincent De Grelle: <https://www.tdc-enabel.be/fr/2019/09/01/ethiquable-2/>

### The Local Farmers' / terra etica's Charter of Ethiquable

The Ethiquable Farmers' Charter (summarised<sup>10</sup> below) includes a series of criteria relating to agricultural practices (agro-ecology and organic agriculture), organisation (cooperative models – family farming) and local products. In addition, farmers must be able to present a local development project that goes beyond the mere marketing of their products. In turn, Ethiquable is committed to guaranteeing fair prices, pre-financing, the allocation of a premium to the project and full transparency.

#### Small-scale local farming

<b>Producers and method of production</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• small family farms that generate family and/or local employment</li> <li>• certified organic farms</li> <li>• agro-ecological practices</li> <li>• an agricultural activity that enhances the value of the territory and local exchanges</li> </ul>
<b>Producer organisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharing cooperative values</li> <li>• guarantee of transparency of information and traceability of production</li> <li>• commercial independence</li> <li>• existence of a local and collective development project that goes beyond the marketing activity</li> </ul>
<b>Products and processing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• priority to local products, specific know-how and typical flavours</li> <li>• organic, local, natural and fair trade raw materials</li> <li>• natural techniques preserving the flavours</li> <li>• local processing, preferably carried out by the producer organisation itself</li> </ul>

#### Fair Trade

<b>Fair and transparent business conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• direct trade relations</li> <li>• commitment of at least 3 years via a partnership contract</li> <li>• fair price established in consultation</li> <li>• the largest share (at least 40%) of the price paid by the consumer goes to the producers</li> <li>• transparent information flow on price structure</li> <li>• payment of a development bonus</li> <li>• pre-financing can be considered if necessary</li> </ul>
<b>Local development project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• long-term local project that goes beyond the commercial act</li> <li>• active involvement of producers and Ethiquable in this project</li> <li>• it serves the interests of producers and a territory</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an annual meeting is held to carry out a self-evaluation of the reciprocal commitments of the partners</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> Extract from Ethiquable's Paysans d'ici charter, available in full at:  
[https://www.ethiquable.coop/sites/www.ethiquable.coop/files/la\\_charte\\_paysans\\_dici\\_ethiquable\\_0.pdf](https://www.ethiquable.coop/sites/www.ethiquable.coop/files/la_charte_paysans_dici_ethiquable_0.pdf)

## SPECIFIC LOCAL FAIR TRADE ORGANISATIONS IN BELGIUM

### BFTF's North-North approach (Belgian Fair Trade Federation)



Based on the observation that "North-South fair trade and North-North fair trade complement each other more than they oppose each other", BFTF<sup>11</sup>, the Belgian Fair Trade Federation, has given itself the mission to "federate and support Belgian fair trade organisations whose philosophy is in line with the standards of the World Fair Trade Organisation for North/South fair trade and with the criteria of the 'Prix Juste Producteur' label for North/North fair trade."<sup>12</sup> Its members include Fairebel, the now well-known brand of fair milk, the Fair Producer Price label, as well as several Belgian producers and distributors of agricultural products favouring short supply chains.

#### Summary of BFTF membership criteria for full 'North-North' Fair Trade Members

<b>Nature of the organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aimed at serving the members of the organisation concerned and the community rather than profit.</li> <li>• Autonomy of management.</li> <li>• Participatory decision-making methods</li> <li>• Fair distribution of the added value to the various links in the chain.</li> </ul>
<b>Economic practices of organisations: the business relationship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fair price allowing a stable and fairly negotiated remuneration, meaning that producers can make a decent living from their activity.</li> <li>• Direct supply chain.</li> <li>• Long-term relationship.</li> <li>• Pre-financing (advance payment to producers of part of their order, unless they do not require this).</li> <li>• Traceability and transparency (down to the raw materials and their producers).</li> </ul>
<b>Economic practices of organisations: practices by profession</b>	<p><b>Producer organisations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual producers belong formally or informally to one or more producer organisations.</li> <li>• Local anchoring in production and supply</li> <li>• Participation in a local development dynamic</li> <li>• Empowerment of producers and their families</li> <li>• Pooling of resources and skills</li> <li>• Family character of the production</li> <li>• Fulfilling working conditions and decent pay for workers (in addition to compliance with ILO standards where applicable)</li> <li>• Respect for the environment</li> </ul> <p><b>Importers, wholesalers and processors (B2B)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sourcing mainly from producer organisations that meet North-South and/or</li> </ul>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.bftf.be/en/?lang=en>

<sup>12</sup> BFTF, brochure « Un prix juste pour une vie décente ».

	<p>North-North fair trade criteria (initially: minimum 75% of the total value of the turnover (aim to reach 100% once a member).</p> <p><b>Distributors-retailers (B2C)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majority supply of products that meet fair trade criteria: 60% of the sales value (objective to reach 100% once a member, for retailers offering exclusively non-food products).</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisations involved in education, awareness-raising or advocacy</b> in favour of fair trade, on the one hand, or in providing <b>technical support and financing</b> for family farming producers involved in fair trade, on the other hand, can be members of the BFTF.</p>
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## Initiatives by agricultural producers - producer federations

### *Fairebel*

The solidarity brand Fairebel<sup>13</sup> currently brings together some 500 farmers - and a total of more than 1300 cooperators – Fairebel offers semi-skimmed milk, chocolate milk, butter and various ice creams. "Our mission is to guarantee a milk price that covers production costs, including a decent wage, and to safeguard family farms,"<sup>14</sup> says Erwin Schöpges, president of Faircoop, the cooperative that owns the brand.



This brand's cooperative was created ten years ago in Belgium and aims to support sustainable and family-friendly agriculture by selling more expensive dairy products (milk, butter, cheese, ice cream) but guaranteeing producers an income of 45 cents per litre.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.fairebel.be/>

<sup>14</sup> See the article "Abundance of European milk but dairy farmers have little reason to celebrate" from the Trade for Development Centre: <https://www.tdc-enabel.be/en/2020/09/02/abundance-of-european-milk-but-dairy-farmers-have-little-reason-to-celebrate/>

Since October 2019, the cocoa in Fairebel chocolate milk has been Fairtrade certified, guaranteeing a better price for cocoa farmers. For every product sold, 1 cent goes towards the Fairtrade premium that certified cooperatives receive. Another cent goes to the 'Women School of Leadership' project in Côte d'Ivoire. This school was set up by Fairtrade Africa to strengthen women's economic empowerment, encourage and train them to participate in the management of producer organisations.

The concept of Fairebel is also available elsewhere in Europe. "The same initiative exists in France, under the name 'FaireFrance', in Luxembourg, in Germany... In total, it is present in six European countries," adds Erwin Schöpges. "The idea was born in Austria and the European Milk Board picked up the concept and made it available to its members."

And since 2018, it is no longer limited to the European continent. FaireFaso is a similar label developed in Burkina Faso, on the initiative of Burkinabe and Belgian producers. It is supported by Oxfam Solidarity and the 11.11.11 campaign. The 'Faire...' galaxy is now getting ready to develop in other West African countries: FaireSen in Senegal and FaireMali. In Niger, too, producers want to launch a similar project.

September 2020 also saw Fairebel take on another sector, that of fruit. Around fifteen cooperators from Flanders and Wallonia (notably from the Aubel and Les Fourons area) joined the initiative. The minimum price for their apples and pears is 1 euro per kilo, in line with the 0.70 cents generally received.

Following on from milk and fruit, will the Fairebel brand cover other foodstuffs?

A member of BFTF.

### *Prix juste Producteur, a specific label for Belgian farmers*



The 'Fair Producer Price'<sup>15</sup> label is a fair trade initiative for agricultural producers in Belgium. This label was created by the Collège des producteurs<sup>16</sup> set up under the Walloon Code of Agriculture, which represents 12,000 Walloon producers. The Producers' College brings together a wide range of players while ensuring that producers are at the centre. It has 64 representatives: 44 representatives of farmers and 22 representatives of various stakeholder associations in the sectors. The latter are environmental associations, agricultural unions, consumer associations, the Belgian food industry association (Fevia) and the distribution association (Comeos). The whole chain is therefore brought together to invest in the informational (towards the general public), economic and institutional aspects.

The specifications of the 'Fair Producer Price' label are based on 15 criteria developed around four axes: respect for production costs, independence of producers, producer groups, transparency and duration of commitments.

<sup>15</sup> <https://prixjuste.be/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.collegedesproducteurs.be/>



### The 15 criteria

1. Existence, description and identification of the product	9. Price is defined by quality
2. Existence, description and identification of the brand	10. Short payment term Maximum duration of 30 days at the end of the month for payments to producers.
3. Existence, description and identification of the operators	11. A contract formalising the agreements between the producer and their first buyer
4. Identification of the group of producers Regardless of the organisation involved in the value chain, raw material suppliers must be part of a group of farmers brought together in a formal or informal organisation.	12. Product traceability
5. Democratic governance of the producer group	13. Origin of the products The products covered by the label must primarily come from the Producers benefitting from the certification.
6. Organisation of production within the producer group Definition of a production plan in order to facilitate the negotiation of value allocation clauses between farmer and first buyer.	14. Duration of commitment A formal commitment of at least one year. This one-year period can be extended for the first 3 years of the business relationship; thereafter the duration of the commitment must be increased to a minimum of 3 years.
7. Concerted pricing policy within the producer group	15. Producer independence Apart from agreements related to product quality, the producer retains all decisions relating to the means of production. The producer is the owner of their productions.
8. Price is defined through production costs, including the notion of remuneration for work	

The fair remuneration is based on, on the one hand, coverage of production costs, and on the other hand, a minimum remuneration established by joint commission number 144 (farm workers) which is set at minimum 12 euros an hour.

The fair price is the price the producer obtains from the first buyer in the chain (in the case of direct sales, this is a final consumer, but otherwise, the first buyer targeted is none other than a dairy, a slaughterhouse, etc.). “Europe has recognised that, considering the situation of the sector, pricing agreements between producers and first buyers do not run counter to competition rules.”, specifies Emmanuel Grosjean, coordinator of the “Collège des producteurs” (College of Producers).<sup>17</sup> For the other segments other negotiations are engaged with retailers who can adjust the price, whereas the guarantee of a fair purchase price from the producer remains standing.

Another important element: “We want producers to affirm, confirm that it is a fair remuneration. And that is why the label should not be too expensive in terms of certification. In other words, we had to build trust rather than put in place a costly auditing system. The Producers Board is in charge of

<sup>17</sup> Read the full Trade for Development Centre interview with Emmanuel Grosjean: <https://www.tdc-enabel.be/en/2020/04/29/prix-juste-producteur-the-new-label-that-guarantees-a-fair-price-to-belgiums-producers/>

monitoring. This is a form of self-monitoring and it is indeed the producer who remains the owner of the fair price concept.”<sup>18</sup>

SoCoPro (Service Opérationnel du Collège des Producteurs), which manages the Prix Juste Producteur label, is a member of BFTF.

## Some short-supply chain initiatives from producer-consumer cooperatives

### *5C, the Collective of Citizen Cooperatives for the Short supply chains*

Some members of BFTF, such as CoopESEM and Li Terroir, are producer-consumer cooperatives active in short supply chains and members of a network, Collectif 5C, which to date brings together 21 consumer cooperatives throughout Wallonia.

The online sales sites of these cooperatives or the farm shops of their members also offer ‘South-North’ fair trade products so long as they do not compete with local products.

### Values and strategies of Collectif 5C<sup>19</sup>

<b>Economic and civic dynamics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 5C collective brings together citizen cooperatives which themselves are made up of consumers, producers, independent or cooperative distributors, all committed to a different model of agriculture and consumption.</li> <li>• Economic ambition: to show that an alternative is possible, by professionalising the organisations of the short supply chains and increasing the market share of the sector, as well as the synergies and solidarities between organisations.</li> <li>• Political ambition: to change mentalities, to draw up a collective project, to adopt collective and democratic governance methods.</li> </ul>
<b>Territorial development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each cooperative's action is part of a strategy of territorial development, of a living area, by stimulating cooperation between organisations and by encouraging the emergence of new producers.</li> <li>• Stimulation of exchanges and solidarity between territories, between cooperatives in Wallonia and elsewhere.</li> </ul>
<b>Agro-ecology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To perpetuate the agro-ecological model in the face of the productivist model driven by the agro-food industry and mass distribution.</li> <li>• Small production units with diversified know-how.</li> <li>• Limiting the use of chemical inputs, strengthening the link to the soil of agriculture and the fodder autonomy systems of livestock farms.</li> <li>• Food sovereignty of the regions</li> </ul>
<b>Controlled consumption</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumption control objective (to resist sales strategies based on emotion and social segmentation).</li> <li>• The right price is not the lowest price, but the price that provides sufficient remuneration to a reasonably efficient producer within the agro-ecological paradigm.</li> </ul>

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Emmanuel Grosjean, Op., Cit.

<sup>19</sup> <https://collectif5c.be/vision/>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-production (gardening, cooking) is also a logical complement to short-circuit supply.</li> </ul>
<b>Short supply chains</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To enable the creation of new relations of trust between producers and consumers</li> </ul>
<b>Social movement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of online sales</li> <li>• Cooperation between producers: through the exchange of products, the optimisation of means of production and the creation of employers' groups or relay halls.</li> <li>• Exchange of good practices</li> <li>• Joint communication of cooperatives at a regional level</li> </ul>

### **An example: Paysans-Artisans**

Created in 2013, Paysans-Artisans<sup>20</sup> is a cooperative with a social purpose established in 9 communes of the Province of Namur and with nearly 800 cooperators. It markets the local and artisanal products of more than 100 producers via online sales, 18 collection points (les R'Aliments) where customers come to collect their orders, a targeted presence on certain markets, farm shops and five of their own shops located in Namur, Jambes, Salzinne, Lustin and Saint-Gérard.

Its ambition: to develop and professionalise short-distance marketing to give it a real economic base and support small-scale farming and crafts.

The cooperative directly employs 22 people, as well as a dozen others through a system of labour sharing within the framework of an employers' group.

Paysans-Artisans thinks big. A 'Fabrique de Circuit court' will soon be set up in the Suarlée area. By the end of 2020, five partners will together occupy a surface area of 2760 m<sup>2</sup>: a small poultry and rabbit slaughterhouse, a meat cutting workshop, a vegetable factory, a cannery, as well as the headquarters and warehouses of Ethiquable Benelux.



The Paysans-Artisans shop in Saint-Gérard



In order to develop a community of producers and consumers, continuing educational activities are not forgotten. The not-for-profit organisation 'Les ateliers de Paysans-Artisans' organises exchanges of know-how, as well as a people's university to develop a shared vision of issues related to agriculture and food.

Paysans-Artisans wants to influence the debates and is also participating in an editorial project. Launched together with about twenty other organisations, Tchak, the farming and consumer magazine that makes decisions, deals with the issues of small-scale local farming, agro-

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.paysans-artisans.be/>

ecology and new models of production, distribution and consumption. It is aimed at "all those who want to cut the cord with agro-industry and mass distribution". Paysans-Artisan is very involved in the 5C non-profit organisation.

### *CoopESEM*

CoopESEM<sup>21</sup> is a citizen cooperative bringing together 25 producers and consumers to develop a distribution channel for local products in the Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse region. The cooperative operates mainly in the municipalities of Florennes, Gerpennes, Walcourt, Cerfontaine, Mettet, Philippeville, Doische, Viroinval, Couvin and Ham/Heure/Nalines. CoopESEM is part of the Collectif 5C.

Member of Collectif 5C and BFTF.

### *Li Terroir*

Li Terroir<sup>22</sup> is a cooperative with a social purpose that brings together producers and consumers from eight communes around Durbuy. With Li Terroir, it is possible to do your shopping online, with delivery at relay points or at home, and at a covered producers' market twice a month. Like CoopESEM, Li Terroir is part of the 5C non-profit association presented above.

Member of the Collectif 5C and BFTF.

### *Agricovert*

Agricovert<sup>23</sup> is an ecological agricultural cooperative with a social purpose located in Gembloux. It brings together around 30 local producers (market gardeners, breeders, craftsmen), certified as organic or converting to, and around 600 consumer cooperators. Sales are made via 60 basket deposit points, one butcher's shop, one bakery and four sales counters. Agricovert is also a collective caterer and a socio-professional integration project.

Member of BFTF.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://coopsem.be/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.literroir.be/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.agricouvert.be/>

## Processors

### *La Brasserie Coopérative Liégeoise*

The Brasserie Coopérative Liégeoise<sup>24</sup> is located at the 'Ferme à l'Arbre' in Lantin. This micro-brewery is the first organic brewery in the Liège region. It produces beers from raw materials (barley and hops) grown on site using organic farming.

Member of BFTF.

### *La Brasserie de la Lesse*

Located in the heart of the village of Eprave, the Brasserie de la Lesse<sup>25</sup> was launched in 2011 as a social cooperative. It produces La Marie Blanche (white beer), la Chinette (golden lager), la Cambrée (amber beer), la Rouge Croix (soft brown beer), l'Hiveresse (winter beer), l'Esprit Triple's (triple lager) and la Top. All their beers are certified as organic and are produced using barley and local hops.

Member of BFTF.

## Others

### *Altérez-vous*

Altérez-vous<sup>26</sup> is a café based in Louvain-la-Neuve that encourages responsible consumption by offering quality products from fair trade, organic farming and local production. This cooperative society with a social purpose (SCRL FS) also organises specific events such as debates, conferences on social issues, cultural evenings, shows and creative workshops. In December 2020, there are plans for it to also take over the Le Respect-Table restaurant space opposite the Altérez-Vous.

Member of BFTF.

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.bcl.bio/>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.brassriedelalesse.be/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.alterezvous.be/>

## BELGIUM'S MAIN ORGANIC LABEL GOES LOCAL AND FAIR TRADE

### *Biogarantie Belgium label: combining organic farming, local production and fair trade*



Created in 1987, before the European legislation on organic farming which dates back to 1991, the Biogarantie label is now available in a "Made in Belgium" variant which includes not only organic but also social criteria, "respectful of people and their environment" to quote their website<sup>27</sup>: this is the Biogarantie Belgium label<sup>28</sup>. Like Biogarantie, it is jointly managed by BioForum Vlaanderen, which represents all operators (producers, processors and distributors) in Flanders<sup>29</sup> and Brussels, Probila-Unitrab, which represents processors and distributors in Wallonia and Brussels, and the National Union of Belgian Agrobiologists (UNAB, the organic producers in Wallonia). Certification is ensured by the organisations Certsys, Quality Partner and Tuv-Nord.

The Biogarantie Belgium label will therefore partially replace the Biogarantie label in the years to come, "even if the old one will still be active for export while the new one serves to raise consumer awareness of Belgian production and processing", says Dominique Jacques, president of UNAB.<sup>30</sup>

The Biogarantie Belgium label concerns products that have been developed in Belgium and whose primary ingredient (constituting more than 50% of it or which is generally associated with the name of the food product by the consumer) has been grown in Belgium.

When several countries are involved in the production of a product, the last substantial transformation of the product must have taken place in Belgium.

### **Fair prices and fair trade**

Beyond the origin, the label emphasises fair pay for workers in the sector. The price that the producer receives for their product must be fair: based on production costs and involving a fair wage as well as investment opportunities. Biogarantie is committed to developing or using a fair price calculation model for each production sector.

*"We try to have an analysis of the whole chain. We want to put forward farmers who work in a family way. For example, small market gardeners sell small quantities of products compared to those who work in field crops. If you make organic onions on 10 hectares, you can sell them cheaper than those harvested on small areas. This has to be taken into account to determine a correct price", says Dominique Jacques.*

In order to ensure long-term business relations, at least one meeting per year must be held between producers and their customers regarding volumes, pricing policy and quality conditions, with the aim of

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.probila-unitrab.be/>

<sup>28</sup> The Biogarantie specifications include a specific section on 'Made in Belgium': [https://www.certsys.eu/doc/RX2002fr11\\_4546.pdf](https://www.certsys.eu/doc/RX2002fr11_4546.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.bioforum.be/>

<sup>30</sup> Read the full Trade for Development Centre interview with Dominique Jacques about the Biogarantie Belgium label: <https://www.tdc-enabel.be/fr/2020/05/25/label-biogarantie-belgium-allier-agriculture-biologique-production-locale-et-commerce-equitable/>



establishing an agreement for a period of one year. Payment to the producer must be made within 30 days of delivery.

A common element of the Biogarantie and Biogarantie Belgium label concerning fair trade: Prepared and processed foods containing more than 5% cane sugar, cocoa, coffee, banana or tea, which come from a country where social sustainability does not apply, can only bear the Biogarantie label if the ingredient in question is certified as 'Fair Trade' by a body recognised by the non-profit organisation Biogarantie.<sup>31</sup> Annex 2 of the specifications lists the social procedures recognised by Biogarantie (including Utz and Rainforest Alliance), as well as the countries where these procedures apply.

### **The first labelled products**

The products sold by Biofresh<sup>32</sup> were among the first to be labelled with the Biogarantie Belgium label, which now has around 20 labels in Flanders and eight in Wallonia. It should be noted that it is indeed the products of Belgian farmers that are labelled. *"Or in the case of a dairy farmer, it is their farm that will be labelled. Shops will not, but they will have the possibility to promote the Biogarantie Belgium label"*.

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<sup>31</sup> Biogarantie, Specifications, January 2019

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.biofresh.be/index.php?id=4&L=%27%271%27>

### III. INTERNATIONAL FAIR TRADE LABELS

#### *Fairtrade*



® The best-known fair trade label, the Fairtrade label does not currently certify 'North-North' fair trade products. However, "Fairtrade will soon launch pilot projects in Europe (in France, Italy and Spain) to assess important value chains like milk, tomatoes and oranges, and propose new standards and business models."<sup>33</sup>

#### *Fair for Life*



Many Origine France fair trade products are certified by Fair for Life.<sup>34</sup> For example, in August 2020, Vignobles Gabriel & Co became the first French wine operator to be recognised as a fair trade company.

The Fair for Life certification programme was launched in Switzerland in 2006 by the Bio-Foundation and IMO (Institute for Market ecology) with the explicit intention of setting itself apart from the system established by FLO International. The objective was to allow all fair trade producers and operators – including those who were unable to join the FLO system – to benefit from independent certification evidencing their observance of criteria such as: rejection of forced labour and child labour, freedom of association, safe and decent working conditions, etc.

The label promotes a supply chain business model aimed at the resilience of each link. Fair for Life certification is a tool that enables the valorisation and protection of exemplary supply chains, where stakeholders have chosen to act responsibly by implementing good economic, social and environmental practices. By following the framework defined by Fair for Life certification, producers, processors and brand owners can secure their sales and supplies, thanks to tools such as long-term contracts that include fixed prices and volumes, and by establishing a real relationship between them.

Since 2017, the Fair for Life and Ecocert Fair Trade standards have merged into the new Fair for Life certification, managed by Ecocert SA.

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<sup>33</sup> Oxfam Italy and Open Society, *Do we need an EU ethical food label? How a mix of measures could help clean up Europe's agri-food system*, September 2020.

<sup>34</sup> See the "Some local fair trade initiatives in Europe" section below highlighting the initiatives developed in various European countries and in France in particular.

### *The WFTO guarantee system*



In 2013, the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) launched a Fair Trade Guarantee Scheme<sup>35</sup> tailored to its members.

It has five elements: a membership admission procedure, a self-assessment procedure, a monitoring audit, a peer review and the Fair Trade Accountability Watch (FTAW), a participatory monitoring mechanism allowing anyone to denounce non-compliance with the criteria.

Members who pass the various stages of the guarantee system are granted the status of a Guaranteed Fair Trade Organisation. They can then use the WFTO label on their products, a label that certifies compliance with the fair trade criteria established by the WFTO.

At the 2017 General Assembly in Delhi, WFTO decided to open its standards to producers from the North, who must comply with WFTO's basic requirements and the 10 principles of fair trade.

In addition, to become members of WFTO, Northern organisations must be or work with a group (i.e. an association or cooperative) of economically marginalised small producers, artisans or farmers.

*Small producers (artisans or farmers) are defined as organisations operating on a small scale and cannot afford to supply large volumes as industrialised producers.*

If they are farmers, they must be certified as organic or be converting to, or be involved in a participatory guarantee system (PGS).<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.wfto.com/standard-and-guarantee-system>

<sup>36</sup> WFTO Europe, *Northern Producers Within WFTO, Factsheet*, April 2018 : [https://wfto-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Factsheet\\_NorthernProducersWithinWFTO\\_Apr20182.pdf](https://wfto-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Factsheet_NorthernProducersWithinWFTO_Apr20182.pdf)

## IV. SOME LOCAL FAIR TRADE INITIATIVES IN EUROPE

### FRANCE

#### *Fair trade law integrates local fair trade*

French legislation applicable to small businesses, which has described and recognised the concept of 'fair trade' since 2005, extended it in May 2014 to North-North relations.

I. "Fair trade is part of the national sustainable development strategy.

II "The purpose of fair trade is to ensure the economic and social progress of workers in a situation of economic disadvantage as a result of their precariousness, remuneration and qualifications, organised within structures of democratic governance, by means of commercial relations with a buyer, which satisfy the following conditions:

*1-A commitment between the parties to the contract over a period of time that limits the impact of the economic contingencies suffered by these workers, which may not be less than three years;*

*2-The payment by the buyer of a remunerative price for the workers, established on the basis of an identification of the production costs and a balanced negotiation between the parties to the contract;*

*3-The granting by the buyer of an obligatory additional amount for collective projects, in addition to the purchase price or integrated into the price, aimed at strengthening the capacities*

*Each company involved in these sectors is able to produce information relating to product traceability.*

*Companies that publicly declare their membership of fair trade are involved in awareness-raising and educational actions on socially and ecologically sustainable production and consumption patterns.*

*These provisions do not prevent the application of Book IV of the Commercial Code. A decree of the Council of State shall specify the criteria of economic disadvantage, within the meaning of the first paragraph of this II, and the contractual terms and conditions defined in 1 to 3.*

*II bis. Only products satisfying the conditions defined in II may include the term "fair trade" in their sales description."<sup>37</sup>*

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<sup>37</sup> Law n°2005-882 from 2 August 2005, in favour of small and medium-sized enterprises (Article 60), amended by law n°2014-856 from 31 July 2014, relating to the social and solidarity economy -Article 94, and by Law No. 2019-486 from 22 May 2019, relating to the growth and transformation of companies - Article 173. Consult the full text of the law and the implementing decrees here: [https://www.commerceequitable.org/wp-content/uploads/le-commerce-equitable/orientation\\_reglementation\\_labelsvf.pdf](https://www.commerceequitable.org/wp-content/uploads/le-commerce-equitable/orientation_reglementation_labelsvf.pdf)

## The National Charter of Fair Trade Origin France



Created in 2014 under the name 'Charte nationale du commerce équitable local', the Charte nationale du commerce équitable origine France<sup>38</sup> changed its name in 2018. It was launched on the initiative of the Fair Trade Platform (PFCE), the network of Initiatives for a Citizen and Territorial Agriculture (Inpact National), in partnership with the National Federation of Organic Agriculture (Fnab).

It structures 13 fundamental principles around three commitments: in a fair and responsible trade relationship, for a local and sustainable agriculture, and for the change of trade practices.

"This charter aims to bring together and give visibility and coherence to the many economic approaches or labels that have emerged in recent years. In this way, it also responds to a strong public demand for fairer economic relations in France. It should make it possible to consolidate the experiments in progress, by also providing them with a framework for capitalisation and exchanges of good practices".<sup>39</sup>

This charter is not a guarantee system serving as a basis for certification, but rather a reference framework.

### The founding principles of the charter

I. COMMITMENT TO A FAIR AND RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS RELATIONSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A transparent and remunerative price</li> <li>• A long-term business partnership</li> <li>• A non-exclusive relationship that preserves the autonomy of producers</li> <li>• A shared development project</li> <li>• An eco-responsible sector</li> <li>• Working conditions that respect human dignity</li> </ul>
II. A COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE AGRICULTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small-scale local agriculture</li> <li>• Sustainable, autonomous and transparent agricultural practices, based on organic and/or agro-ecological farm production methods</li> <li>• A producer organisation on a human and democratic scale</li> <li>• Production based on local resources and specificities</li> </ul>
III. COMMITMENT TO CHANGE BUSINESS PRACTICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparency and communication vis-à-vis consumers</li> <li>• Consumer awareness and education</li> <li>• Advocacy for economic and political decision-makers</li> </ul>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.commerceequitable.org/notre-collectif/commerce-equitable-origine-france/>

<sup>39</sup> Charte du commerce équitable origine France, Principes fondamentaux du commerce équitable appliqués aux agricultures citoyennes et durables en France, 2018.

## *Biopartenaire*



Created in 2002, Biopartenaire<sup>40</sup> is a label which synthesises organic agriculture and fair trade; organic does not guarantee a fair remuneration for producers, and fair trade is not necessarily synonymous with respect for the environment.

The label provides a framework for relations between producers, input suppliers, wholesalers and processors by ensuring outlets at a guaranteed minimum price for producers over a period of at least 3 years. The processors are able to benefit from this because they have quality products at their disposal. Checks are carried out at all stages of the supply chain by third party organisations according to the specifications of two standards: Fair for Life and Reliable.

Biopartenaire has chosen to label only products distributed in organic food shops or similar. More than 700 products are labelled, from 60 sectors worldwide, including 15 in France, ranging from cereals to cashew nuts, including tea, rice, livestock or aromatic and medicinal plants.

## *The Fair Tourism Label*



The Association pour le Tourisme Equitable et Solidaire<sup>41</sup> (Association for Fair and Solidarity Tourism) is a French network of organisations and specialists in fair and solidarity tourism. Created in 2006, it brings together tour operators, relay operators and associate members, all committed to making travel a lever for development and international solidarity.

Historically reserved for tour operators, and launched at the beginning of 2020 to tourism stakeholders in France, the 'Label Tourisme Equitable' (Fair Tourism label) is now accessible without prior membership of the ATES to professionals committed to an ethical, responsible and solidarity-based approach who wish to enhance their offer of holidays, activities or accommodation. It is aimed at specialised and general tour operators who wish to have all or part of their offer labelled, and at tourist reception facilities in France (accommodation, leisure sites, cultural sites, activity providers, events, restaurants, incoming agencies in France...).

Through nearly 50 criteria, the label guarantees fair management of purchases and partnerships, an activity that preserves the environment and natural resources, democratic and fair management of the organisation, an activity rooted in its territory and beneficial to the inhabitants.

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.biopartenaire.com/>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.tourismesolidaire.org/>



## *Bio Equitable En France*



On 12 May 2020, 27 agricultural groups representing 4,000 producers, 26 organic farming companies, Scop Ethiquable and Biocoop, a network of 637 shops, created an association to develop the BIO ÉQUITABLE EN FRANCE<sup>42</sup> label and build, with consumers, a new economic model. The groups have decided to involve processing companies (dairy, charcuterie, miller...) in the labelling and governance in order to create coherent channels.

The label targets family farms organised in autonomous groups. There are precise criteria governing the size of farms to support the many farms in the area that generate employment and income. The standards rely on independent producer groups, which market their products and are committed to cooperative and democratic values. The farms must be certified organic. The implementation of agro-ecological practices is an integral part of the changes in production methods encouraged by the standard.

The label guarantees producer-defined prices and regular monitoring. Each producer group sets its price according to:

- Agricultural production costs (including agricultural risk);
- Sufficient remuneration to meet basic needs and improve the standard of living of producers and their families;
- A margin enabling producer groups to cover their operations and make the investments necessary to improve the efficiency of their production tools and the marketing of their products.

Since the start of the new school year 2020, all products are labelled BIO ÉQUITABLE EN FRANCE.

This label, Bio Equitable En France, was preceded by another one launched by the National Federation of Organic Agriculture: Bio.Français.Equitable<sup>43</sup>.

## *Bio.Français.Equitable*



Bio.Français.Equitable<sup>44</sup> was launched at the beginning of 2020 by the National Federation of Organic Agriculture, which is responsible for its governance, in collaboration with the Picard retailer. Courgettes, maize, green beans and carrots are the first products concerned. They are initially sold in the south-west, in 87 sales outlets.

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.ethiquable.coop/page-dactualites-mag/bio-equitable-france-nouveau-label-dans-vos-rayons>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.fnab.org/nos-actions/filieres-de-commercialisation/1070-qu-est-ce-que-le-label-bio-francais-equitable-porte-par-la-federation-nationale-d-agriculture-biologique-fnab>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.fnab.org/nos-actions/filieres-de-commercialisation/1070-qu-est-ce-que-le-label-bio-francais-equitable-porte-par-la-federation-nationale-d-agriculture-biologique-fnab>

## Agri-Éthique



Created in 2013 by the Cavac cooperative group in the Vendée, Agri-Éthique<sup>45</sup> is today the first French fair trade label. It all started with the wheat sector, in response to price volatility, but Agri-Éthique now also deals with the milk, beef, pork and dried vegetables sectors, and works with 19 producer groups and more than 1,300 farmers and breeders.

The Agri-Ethics approach is based on multipartite agreements between farmers, storekeepers, processors and distributors over a minimum period of 3 years to ensure economic security and fair remuneration for the former. The production costs of the region concerned and the characteristics of the farms in the sector serve as a basis for setting guaranteed prices.

In 2019, the label represented €252 million in turnover, i.e. 58% of the turnover of products labelled fair trade origin France. In addition to the volumes generated, the label is also important for mobilising conventional agricultural sectors and supporting them in the agro-ecological transition.

## ITALY

### *Solidale Italiano*

Italy is a genuine pioneer of North to North fair trade, but its story is peculiar. In 2010, after years of preparation, Altromercato, the largest Italian fair trade organisation which includes 300 worldshops, launched the Solidale Italiano<sup>46</sup> product line. It aims to offer products of Italian social cooperatives, first and foremost from Libera Terra. This movement has fought the Mafia throughout southern Italy since 1995, among others by starting up agriculture projects on land that was confiscated from members of the Mafia.

The offer in the Italian worldshops is now broadened with local wine and olive oil, *limoncello*, *passata and pommodori*. Recently, the product range was extended with products from cooperatives that work with prisoners or teens who have lost their way and via a peace project in Bosnia with blueberry juice and jam. Many Italian worldshops commit to distributing local organic produce and contribute to the establishment of an alternative agricultural model in both the South and the North.

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.agriethique.fr/>

<sup>46</sup> [https://www.altromercato.it/it\\_it/solidale-italiano/](https://www.altromercato.it/it_it/solidale-italiano/)

## GERMANY

### *Naturland Fair*

In 2009, the German organisation Naturland<sup>47</sup>, a pioneer in the field of organic labelling, wanted to supplement its certification system with a fair trade component.

It is primarily aimed at producers and cooperatives that are already certified Naturland organic worldwide and who want to strengthen their commitment by taking better account of the social and economic dimensions.

Already recognised for the quality and rigour of its specifications in terms of organic production, the Bavarian association has, in fact, developed this new label to have an integrated certification structure around the three pillars of sustainable development: organic agriculture (environment), responsibility and justice (social) and fair trade (economy).

The first products were produced by a group of producers from the Bavarian Alps, whose organic fair trade milk is transformed into a wide range of milk chocolates by Gepa, the main German fair trade organisation, by adding cocoa and sugar, which are also fair trade. Other partners and producers have followed suit, such as Italian farmers in the Marche region who supply durum wheat as a basic ingredient for quinoa spaghetti.

While the Naturland Fair standard is in theory applicable to all types of products, it is found more in the agro-food industry, in the countries of the South (for producers of coffee, olive oil, tea, fruit, etc.) but also in the countries of the North (especially for processors or distributors).

Based on more than 30 years of experience in the field of organic certification and on exchanges of know-how with recognised fair trade organisations, this label appears to be as demanding as its organic big brother. For example, products displaying the "Naturland Fair" logo must be made as much as possible from 100% fair trade ingredients and "this applies to milk or wheat from Germany as well as products such as coffee or tropical fruits".



Bavarian farmers promoting "their" fair trade chocolate © Gepa

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.naturland.de/en/naturland/what-we-do/naturland-fair.html>

*FairBio*

The FairBio<sup>48</sup> label was created in 2017 to raise awareness among producers, traders, processors and consumers about the fairness of domestic organic products. In addition to fair prices for the products, the organisation provides maximum wage differentials according to the size of farms and companies.

## AUSTRIA AND SWITZERLAND

Austria's EZA, a fair trade organisation, has offered organic herb tea from a group of Austrian farmers in Mühlviertel since 1986. There are also a few Eastern European producers in fair trade partnerships. Claro, a Swiss fair trade organisation, has partnered with farmers from mountain villages surrounding Tirana since 2004. That way, Swiss consumers can choose between Albanian and Palestinian fair trade olive oil.

## GREECE

The solidarity economy cooperative Syn Allois<sup>49</sup> (which means 'together with others' in Greek) was founded in Athens in autumn 2011. This member of the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) sells fair trade and solidarity products from countries in the South, such as coffee from Chiapas in Mexico. At its head office in the Greek capital - which is also a shop, distribution centre and event venue - Syn Allois also offers products from local collective projects and from small farmers and manufacturers with whom it has direct and long-term relationships.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> <https://www.fairbio.bio/>

<sup>49</sup> <https://synallois.org/>

<sup>50</sup> Source: WFTO, Member Presentation Register: <https://wfto-europe.org/our-members-syn-allois/>

## V. TYPOLOGY OF ORGANISATIONS

In this publication, the choice has been made to bring together local fair trade initiatives in Belgium - first gathering initiatives from 'classical' South-North fair trade organisations, then those from specific local fair trade organisations or from the organic farming movement - before presenting some international labels certifying local fair trade and some initiatives in other European countries.

Other classifications could have been made without taking into account the origins of the initiatives. For example, labels could have been grouped together regardless of their scope (national or universal), or initiatives emanating from the organic farming movement.

	Brands/Ranges	Labels		Short supply chains
		Universal	With a national scope	
From 'classic' South-North fair trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paysans d'Ici (France-Belgique)</li> <li>• Paysans du Nord – Oxfam-MDM</li> <li>• Coffret miel du monde (MMH)</li> <li>• Solidale Italiano (Italy)</li> <li>• Oxfam Fair Trade</li> <li>• EZA (Autriche), Claro (Suisse) et Syn Syn Allois (Grèce)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fair for Life</li> <li>• WFTO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bio Equitable En France</li> <li>• ATES (label Tourisme équitable)</li> </ul>	
Coming from organic farming movement		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naturland Fair (Germany)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biogarantie Belgium</li> <li>• Bio Français Equitable</li> </ul>	
From agricultural producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fairebel</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prix Juste Producteur</li> <li>• Agri-Ethique (France)</li> </ul>	
From producer/consumer cooperatives (short supply chains)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Li Terroir</li> <li>• Agricover</li> <li>• 5C, Coopesem et Paysans-Artisans</li> <li>• Open Food Network</li> </ul>
Coming from processors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• La Brasserie Coopérative Liégeoise</li> <li>• La Brasserie de la Lesse</li> </ul>			

## VI. CROSS-CUTTING ANALYSIS

This transversal analysis of different local fair trade organisations concerning Belgium aims to highlight similarities as well as differences in approaches, possibly with a view to identifying the main characteristics of what could be called local fair trade for Belgium.

What are the factors of differentiation compared to conventional channels, whether at the level of organisation profiles and governance, modes of production, commercial practices, pricing methods or collective social projects?

### DEFINITION AND CRITERIA OF FAIR TRADE

Prior to the analysis, it is necessary to recall the definition of fair trade and its main characteristics.

Fair trade was born out of the observation that the wealth gap between rich and poor populations continues to widen, and out of the desire to practise fairer trade. Fair Trade aims to change the way trade is conducted through more remunerative prices and decent working conditions for farmers, artisans and workers.

In 2001, the main global networks of the fair trade movement agreed on the following definition: “Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers – especially in the South. Fair Trade Organizations, backed by consumers, are engaged actively in supporting producers, awareness raising and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade.”

In addition, the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) has set out 10 principles of fair trade:

1. Create opportunities for economically disadvantaged producers.
2. Promote transparency and accountability.
3. Guarantee trade relations based on trust and mutual respect.
4. Guarantee the payment of a fair price.
5. Ban child labour and forced labour.
6. Commit to non-discrimination, gender equity and women’s economic empowerment, and the freedom of association.
7. Ensure decent working conditions.
8. Provide capacity building.

9. Promote fair trade.
10. Respect the environment.

To learn more about the principles of fair trade, see the International Fair Trade Charter.<sup>51</sup> “The Charter offers a concise explanation of the generic objectives and approaches that are common to most Fair Trade initiatives. It is not possible for such a document to act as a manual of Fair Trade practices or as a standard by which the approach of specific organizations can be assessed. This document cannot therefore be used to justify the Fair Trade claims or credentials of any organisation, business, or network.”

## WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LOCAL FAIR TRADE IN BELGIUM AND EUROPE ?

### *Fair prices and remuneration*

This is the main characteristic that unites the Belgian and European local fair trade initiatives: starting from the production costs and not from the market to determine a price, a fair remuneration, in consultation with the producers.

More specifically, for the Prix Juste Producteur label the price "is defined through the production costs, including the notion of labour remuneration" and "is defined through quality".

For the 5C collective: "The fair price is not the lowest price, but the price that provides sufficient remuneration to a reasonably efficient producer within the agro-ecological paradigm."

Oxfam Fair Trade and Fairebel seem to be the only ones for the moment to set minimum prices: 45 cents/l for Fairbel milk (after the European Milk Board carried out a European study of production costs) and 1 euro/kg for Fairbel fruit (apples and pears).

In addition, BFTF provides a fair distribution of the added value to the various links in the chain. Paysans d'ici (Ethiquable) determines this distribution by reserving the largest share (at least 40%) of the price paid by the consumer to the producers.

The pre-financing of orders is planned by BFTF, Paysans d'ici, Fair for Life and Paysans du Nord (Oxfam-Magasins du monde).

The payment of producers within a reasonable period of time should be an important element of a fair remuneration: this period is 30 days maximum for Prix Juste Producteur and Biogarantie Belgium.

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<sup>51</sup> <https://www.fair-trade.website/the-charter-1>



### *Organised producers*

This is the second main feature of the different local fair trade initiatives in Belgium presented in this study. With the exception of the Biogarantie Belgium label and Miel Maya Honing (in view of the small volumes involved for the latter), local fair trade producers must belong to a producer group with a democratic mode of governance, whether informal or formalised, for example in the form of a producer cooperative or producer/consumer cooperatives.

### *Decent working conditions*

Good working conditions and, more generally, respect for the basic conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), such as freedom of association, the absence of forced labour, etc., are among the basic criteria of fair trade. This is reflected by Oxfam-World Shops in the framework of its 'Northern Farmers' charter, by BFTF and Oxfam Fair Trade, as well as by the Fair for Life and WFTO labels, all specialists in South-North fair trade.

These notions are perhaps less promoted by other local fair trade initiatives because ILO conventions have already been incorporated into European legislation.

### *Family farming and marginalised producers*

Fair Trade claims to work with marginalised producers. What could this notion cover for Belgian and European producers? Does it give priority to small-scale family farming?

In its document 'Northern producers within WFTO', the World Fair Trade Organization defines marginalised people or communities as those who are "restricted to the lower or peripheral edge of the economy, who are prevented from participation in mainstream economic activity by factors beyond their control". The factors that make a person "economically marginalised" vary considerably from place to place but, according to WFTO, include at least one of the following:

- Living in a region or country with lack of job opportunities, in other words a place with persistent high unemployment;
- Having a lack of, or lack of access to (namely due to financial reasons), education or professional training;
- Being mentally or physically differently-abled to the extent that this would hinder conventional employment;
- Suffering from discrimination which prevents one from taking advantage of existing (dignified) employment or education/training opportunities;
- Being unable to engage the market as an equal trading partner due to unfair trade rules, dominant monopolies or political restrictions.

Among other things, WFTO gives the example of "farmers organised in cooperatives which are not able to secure a dignified life for their family and therefore are at risk of being forced to give up farming". We can recall here that between 1980 and 2019, Belgium lost 68% of its farms. This phenomenon was accompanied by a significant increase in the average size of farms: from 8.4 ha in 1980 to 26.7 ha in 2019.<sup>52</sup>

Working with small family farms is therefore at the heart of the actions of initiatives such as Paysans du Nord, Paysans d'ici, Oxfam Fair Trade and BFTF. This is justified by the fact that family and small-scale local farming faces competition from large agri-businesses. Their wages are too low, their incomes uncertain.

In order to obtain the Fair for Life or WFTO label, organisations must be or work with economically marginalised producer groups (artisans or farmers).

WFTO and Fair for Life give priority to small producers (defined by WFTO as organisations operating on a small scale and which cannot afford to supply large volumes like industrialised producers) while leaving the door open for certification of very large farms and sub-contracted farming.

BFTF foresees the empowerment of producers and their families, as well as the pooling of resources and skills.

### *Local anchoring - short supply chains?*

BFTF, Paysans du Nord, Paysans d'ici, Oxfam Fair Trade and Collectif 5c clearly refer to short supply chains that are part of a dynamic that promotes the territory, employment and local trade, and even food sovereignty.

"The user of the 'made in Belgium' Biogarantie logo must be able to prove that the product was produced in Belgium and that the primary ingredient of this product was grown in Belgium."

For Collectif 5C: "Each cooperative's action is part of a strategy of territorial development, of a living area, by stimulating cooperation between organisations and encouraging the emergence of new producers". The union of producer and consumer cooperatives in Wallonia goes further, however, and in the long term aims to achieve food sovereignty in the regions.

Paysans d'ici highlights another specificity: the priority given to local products, specific know-how and typical flavours.

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<sup>52</sup> Source: Statbel.

### *Organic agriculture, agro-ecology, respect for the environment... or not...*

Compared to South-North fair trade, an additional commitment is required from producers involved in local French fair trade. Indeed, the national charter of fair trade 'origine France' explicitly ensures: "sustainable, autonomous and transparent agricultural practices, based on organic and/or farmer-based agro-ecological production methods". For 92% of the participants at the French fair trade conference, "fair trade must have the dual objective of fair remuneration for producers AND the agro-ecological transition."<sup>53</sup>

This desire is based on the IPCC report of August 2019. "According to the IPCC, while in the South there is an urgent need for intensification in order to increase yields per hectare, OECD countries must give priority to promoting agricultural production systems that can both protect the productive potential of ecosystems and mitigate global warming by sequestering carbon in biomass and soils."<sup>54</sup>

The local fair trade initiatives present in Belgium are divided, some of them not making this choice. The Ethiquable's Paysans d'ici charter, Oxfam Fair Trade and the labels Biogarantie Belgium and WFTO work within the framework of organic agriculture, and Fair for Life strongly encourages it. For their part, Paysans d'ici, the 5C collective, Paysans du Nord (Oxfam-Magasins du Monde) and Oxfam Fair Trade clearly choose agro-ecological production.

Fair for Life and Oxfam Fair Trade explicitly mention the ban on GMO products. For Fair for Life, seeds or seedlings used on farms must not be genetically modified (including those used for animal feed)<sup>55</sup>. This ban is also explicitly included in the specifications of organic farming standards<sup>56</sup> and implicitly in agro-ecological practices. It is part of Principle 9 of the Fair Trade Charter for France.

BFTF confines itself to mentioning a generic "respect for the environment" in terms of requirements linked to production methods. On the other hand, Fairebel or 'Prix Juste Producteur' do not mention environmental protection in their requirements.

Another difference of opinion: industrial and non-industrial agriculture coexist at the level of Belgian and European fair trade products. The 5C collective opposes agro-ecology "to the productivist model carried by the agro-food industry and mass distribution". Similarly, Paysans du Nord refers to a non-industrial and not very intensive small-scale local farming, which is not necessarily the case of a cooperative such as Faircoop, at the initiative of the industrial milk brand Fairebel.

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<sup>53</sup> Commerce Équitable France, Commerce équitable Origine France, 3 leviers, 8 recommandations pour changer d'échelle. : <https://www.commerceequitable.org/wp-content/uploads/cahier-de-recommandations-vf.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> Commerce Équitable France, Op. Cit.

<sup>55</sup> Commerce Équitable France, Fair World Project, FairNess, Forum Fairer Handel, *Guide internationale des labels de commerce équitable*, édition 2020.

<sup>56</sup> The 0.9% threshold for adventitious and technically unavoidable presence set by European regulations is not synonymous with tolerance.

### *Long-term commitment and independence of producers*

The local fair trade initiatives present in Belgium provide for management autonomy and commercial independence of producers. For Prix Juste Producteur: “apart from agreements linked to the quality of the products, the producer retains all decisions relating to the means of production. The producer is the owner of their productions.”

A formal long-term commitment with the producers is generally provided: three years minimum for Prix Juste Producteur (reduced to one during the first three years), Paysans d'ici and Fair for Life. One year for Biogarantie Belgium. WFTO mentions a long-term commitment without specifying its duration.

### *Traceability and transparency*

Production traceability is guaranteed by Paysans du Nord, Paysans d'ici, Biogarantie Belgium and Prix Juste Producteur. For Fair for Life, physical and documentary traceability is required at all stages of the supply chain. The circulation of transparent information on the price structure is an additional requirement of Paysans d'ici.

For its part, BFTF provides "traceability and transparency right down to the raw materials and their producers". However, Fairebel, which does not control the physical traceability of its milk sector, is a member of the BFTF. Moreover, it is this lack of traceability to the producer that prevents FaireFrance (Fairebel's sister organisation in France) from being recognised by French law as a fair trade organisation and from being a member of Fair Trade France, the French federation of Fair Trade organisations. However, since January 2020, Fairecoop has been organising the collection of milk from some of its members...

It should be pointed out that in ‘classic’ fair trade, traceability is not always guaranteed right up to the producer groups. At Fairtrade in particular, for products such as cocoa, sugar, tea, fruit juices and cotton, for which it is difficult to separate the fair trade and non fair trade versions when they are processed in large factories, a system known as ‘mass balance’ has been introduced. Documentary traceability replaces the physical traceability of the product. For a manufacturer, the volumes of chocolate sold bearing the label must correspond to the quantities of certified cocoa purchased, but the chocolate bars with the Fairtrade logo do not necessarily contain certified cocoa. Both uncertified cocoa is found in chocolate bars bearing the label and, conversely, certified cocoa is found in unlabelled bars.

### *Citizen dynamics beyond commercial activity or brand promotion*

The producers associated with the Paysans d'ici approach implement a "local and collective development project that goes beyond the marketing activity", which "serves the interests of producers

and a territory". To this end, they receive a development premium, as do producers of Fair for Life certified products.

The 5C collective brings together citizen cooperatives that have an economic ambition (to show that an alternative is possible, by professionalising the organisations in short supply chains and by increasing the market share of the sector, as well as synergies and solidarity between organisations.) and a political ambition (to change mentalities, to draw up a collective project, to adopt collective and democratic governance methods).

For its part, Oxfam-Magasins du monde "would like producers to initiate local projects in the service of the local farming sector" (an evolving criterion).

### *Raising awareness of fair trade*

This is one of the pillars of fair trade, as stated in the 2001 international definition: "Fair Trade Organizations, backed by consumers, are engaged actively in supporting producers, awareness raising and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade."

BFTF allows that "organisations providing education, awareness raising or advocacy for Fair Trade, on the one hand, or technical support and financing for family farmers involved in Fair Trade, on the other hand, can be members of BFTF."

WFTO members should raise awareness and/or promote Fair Trade and these principles internally, among supply chain organisations and with the external community/general public.<sup>57</sup>

This transversal analysis of different local fair trade actors concerning Belgium aims to highlight similarities as well as differences in approaches, possibly with a view to identifying the main characteristics of what could be called local fair trade for Belgium.

What are the factors of differentiation compared to conventional channels, whether at the level of actor profiles and governance, modes of production, commercial practices, pricing methods or collective social projects?

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<sup>57</sup> International Guide to Fair Trade Labels, Op. cit.

## SYNOPTIC TABLE OF CRITERIA USED FOR LOCAL FAIR TRADE

	Paysans d'ici / terra etica (Ethiquable)	Paysans du Nord (OMDM)	BFTF	Oxfam Fair Trade	Prix Juste Producteur	Fairebel	Biogarantie Belgium	WFTO	Fair for Life	5C
<b>Producers and producer organisations</b>										
Organised producers	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Small-scale family farms or marginalised producers	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X
Commercial independence	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Local and collective development project	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X
<b>Production methods</b>										
Organic agriculture	X			X			X	X	X	
Agro-ecology	X	X		X			X		X	X
Short supply chains	X	X	X	X			X			X
Physical traceability	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Decent work		X	X	X				X	X	
<b>Terms and conditions of business</b>										
Price, fair remuneration	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Minimum price						X				
Long-term commitment	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Pre-financing	X	X	X					X	X	
Development premium	X								X	
<b>Awareness raising</b>										
Raising awareness for fairer trade	X	X	X	X				X	X	X

## VII. SOME POINTS OF ATTENTION

### Multiplication of labels and blurred image

There is no doubt about it, the emergence of local fair trade has led to the appearance of new labels such as Prix Juste Producteur in Belgium, Bio Equitable or Agri-Ethique in France, and has led certain labels such as Biogarantie to position themselves in this niche. All this in a context where 'classic' South-North fair trade already has several (Fairtrade, Fair for Life, Symbol of Small Producers, WFTO, etc.) and where consumers say that there are too many labels, that it is difficult to find one's way around.

The corollary of this multiplicity of labels is greater variability and a greater diversity of criteria. By becoming universal, the image of fair trade will therefore also become blurred and less legible. On the other hand, and this is not to be neglected when considering the future of fair trade, when in its communication it is linked with or sees itself as complementary to the process of buying local products, we notice a renewed interest of the press and consumers for this type of trade.

### The need for legislation?

France is the only European country to have adopted legislation describing and recognising the notion of 'fair trade', and to have extended it in May 2014 to North-North relations. Such legislation within the European Union would help to clarify things, to get out of the vagueness surrounding "who really does fair trade and who doesn't?" and thus provide a framework

allowing new organisations to launch themselves in a slightly more secure way in this type of trade. This would also enable consumers to distinguish between fair trade and non-fair trade products and to serve as a reference for public authorities wishing to promote them in the context of calls to the market.

### Taking animal welfare into account?

Fair Trade milk has brought a product from the animal world into the scope of this solidarity trade, which will eventually oblige Fair Trade organisations to detail criteria relating to animal welfare. Oxfam Fair Trade already foresees in its framework for partnerships with producers in

the North that: "The partner respects the rights of the animals. "But what will happen when the first 'fair trade' cuts of meat are offered in supermarkets? What will then be the nature of the debate between the proponents of fair trade, vegetarianism or veganism?"



### The coexistence of 'Southern' and 'Northern' products

Will local Fair Trade products compete with Fair Trade products usually coming from the South? It is this risk that has until now led Fairtrade producer networks to avoid opening up the most well-known Fairtrade label to products from the North.

For products such as coffee and cocoa, the question does not arise since these products can only be grown in tropical zones. But for flowers, wine, honey or certain fruit juices? For honey, European supply is lower than demand. So as long as honey is brought in from elsewhere, it's better to make it fair. For wine and fruit juices, apart from the organoleptic characteristics and tastes linked to the region, the carbon balance and ecological footprint of products from different geographical areas should be taken into consideration. This debate is far too vast to

be developed here, especially as production methods must also be taken into consideration. An organic agro-ecological product coming from the South and transported by boat (or even by cargo sailboat) could have a smaller ecological footprint than a product from Spain coming from industrial agriculture.

In concrete terms, 'cohabitation' does not seem to pose too many problems at the moment. Apart from replacing a Chilean apple juice with a Belgian apple juice, Oxfam-Magasins du Monde, for example, distributes 'Northern' products that complement its original range.

And let's dream a little. In the long term, the parallel development of local fair trade in the countries of the South could absorb some of the products that could no longer be marketed via large-scale exports.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

With climate change and the current health crisis, alarm bells are starting to ring: the way we have organised the globalisation of the market with international just-in-time value chains makes us extremely vulnerable and is putting more and more pressure on ecosystems. Not to mention the social consequences, like growing inequality.

It is time then to take a different approach to our trade relations. We urgently need to re-localise some of the economic activity in vital sectors like healthcare and the food industry, in order to increase our autonomy and resilience. We need to de-specialise our areas and define a new 'food sovereignty' by collectively deciding how we want to produce and bring our food to market.<sup>(1)</sup> Fair trade can contribute to this.

### **Fair trade goes local**

Fair trade is a movement that is constantly looking for cohesion, with various different dynamics at play. One of these is an important one: fair trade has long been confined to the North-South solidarity trade, but has since opened up to local trade. First in southern countries like Mexico, India, South Africa, Kenya and Ecuador. Brazil has even gone so far as to introduce legislation that heads in that direction. Then in European countries to obtain a sustainable agricultural model to strengthen the social fabric. In Belgium, various initiatives were

launched: the label 'Prix juste producteur', Fairbel milk and the 'Biogarantie Belgium' label that has adopted certain fair trade criteria. More traditional fair trade organisations like Miel Maya honey, Oxfam, Ethiquable and others have also integrated certain players and local products to give a truly universal dimension to the concept and practices of fair trade.

### **A variety of approaches**

The 'classic' South-North fair trade had already shown its multiplicity, with, for example, organisations working only with marginalised producers organised in cooperatives and others allowing contract farming or certifying large plantations. The same is true of local Belgian and European fair trade. While all organisations are committed to remunerating producers fairly, and while almost all work with organised producers, there are differences in terms of the agricultural model (agro-ecological or not), the attention paid to the physical traceability of products, the size of farms, etc.

Since its creation, more than 70 years ago, fair trade has undergone constant evolution, always in search of greater relevance. Today it has reached a universal dimension, with practices adapted to different local contexts. Let's count on the fact that the international movement or the legislator will manage to maintain a certain unity of approach.



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