

Delegates attending a trade union conference in the German Trade Union Training Centre BZO close to Frankfurt demand the abolition of child labour and a system of social labelling in a sustainable cocoa and chocolate sector

Almost 100 delegates, representing 21 trade unions coming from 14 different countries, met close to Frankfurt in order to develop the trade union network *cocoanet.eu* in the cocoa and chocolate industry. This networking project has been co-funded by the European Commission and has been organised jointly by *wmp Consult* and *Foodworld R&C*. Two further international meetings will be held in the next months. Besides this, a joint website will be set up in order to enhance cooperation in the field of sustainability across companies and borders. Under the auspices of the European Trade Union Federation EFFATT, the German trade union NGG organised this meeting of representatives from the following trade unions and project partners: *FNV* (Netherlands), *ACV* (Belgium), *ABVV* (B), *Pro-Ge* (Austria), *Unite* (UK), *CFDT* (France) and *Solidarnosc* (Poland). Trade union officials from Spain, Croatia, Italy, Malta, Lithuania, Turkey and Norway also attended the conference.

Besides a discussion on the network *cocoanet.eu*, the most important other conference topics were working conditions in Europe and sustainability in the cocoa chain. Delegates developed a trade union definition of *sustainability in the cocoa and chocolate industry*. They addressed the environmental, economic and social dimension in the entire value chain from cocoa cultivation up until the production of chocolate. Trade unions define sustainability as a decent life/decent living conditions for all stakeholders of the cocoa chain in a sustainable environment. The conference offered presentations, group work, films and discussions in the plenary. Representatives from Non Governmental Organizations as well as company representatives also attended parts of the conference.

At the end of the three day conference held in the training center BZO, the delegates approved the following Declaration on the 17th of September 2010:

- Child labour in cocoa production must finally be abolished once and for all. The ILO Convention 182 on the abolition of child labour from the 19th of November 2000 was ratified by many producing countries, as well as by the European cocoa processing countries, and must finally be fully implemented into reality.
- The support and qualification of people in producing countries with regard to topics such as soil improvement, plants and the use of pesticides is reasonable from an environmental point of view and has a sustainable global impact.
- The OECD published guidelines for multinational enterprises. They define Corporate responsibility, including the supply chain. Multinational companies must live up to this responsibility. However, small and medium-sized enterprises in Europe bear responsibility as well.
- Fair prices for cocoa farmers can help to counteract financial speculation within the cocoa sector. As a result, fair prices can also stabilize the supply of commodities/raw materials and can bring about more economic certainty/security for companies in the chocolate industry. This will increase the safety of jobs within Europe.
- Precarious (i.e. casual) work, which puts workers unilaterally at a disadvantage, is something that exists also at the end of the value chain within the European chocolate industry. Precarious work can take the form of frequently unfair practices of temporary work, short term contracts for work and services, low wages and sub-contracting. The trade unions participating in this project demand fair work and social minimum standards. This would have to be documented by means of a *social label*.
- By strengthening their cooperation with NGOs and other stakeholders, the trade unions intend to reinforce a network for more safety in social, environmental and economic aspects across the entire value chain from cocoa beans to the box of chocolates. To this end a roadmap for future cooperation will be developed.