

November 2010

*Dear European Fair Trade family,*

*During the Cordoba WFTO Europe AGM I was appointed as the new WFTO Europe President. My first thanks are to Carola Reintjes, that occupied this role til this last AGM, and that now is in charge of a most challenging job (WFTO Global CEO). After almost 20 years that I'm involved in Fair Trade, and after 3 years representing Italy in the European Board, I'm very honoured to cover this so important role. But I remind to myself and to all European FTOs and fairtraders that I'm President of a collective body (the WFTO Europe Board, all volunteers in this role), and that we have to work together to assure the most positive and democratic results. About me, it is enough to know that I know both sides of the Fair Trade chain: the "Northern side", in 1992 I funded a World Shop, and I continue working with the World Shops associate to my organisation (Ctm altromercato, an importer that is a Consortium of 120 World Shops); and the "Southern side" I visited a big number of Fair Trade producers, and I'm in contact with them because I'm the Co-ordinator of the Ctm altromercato Asia Producers Monitoring Unity. I hope that this experience will guide me in the right direction...*

*In Cordoba, last week, we held a very positive WFTO Europe Annual General Meeting. We are facing many problems in WFTO Europe: lack of economical resources and lack of members participation, and many concerns about the WFTO Global scenario and perspectives. But people present in Cordoba shared the most important tool to face the present situation: a clear engagement to strengthen WFTO and to achieve a more visible "WFTO added value" as home of the "Fair Trade Organisation". We commit ourselves to bring WFTO Europe to the next AGM in a better general position against the problems that is facing now, and we know that we can count on an engaged and motivate staff working for these goals.*

*Finally, it is important to know that at the AGM all documents presented by the Board have been approved by a very large majority or unanimously: so now we have (you can find it in the WFTO Europe intranet) our 2011 Budget and Strategic Plan, and an ambitious but credible "Advocacy Strategy". The AGM adopted as well the proposal to change the rules to appoint the WFTO Europe Board members: we moved from a "geographic criteria" (1 country=1 Board representative) to a criteria based on skills and experience. So, during our next AGM (scheduled in May 2011, during next Global AGM) all present European Board members will resign, and all members will vote for at maximum 9 Board members. We will inform you about new criteria and procedure.*

*Don't hesitate to contact your national representative, the WFTO Europe staff or myself if you have questions or proposals.*

*Giorgio Dal Fiume*