



## FINAL REPORT

# EU decision makers' understanding of and engagement in sustainable consumption and production topics

Baseline study for: The DEAR Project "Trade Fair, Live Fair: raising awareness and mobilizing the European public to advance consumption patterns that nurture the Sustainable Development Goals"

CLIENT:

Fairtrade International

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# 1. Objective of the study

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This report presents the results of interviews conducted on understanding of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SC&P) and Fair Trade among selected EU decision makers and other stakeholders. The study forms part of a baseline study for the Trade Fair Live Fair (TFLF) project led by Fairtrade International and financed by the European Commission DEAR project. The TFLF project aims to raise awareness and mobilize the European public to advance consumption patterns that nurture the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and foster more resilient livelihoods for producers and workers.

The purpose of this study is to create a baseline for the TFLF project and provide a better understanding on the perspectives on SC&P held by key stakeholders of Fairtrade. For this purpose, a number of EU decision makers from the European Parliament and the Commission as well as some other stakeholders from civil society organisations were recommended by the Fair Trade Advocacy Office (FTAO) to be interviewed. The interviews covered three main sections: The first section aimed at generating a better understanding of how the decision makers and stakeholders understand SC&P, which topics they include in the definition, which issues they prioritise, and what they see as the main barriers for SC&P. The second part serves to identify the potential policy measures that the different stakeholders find effective and to investigate which additional measures they think may lead to more sustainable patterns. The final section refers to the role of the Fair Trade movement in general and the FTAO in particular, and aims to inform how FTAO can shape the work in order to best support the stakeholders and ultimately contribute to SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production.

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# 2. Methodological approach

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## 2.1. Sampling

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The study is based on interviews with 13 selected EU decision makers and other Fair Trade stakeholders. The initial selection was made by the Fair Trade Advocacy Office, which provided a list of 19 potential interviewees. The list covered Members of the European Parliament (MEP), staff members of the European Commission (EC) as well as representatives of Civil Society Organisations (CSO). All people who agreed to be interviewed are to some extent active in topics related to SC&P and the vast majority already collaborates or communicates with FTAO on some level.

The final sample of interviewees included five MEPs (political views represented: Socialist, Green, Liberal, and Cristian Democrat); four representatives from the European Commission (representatives from the Directorate-General of Trade, Development Cooperation (EuropeAid), Agriculture and Rural Development, and Environment) and finally four representatives of Civil Society Organisations.

## 2.2. Method

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Interviews were requested by email for all 19 individuals listed by the FTAO. In the case emails were not responded, two follow-up emails were sent offering the opportunity to do a phone interview or

answer the questions in writing. Among those who declined to participate, four referred to time constraints and two said that it was not within their current mandate to express views on such questions. The interviews were held in November 2018. Six interviews were conducted face to face in Brussels, five over phone and two in writing. The time dedicated for each interview was one hour but due to time constraints on the side of the interviewee some interviews had to be shortened. All interviews were conducted by two people, one responsible for leading the interview and the other one for taking notes.

The interviews were semi-structured, and the interviewees had been provided with the questions prior to the interview. For some questions, prompted alternatives for replies were given after asking an open question. For the face to face interviews an overview of different alternatives was presented on paper as a basis for conversation, in the phone interviews the options were read to the respondents and in the written interviews the respondents were requested to rank or rate the different options specifically.

## 2.3. Limitations

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The biggest limitation of the study is the small number of participants. FTAO has chosen a limited number of people to contact and not all of them were willing to participate. The small number of participants makes it difficult to generalise responses for larger groups, for instance referring to categories such as political orientation, country, gender, age, or policy area. In many cases it has also been difficult to determine any specific patterns based on the three different stakeholder groups. A further restriction is the type of participants selected. All interviewees are familiar and to some extent engaged with SC&P. Most of them also have a direct engagement with the Fair Trade movement and are in contact with the FTAO which indicates that they are inclined to have a positive attitude to efforts related to SC&P in general and also the work of the Fair Trade movement and FTAO.

These limitations have been accepted against the background that it is very difficult to convince people to dedicate time for a subject which is not among their priorities. The limitations originating from the sample size and composition may cause a bias in the results towards a more positive and proactive position on SC&P than if the sample had included a wider group of EU decision makers and thus would have been more representative.

## 3. Stakeholders' understanding of SC&P

This section aims to map the general understanding of interviewed stakeholders regarding the concept of SC&P as well as the topics they prioritize and the factors they find as limiting for promoting more sustainable patterns.

### **Related interview questions:**

- In your own words, what are the key elements of SC&P?
- In your opinion, which are the most important issues to address in order to achieve SC&P?
- In your opinion, what do you see as limiting factors and barriers for adopting SC&P, in your domain and in general?

### **Key elements of SC&P**

Trying to describe what sustainable consumption and production (SC&P) means, the interviewees give a multidimensional perspective incorporating social and environmental aspects. When explaining what SC&P means, social aspects are addressed in two dimensions: On the one hand referring to fair distribution of wealth, access to resources and infrastructure, and on the other hand to conditions in production, such as human rights, decent working conditions, and abolishment of child and forced labour. Regarding the environmental dimension, two interviewees specifically emphasised the need to ensure that consumption patterns (and thus production) fit within the planet's limitations. Further environmental topics mentioned were climate change and the use of chemicals. Four interviewees explicitly mention the SDGs as a framework when defining SC&P, one of which refers to SDG12 as the definition of SC&P.

There are no major differences in the opinions between the groups of EC, MEP and CSOs besides that two of the CSOs stress the importance of seeing the SC&P issues from a North-South<sup>1</sup> perspective. They consider important to understand the topic in two parallel dimensions, focusing on sustainable lifestyles in the North while at the same time ensuring distribution of growth and sustainable livelihoods in the South.

### **Prioritised SC&P issues**

To find out which specific issues were considered important to tackle, the interviewees were first asked an open question and then presented a list of answers to prioritise<sup>2</sup>. Taking into account both the replies to the open question as well as the prioritization of the proposed alternatives, the topics that were most frequently mentioned were those related to general concepts of 'decent working conditions' and 'environmental protection'. All interviewed MEPs see different areas related to decent working conditions as key priorities, including human rights, labour dignity, wages and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS). Another priority seen by MEPs is environmental protection during production. Environmental sustainability is furthermore addressed through the demand of focusing on shorter supply chains and more regional production (mentioned spontaneously and in relation to the prompted answer *Environmental emissions during transport and distribution of goods*). Quality over quantity was given priority as a way to tackle the environmental problems that are caused by overconsumption. The issues

<sup>1</sup> "North" refers to the industrialized countries and "South" to developing/emerging economies.

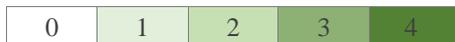
<sup>2</sup> See appendix 1 question 4 for options.

of *transparency* and *balance of power in supply chains* are stated as very important and seen as means for addressing other issues. Overall the respondents express that it is difficult to make a rank between the different topics as all of the points are considered important to some extent.

Table 1: Priority among different types of issues to address to achieve SC&P<sup>3</sup>

Type of SC&P issue	EC	MEP	CSO	Total
Transparent supply chains from producer to consumer.	3	2	2	7
Human rights in supply chains (encompassing gender equality, protection of children and vulnerable adults, migrants, etc).	1	4	2	7
Sustainable prices that cover living wages and living incomes at factory and farm level.	2	3	1	6
Occupational health and safety in factories and farms.	2	3	1	6
Balance of power in supply chains.	2	1	3	6
Environmental protection during production.	2	3	1	6
All issues simultaneously <sup>4</sup> .	3	1	0	4
Environmental emissions during transport and distribution of goods.	1	0	1	2
Quality over quantity.	0	1	1	2

Colour scale, number of interviewees who expressed priority on the issue:



Besides what was mentioned in the prompted answers, some other topics were raised by the participants:

1. Lifestyles (especially in the North) must be reconsidered, including the extent of consumption, the durability of products, and the environmental impact;
2. It is essential to make sure that the entire consumption and production patterns fit within the limits of the planet, mentioning a decarbonised economy, protection of biodiversity, and circular production models;
3. Measures for addressing SC&P issues including the role of internationally agreed standards, and the role of regulations to address shortcomings in the market.

### Limitations and barriers for SC&P

To identify the limitations and barriers for achieving SC&P, the interviewees were asked in an open question to explain the hindering factors not only in their domain but also in general.

<sup>3</sup> Prioritisation based on both open question and prompted alternatives. The table is sorted by the total number of interviewees who said the issue was important or very important to address, the colour scale indicate how many per group gave priority to the issue.

<sup>4</sup> This was not a prompted category but some interviewees said expressively that it was important to address them simultaneously and they didn't want to make a rank.

The main barriers for more sustainable consumption and production patterns are related to the role of big businesses. The topic was raised by ten interviewees. The specific comments are presented in the table below.

*Table 2: Specific comments related to the role of big businesses as main barrier for SC&P*

EC	MEP	CSO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsustainable business models and purchasing practices.</li> <li>• Concentration of power on some large businesses</li> <li>• Insufficient ‘costing’ of non-sustainable practices especially in internationally competitive sectors, leading to a ‘race to the bottom’.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The single focus on profit-making and short-term financial gains.</li> <li>• Vested interests preventing the system change which is needed but cannot be achieved through market economy alone.</li> <li>• Social and environmental irresponsibility of big companies.</li> <li>• Industry lobby</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power of big companies</li> <li>• The interest of large companies at the centre for policy making.</li> <li>• Protection of internal market</li> <li>• Influence of the business lobbies, as for example pesticide lobby, GMO lobby, retailers etc.</li> </ul>

The second most mentioned topic is the lack or inadequacy of policies to address unsustainable practices and promote sustainability, which is seen by five stakeholders as limiting factor. Two of them specifically say that there are insufficient incentives for sustainable practices and the true cost for unsustainable production processes is not well reflected in the production costs. Another criticism of the current policy expressed by two interviewees is the failure to address SC&P issues from a comprehensive perspective that integrates social and environmental dimensions in order to optimise the outcome.

Further limiting factors seen by respondents are:

- The root-causes for unsustainable conditions in producer countries are insufficiently addressed.
- A gap between policy intention and actual behaviour of stakeholders, including companies, consumers, and producers.
- Lack of consumer awareness.
- Lack of transparency in the production systems.
- The ideology of the need for high consumption to support a healthy economy and the protection of the internal market.
- A gap between specific product policies and the overall environmental impact (for instance it is sometimes easier to use virgin raw materials than recycled ones due to regulations on waste).
- Policies are weak because the proposals are watered down by the Council.

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## 4. Policies and regulations on SC&P

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With a starting point in current EU policies and regulating frameworks, this section aims to create a better understanding of which type of measures are considered most effective by the interviewed stakeholders and to find out which SC&P topics are considered to be effectively addressed in current EU policies and which are not.

### **Related interview questions:**

- In your opinion, which are the most effective strategies/ measures to push for SC&P?
- Which instruments/policy measures do you consider to be the most effective for achieving fair prices for farmers and fair wages for workers in the global south?
- Do you think that current EU policies are addressing SC&P issues in an effective way?
- Considering current EU policy (in your domain or in other relevant domains), which SC&P topics do you think are most successfully addressed?
- Which SC&P topics that you find important are not successfully/sufficiently addressed by current EU policy?
- Do you think that policy changes are needed to ensure that consumption within the EU contributes to fair prices and living income/living wages for farmers and producers in the global south? If yes, what changes?
- Which EU actors (institutions) do you consider as having a key role in fostering and promoting SC&P?

### **Most effective strategies and measures to push for SC&P**

To find out which types of measures are considered most effective, stakeholders have been asked for their opinion a) in an open question followed by b) asking them to rate the importance of different options.<sup>5</sup>

a) In the open question, the interviewee's state strategies/ measures related to seven different areas:

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 2.

Table 3: Proposed strategies / measures to push for SC&P

Potential measures to promote SC&P	EC	MEP	CSO	Total
<b>Incentivise better practice for industry actors</b>				
- Measures to reward better products. - Favouring of Fair Trade and local production in public procurement. - Positive discrimination initiatives.				3
<b>Promote best practices</b>				
				0
<b>Raising the minimum bar/ regulations to ban the worst</b>				
<u>Regulation</u>				
- Guarantying minimum prices for commodities. - Measures to remove the ‘worst’ products from the market. - Sectoral legislative framework on supply chains. - Regulation both in the EU and the global South.				4
<u>Transparency &amp; data disclosure</u>				
- Mandatory reporting systems based on transparency. - Disclosure requirements of Environmental, Social and Governmental (ESG) indicators. - Transparency of the social and environmental costs.				3
<u>Internalisation of true environmental and social costs</u>				
- Reflection on the environmental and social production costs. - Penalizing non-sustainable products.				3
<b>Support to producer countries</b>				
				0
<b>Raise public awareness</b>				
- Create awareness of the importance and added value of SC&P both in EU and 3rd countries. - Awareness raising is important to create a strong public opinion for more sustainable policies.				3
<b>Multiple aspect approach</b>				
- Coherence in policies and coherence in approaches. - Ensuring that development is at the centre and that approaches include ‘a good mix of things’ e.g. coherent policy, budget and, awareness raising strategies.				2

Colour scale, number of interviewees who proposed the corresponding type of measure:

0	1	2
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b) When asked to decide on priority measures to promote SC&P, all interviewees agreed that the measures under the category *Raising the minimum bar* in terms of putting in place stricter regulation addressing production conditions are very or extremely effective<sup>6</sup>, followed by *Awareness raising*, prioritised by nine interviewees. These are also the only two categories where no one expressed negative opinion on any of the particular measures.

Looking at the specific measures we can find the highest support for *public awareness campaigns and education* and the second highest for the *prohibition of unfair trading practices (UTP)* and for *Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) Frameworks*. Furthermore, *public procurement rules* are seen as an important, and sometimes underutilised, tool. With regards to awareness raising, different perspectives are addressed pointing both to the importance of raising awareness so that consumption patterns and

<sup>6</sup> Expressed either unprompted stating that legal requirements is the most efficient way or by expressively prioritising the category when showing the prompted answers.

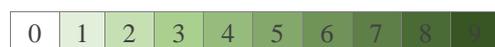
lifestyles will change, but also to change mind-sets and give support for progressive politics related to SC&P.

Some measures were more controversial. The measures with most diverse answers are the introduction of *Import regulations* and *Tax incentives for sustainable products or companies*. The negative opinions expressed on *Import regulation* were on the one hand related to the difficulties to foresee the impact of regulations on the conditions in the producer countries, perceiving the risk that this might shift problems to hidden tiers of the supply chain such as domestic production or pushing it to the informal market. On the other hand, interviewees called for cautiousness with regards to *Import regulation* in order to not block out producers in the global South from the EU market. *Tax incentives* were considered irrelevant because a) they have little impact on changing practices towards SC&P and b) there is no sense in ‘helping’ businesses, they simply need to take responsibility. The second reason is also applicable for the low support or even resistance towards *Awards* and *financial support for best actors/ practices*.

Table 4: Rating of potential EU policy measures to promote SC&P<sup>7</sup>

Potential EU policy measures to promote SC&P prepared by FTAO	Not relevant at all	Slightly & relevant	Very & extremely relevant
<b>Incentivise better practice for industry actors</b>			
Public procurement rules		2	6
Competition law allows voluntary sector-wide commitments		4	1
Tax incentives for sustainable products or companies	2	1	4
<b>Promote best practices</b>			
Awards	2	3	
Financial support to best actors/ pioneers	1	1	1
<b>Raising the minimum bar/ regulations to ban the worst</b>			
Supply chain transparency requirements		2	3
Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) Frameworks for companies to help them prevent and manage labour rights risks			8
Import regulation	2	1	4
Prohibition of Unfair Trading Practices (UTP)			8
Sustainable finance (investment conditionality)		2	5
<b>Support to producer countries</b>			
Support to legislative frameworks (labour law, environmental law)		2	4
Development cooperation policies: Support measures to promote sustainable production practices		2	2
<b>Raise public awareness</b>			
Support public awareness campaigns and education			9

Colour scale, number of people that ranked the potential policy measure:



<sup>7</sup> The table shows a combination of spontaneous answers to the open question and comments made on the prompted answers as demonstrated in the overview presented in appendix 2. All specific measures have not been ranked by all interviewees.

## The effectiveness of current EU policies

When it comes to the effectiveness of existing EU policies addressing SC&P, the following opinions were given:

- Two EC representatives and one MEP consider current policies effective, although with the reservation that more could be done and that the implementation is still lagging behind.
- Four respondents (3 MEP, 1 CSO) say that the current policies are not addressing SC&P in an effective way, because they are too basic and need further strengthening.
- Four (3 CSO, 1 EC) respondents say that they are partially effective, they are aware that ‘some things are on their way’ but consider current policies either to be superficial or insufficiently addressing social issues, while seeing environmental aspects more effectively addressed.
- One respondent expressed that the EU policies need to be complemented by national rules and specific taxation tools to incentivise more sustainable operations and disincentive unsustainable practices.
- Two people did not express an opinion.

Looking at which specific topics are considered to be successfully addressed and which ones are not, responses are almost as diverse as the interviewed stakeholders themselves. In general, interviewees mainly refer to the policies and regulations they are engaged in or which are related to their specific working area. The lack of consensus here suggests that participants are very well informed on the specific area they are working on, but have less overview on all EU policies addressing SC&P. In line with the opinions expressed regarding the effectiveness of EU policies in general, most opinions regarding specific policies are expressed in terms of ‘progress has been made’, ‘it is a step on the way’ etc. which indicates that the majority is in favour of further measures to strengthen the framework for SC&P. Looking at which type of issues are more frequently mentioned in positive terms compared to negative, there is a tendency for interviewees to see more environmental aspects of SC&P addressed in EU policies than specific social issues. With regard to issues that are seen as insufficiently addressed, the majority of the topics mentioned can be understood as cross-cutting – covering both environmental and social dimensions.

Table 5: List of SC&P topics more successfully addressed / not successfully addressed<sup>8</sup>

	Issues more successfully addressed	Issues <u>not</u> successfully addressed
<i>Environment<sup>9</sup></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reinforcement of the commitment to tackle climate change by the EU at the Marrakech Climate Change Conference.</li> <li>• The regulation of environmental topics such as reduction of plastic use and improved waste management systems is seen as more successful than for example policies on social issues.</li> <li>• The regulation of some environmental aspects for particular products are quite well developed, for instance controlling energy consumption in the user phase.</li> <li>• The regulation of single use plastic bags which also serve as an example of how applying market mechanisms can impact behaviour.</li> <li>• Safety and environmental aspects of products produced in the EU well addressed by current policies.</li> <li>• Organic agriculture is well regulated through the existing legislative framework.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current policies are missing an overall perspective to make sure that consumption and production patterns are working within the planetary boundaries.</li> <li>• Taxation on environmentally harmful products can be strengthened / complete eco-taxation is not in place.</li> <li>• Environmental impacts of imported products (production and transport).</li> </ul>
<i>Social<sup>10</sup></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress has been made in EU policies in the last years to restrict investments from EU actors that lead to land grabbing at international level.</li> <li>• The inclusivity aspect of the ‘Trade for All strategy’ that aims for development of markets outside the EU as well is a step in the right direction.</li> <li>• Social sustainability for producers within the EU is increasingly better addressed, for example through the new Completion law in progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum prices paid to producers that cover living wages and incomes. This is much less in focus now compared to ten years ago.</li> <li>• The aspect of creating policies that allow for developing countries to catch up on development.</li> <li>• Human rights obligations for the private sector including obligatory human rights due diligence.</li> <li>• Fair wages for producers, particularly outside the EU but also EU farmers.</li> <li>• Subsidies should be replaced by fair prices for products.</li> </ul>
<i>Cross-cutting<sup>9</sup></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The regulation of timber with requirements both related to biodiversity protection and transparency issues to avoid wood sales financing conflicts is an example of an effective legislation that has been in place for some years.</li> <li>• From an international perspective, International standards for working conditions and environment are increasingly included in the trade policies.</li> <li>• Progress has been made with regards to sustainable finance reporting and due diligence, however it is not completely in place yet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unfair Trading Practices in the food supply chain has been a problem but the issues that are now being addressed through the new EC proposal for prohibition (UTP)<sup>11</sup>. Important that it gets approved and implemented.</li> <li>• The supply chain for textiles.</li> <li>• The coherence aspect of different EU policies and how they can be linked to the SDGs.</li> <li>• Insufficient policies for addressing sustainability through/in the finance sector.</li> <li>• True cost of food is not well addressed by current EU policy</li> <li>• Market transparency is not well addressed but might be in the near future.</li> <li>• The mandatory requirements for integrated reporting of both financial and sustainability data making company boards accountable.</li> <li>• Progress has been made with regards to sustainable finance reporting and due diligence, however it is not completely in place yet.</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> The table represents all answers given to questions 9 and 10 (see appendix 1) in a systematised way.

<sup>9</sup> Issues related to protection of environment, climate, natural resources, and eco-system.

<sup>10</sup> Social issues are defined as those either related to conditions in production or the aspect of inclusivity and right to development in general.

<sup>11</sup> See: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/market-measures/unfair-trading-practices\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/market-measures/unfair-trading-practices_en) (accessed 26 November 2018).

## Measures to ensure fair prices that cover living incomes and wages

In addition to the discussion on measures to promote SC&P in general, the specific issue of fair prices that cover living incomes and wages was discussed during the interviews, assessing which measures are considered effective and if changes are needed in current policies.

The measures and strategies seen as most effective for achieving fair prices for farmers and fair wages for workers in the global South can be divided into two main groups, one focusing on the international trade system and the relationship with non-European producer countries and the other one focusing on regulations for businesses.

Measures related to the trade system are particularly supported by EC representatives. The ILO conventions combined with local legislation in producer countries and effective trade unions, are seen as the important instruments. Furthermore, it is argued that the enforcement of requirements can also be supported by the import tariffs system for developing countries under the Generalized System of Preference (GSP), if accompanied by requirements and capacity building measures.

Parliament and CSO representatives more frequently mention topics related to regulations for businesses. Favoured measures include stricter CSR regulations in terms of due diligence, transparency, and disclosure requirements. Other measures discussed were related to regulation on minimum prices for commodities, the regulation of Unfair Trading Practices, awareness raising, as well as a change of mind-sets leading to the denouncement of marketing campaigns selling the idea that 'cheap is good'.

Table 6: Effective instruments and measures for promoting fair prices and living income/living wages for farmers and producers in the global South<sup>12</sup>

Potential measures for fair prices and wages	EC	MEP	CSO	TOTAL
<b>Incentivise better practice for industry actors</b>				
				0
<b>Promote best practices</b>				
				0
<b>Raising the minimum bar/ regulations to ban the worst</b>				
Supply chain transparency requirements				4
Due diligence requirements				3
Regulate minimum prices paid to farmers				4
Prohibition of Unfair Trading Practices (UTP)				2
Addressing power in supply chains				1
<b>Support to producer countries</b>				
Trade unions, collective bargaining, sound labour market policies				3
Enforcement of ILO conventions				2
Responsible EU trade policies and agreements with producer countries including Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) with sustainability requirements but also accompanied by capacity building.				2
<b>Raise public awareness</b>				
Awareness raising measures towards EU consumers based on transparency on supply chain issues.				2

Colour scale, number of people who indicated the type of measure:

0	1	2
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Considering current policies, the majority (nine) of the interviewees think that policy changes are needed in order to make sure that consumption within the EU contributes to fair prices and living income/living wages for farmers and producers in the global South. Two respondents (EC) do not state that policy changes are needed but instead they mention that measures could be taken to strengthen enforcement and implementation of current regulations. Two CSO representatives say that they are not able to answer. The types of changes proposed are much in line with what was argued to be efficient measures in table 6. Specific comments include:

- Mandatory and enforceable measures setting minimum fair prices to be paid to farmers / producers, instead of subsidies for the production of cheap products.
- Regulation of price setting from big retailers and limiting their space to decide what fair prices are.
- Making unsustainable products more expensive.
- Prevent that voluntary standards come in the way of imposing strict legislation.
- Establishing policies that address the human costs of production

<sup>12</sup> Corresponds to question 7 (see appendix 1). Unprompted question, categories are created based on groping of similar comments.

- Ensuring that we do not have strict regulations in the EU and at the same time allow social dumping in other parts of the world.
- Applying fair trade practices while at the same time addressing the question of the extent and type of consumption within the EU to ensure it can be managed within the limitations of the planet.

### **Responsible actors to push for SC&P**

There is agreement among the interviewed stakeholders that the EU institutions share the responsibility for pushing a SC&P agenda. Four respondents point at all three main EU institutions, the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council, as key actors for fostering and promoting SC&P. The most frequently mentioned actors are the Commission (mentioned by ten) and the Parliament (mentioned by nine). Five respondents mentioned the Council, three of whom stated that it plays a key role in ensuring that the proposed policies are not watered down, which means that national policies also play an important role. One MEP mentions that he/she often sees a majority for the strengthening of SC&P in Parliament but that it is rejected by the Council. Besides the EU institutions, one interviewee (MEP) sees that the responsibility is also shared with a number of actors including EU ambassadors in producer countries, governments in producer countries, CSOs, and businesses. In addition to this the UN is seen as an important actor by one CSO and another CSO sees that ‘we all’ have a role in contributing to the change of patterns.

## 5. Engagement with Fair Trade

In line with the overall purpose of the study to generate knowledge that can be used for the strengthening of activities for the TFLF project, this section aims to investigate the stakeholders' perceptions of the Fair Trade movement and identify how the FTAO can provide support to stakeholders in promoting SC&P.

### Related interview questions:

- Which role do you think the Fair Trade movement plays in achieving SDG12 (ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns)?
- Do you engage with the Fair Trade movement in some way?
- How do you evaluate the work that the Fair Trade movement is doing in general?
- Is it useful for you to work with the Brussels-based Fair Trade Advocacy Office (FTAO)?
- What are your main objectives for your engagement in questions related to SC&P and what do you see as your main obstacles for achieving these objectives?
- What additional support/tools/information do you need to overcome these obstacles and accomplish your objectives?
- In what way do you think that the FTAO can best support you in achieving your objectives related to SC&P?
- What type of support and interactions provided by the FTAO is most useful to you?
- What SC&P-related topics are you most interested in / would you like to receive more information on?
- Do you have any additional comments on the FTAO's work?

### Relevance of the Fair Trade Movement

The work of the Fair Trade movement is generally seen as relevant by the interviewed stakeholders. Four respondents (3 MEP and 1 CSO) say it is *extremely relevant*, five (2 EC, 1 MEP and 2 CSO) say that it is *very relevant* and three (2 EC and 1 MEP) rate it as *relevant*. Looking at the more specific question of SC&P and in particular SDG12, interviewees agree that the Fair Trade movement plays an important role for achieving this goal. Two respondents (EC and CSO) say that it is *very relevant* and nine respondents (3 EC, 3 MEP and 3 CSO) express that it is *important* although with different kinds of reservations, some even contradictory: 1) The role of Fairtrade is important but along with other labelling systems; 2) it is important already but it has not yet reached its full potential; 3) it is important but the focus should be its role in transforming the trade system rather than increasing Fairtrade sales.

### Interaction with FTAO

Looking at the type of interaction that the stakeholders have or wish to have with FTAO, it is clear that one of the most appreciated activities are events such as the Fair Trade breakfast, mentioned by six respondents (2 EC, 2 MEP, 2 CSO). The two other interactions that are specifically appreciated are policy briefs and the opportunity to communicate bilaterally, mentioned by five interviewees respectively. Three respondents expressively say that a mix of all proposed activities is good<sup>13</sup>. There is no noticeable difference in preferences between the different groups.

<sup>13</sup> Prompted question, see options in Appendix 1 question 20.

The final parts of the interviews were dedicated towards understanding the challenges that the stakeholders face when addressing SC&P issues and how FTAO can support them best to overcome these challenges. Most interviewees (all but three) already have an established contact with the FTAO and find the collaboration very useful. It was expressed that Fair Trade plays a key role for placing the issue of prices and wages on the political agenda and FTAO plays an important role to advocate for the need of standards ensuring real improvements instead of standards merely aimed to reducing harm.

The added value for interviewed stakeholders is perceived to be the experience of the Fair Trade movement, gained from working with producers in the field as well as from consumer-advocacy and public policy advocacy work.

### **Obstacles to reach objectives related to SC&P**

The main obstacle that respondents see for not achieving the targets for their own commitment to SC&P is the reluctance of key actors to engage with the issue. The actors are seen as either a) unaware of the urgency of the problem or b) not prioritising it and instead pursuing diverging interests, such as their own financial gain. The obstacles mentioned are much in line with what was mentioned in the section for *Limitations and Barriers for SC&P*.

### **Measures to overcome obstacles**

In general lines the interviewees see that Fair Trade is already doing a good job and should continue their work. Most important activities are seen in awareness raising and information on the interlinkages between consumption and production, not only among the general public, but also in EU institutions. Campaigns have been mentioned as effective means to call for attention on the issue. A good method to raise awareness is also seen in story telling on problems and possible solutions.

Also, respondents consider it important for FTAO to continue networking and strengthening collaboration among CSOs. FTAO can use the on-the-ground experience of working with Fair Trade actors to create networks with other movements working on sustainability issues. Through networking and sharing experiences, the CSOs can create a stronger voice together even if they don't advocate for the exact same topic. In this regard it was also mentioned that it is not only important for FTAO to invite other CSOs to their activities, but that FTAO takes opportunities to participate in activities arranged by others in order to strengthen the networks, connect more with the international agenda and provide expertise on Fair Trade. Another suggestion made was to expand the target group of networking activities to a broad spectrum of different actors, including different political groups, churches, etc. Furthermore, the idea was mentioned to follow up on speeches and positions stated by politicians and Commission employees during Fair Trade events to try to hold them accountable for taking action accordingly.

### **Support for achieving objectives related to SC&P**

FTAO is considered to possess valuable access to empiric evidence and data on conditions in the global South and product supply chains. This type of information is expressively requested by two EC, three MEP and four CSO with the argument that it can serve to explain the interlinkage of production and consumption as well as how consumption in the North impacts human rights in the South. Providing stakeholders with studies containing argumentation and conclusions based on empiric data could help them to win people for the cause.

With regards to the experience in advocacy, stakeholders are on the one hand interested in learning more on the successes and limitations that Fair Trade has had when trying to engage consumers, and on the other hand, they are interested in getting better insight into how other types of stakeholders, such as business forums, talk about SC&P topics.

## Action areas and important topics to address

Based on these needs and challenges expressed by the stakeholders, the particular experience of Fair Trade can be translated into two different types of activities that would benefit the stakeholders<sup>14</sup>:

1. Advocacy on two levels:
  - Providing the Fair Trade stakeholders with evidence based material that they can use in advocacy towards other groups.
  - Direct advocacy from FTAO towards all kinds of actors that are not already convinced by the movement or engaged in the topic, including for example different political groups and the church.
2. Networking and strengthening collaboration among CSOs

Finally, looking at the general comments from the interviewed stakeholders on what the Fair Trade movement and FTAO need to pay special attention to, two topics can be highlighted:

- **Fairtrade label vs. other sustainability labels**

It was expressed that the Fairtrade system needs to make efforts to distinguish the Fairtrade label from other labelling systems. For consumers it is difficult to understand the differences and some of the respondents express that Fairtrade has a much stronger impact, specifically when it comes to ensuring fair prices at farm and worker level, and that this must be strengthened in the communication with consumers.

- **Fair trade, consumption patterns and supply chains**

From the CSOs side in particular, the interest has been expressed to discuss the role of shorter or regional supply chains compared to the export-based model, with extraction or production in the South, which many Fair Trade products originate from. This issue is also related to the emphasis on keeping entire consumption and production patterns within the boundaries of the planet. A point is made that for SC&P it is important to pay attention to lifestyles and ecologic footprint in Europe and measures to address issues of resource distribution and poverty in other parts of the world must be balanced against this. For instance, it could be questioned if purchasing Fairtrade-certified flowers from South America in Europe can be considered sustainable.

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<sup>14</sup> Both activities are recognised as something that FTAO is already doing, however they are still mentioned because they are argued to be important.

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## 6. Key findings

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- Both, decent working conditions and environmental protection are considered to be key issues to achieve SC&P.
- Addressing the balance of power and increasing transparency are seen as important means for addressing sustainability issues in supply chains.
- The financial interest of businesses as well as the lack or inadequacy of policies to address unsustainable practices and promote sustainability, are seen as the main barriers for SC&P.
- The work of the EU Parliament, Commission, and Council as well as the implementation of EU policies are seen as crucial to achieving SC&P.
- Interviewees tend to see environmental aspects of SC&P more effectively addressed in EU policies than specific social issues.
- The majority of the interviewees agree that strict legislation is needed to strengthen SC&P and that current policy is not sufficiently effective. Measures aiming to *Raise the minimum bar* as well as *Public awareness* are considered as the most effective strategies.
- Mandatory standards and requirements for businesses are favoured above voluntaristic systems such as incentives and awards.
- Awareness among consumers has the potential to both change their consumption patterns but also to increase the likelihood that they will support public policies that address SC&P issues.
- Interviewees see an important role for the Fair Trade movement in achieving SDG 12 and consider the work of Fair Trade very relevant in general.
- FTAO's networks, their experience from the field and access to evidence-based data are highly valuable to stakeholders.
- Fair Trade, and in particular the FTAO, plays a key role in putting the question of fair prices in commodity supply chains on the EU agenda.
- Important points for consideration for future work of FTAO are: 1) the positioning of the Fairtrade label in relation to other sustainability labels; 2) continued efforts to try to reach actors in different policy areas and from across the political spectrum; 3) discussions on how the Fair Trade movement positions itself towards sustainable consumption models based on shorter supply chains, local production or reduced consumption.

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## 7. Concluding remarks

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The positions expressed in the interviews with selected EU decision makers and other stakeholders show an active commitment to SC&P from an already engaged group. The readiness for participating in the interviews and the very positive attitude towards FTAO is a clear sign of how well the advocacy work has been done so far.

The understanding of what SC&P means and which issues are important to address is similar among the different actors but they propose different ways to address the issues. Among the interviewees there is a general agreement that the interest of big business is a barrier for SC&P and the majority is in favour of stricter regulations and legislation, demonstrating the importance that they give to the three EU institutions as key actors with the potential for ensuring SC&P.

Interviewed stakeholders express that EU policies increasingly address environmental aspects of SC&P, but social aspects are not present enough on the political agenda. To tackle this, they see a relevant role for the Fair Trade movement. Its experience and networks, especially in the global South, contribute to gaining the support of EU decision makers. The movement contributes to create awareness among consumers, both influencing purchasing decisions and changing mind-sets in favour of promoting SC&P policies and measures.

However, more and more players are appearing on the market of fair and sustainable trade and many consumers are not aware of the distinguishing features of the Fairtrade label compared to other labels. There is also no clear understanding among interviewed stakeholders if Fair Trade mainly focuses on social aspects or aims at encompassing a global perspective addressing all aspects of SC&P combined, including for example shorter or regional supply chains.

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# Appendix 1: Interview guide

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## I. Basic data

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1. Introduction and presentation round. Please briefly explain your work.
2. Are you professionally engaged in the promotion of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SC&P)? Please explain how and which topics you engage in.

## II. Understanding of SC&P

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3. In your own words, what are the key elements of SC&P?
4. In your opinion, which are the most important issues to address in order to achieve SC&P?  
*For example:*
  - Sustainable prices that cover living wages and living incomes at factory and farm level
  - Environmental protection during production
  - Occupational health and safety in factories and farms
  - Balance of power in supply chains
  - Transparent supply chains from producer to consumer
  - Human rights in supply chains (encompassing gender equality, protection of children and vulnerable adults, migrants, etc)
  - Environmental emissions during transport and distribution of goods
  - Quality over quantity
5. In your opinion, what do you see as limiting factors and barriers for adopting SC&P, in your domain and in general?

## III. Policies and regulations on SC&P

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6. In your opinion, which are the most effective strategies/ measures to push for SC&P?  
*See appendix 2 for example of discusses potential policy measures.*
7. Which instruments/policy measures do you consider to be the most effective for achieving fair prices for farmers and fair wages for workers in the global south?
8. Do you think that current EU policies are addressing SC&P issues in an effective way?
9. Considering current EU policy (in your domain or in other relevant domains), which SC&P topics do you think are most successfully addressed?
10. Which SC&P topics that you find important are not successfully/sufficiently addressed by current EU policy?
11. Do you think that policy changes are needed to ensure that consumption within the EU contributes to fair prices and living income/living wages for farmers and producers in the global south? If yes, what changes?
12. Which EU actors (institutions) do you consider as having a key role in fostering and promoting SC&P?

## IV. Engagement with Fair Trade

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13. Which role do you think the Fair Trade movement plays in achieving SDG12 (ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns)?
14. Do you engage with the Fair Trade movement in some way?
15. How do you evaluate the work that the Fair Trade movement is doing in general?
16. Is it useful for you to work with the Brussels-based Fair Trade Advocacy Office (FTAO)?
17. What are your main objectives for your engagement in questions related to SC&P and what do you see as your main obstacles for achieving these objectives?
18. What additional support/tools/information do you need to overcome these obstacles and accomplish your objectives?
19. In what way do you think that the FTAO can best support you in achieving your objectives related to SC&P?
20. What type of support and interactions provided by the FTAO is most useful to you?

*For example:*

- Distribution of information through newsletters, twitter, article in newspapers
- Policy briefs / analysis
- Bilateral communication in emails, linked in, or bilateral meetings
- Organisation of events such as Fairtrade Breakfast, lunchtime meetings or large conferences
- Opportunities to meet producers
- Other

21. What SC&P-related topics are you most interested in / would you like to receive more information on?

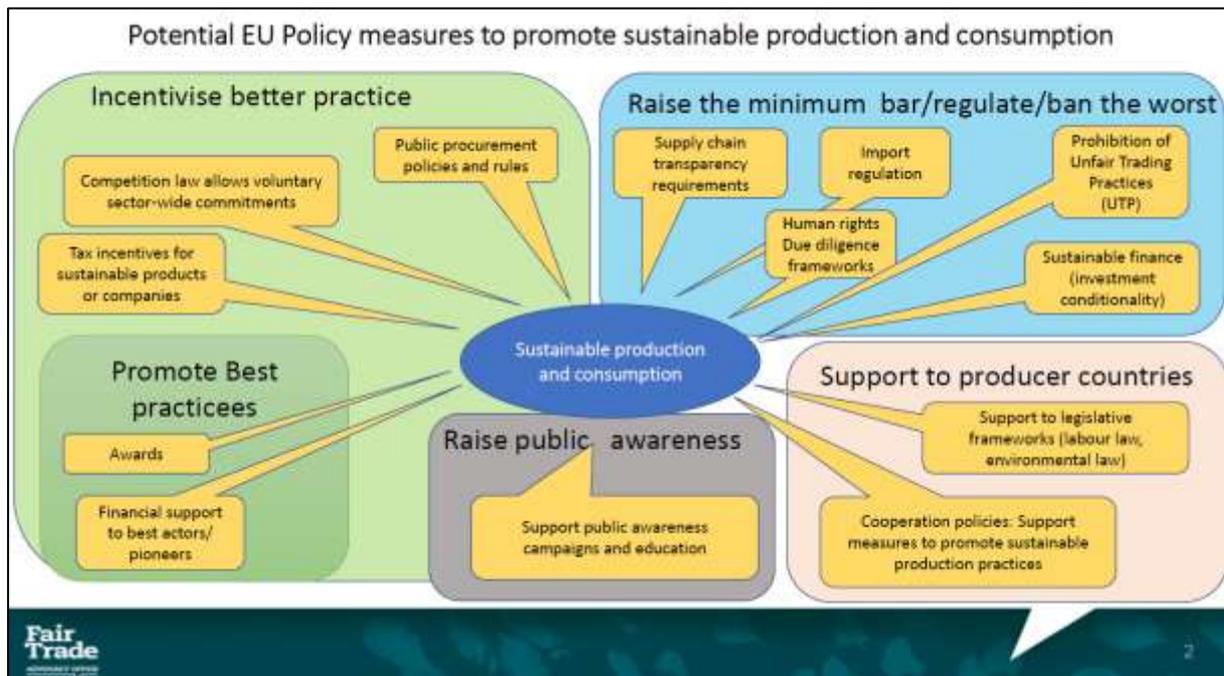
*For example:*

- Sustainable prices that cover living wages and living incomes at factory and farm level.
- Environmental protection during production.
- Occupational health and safety in factories and farms.
- Balance of power in supply chain.
- Transparent supply chains from producer to consumer
- Human rights in supply chains (encompassing gender equality, protection of children and vulnerable adults, migrants, etc)
- Environmental emissions during transport and distribution of goods
- Other (please specify)

22. Do you have any additional comments on the FTAO's work?

## Appendix 2: Overview of potential policy measures to promote SC&P prepared by FTAO

The overview was used as a basis for discussion for question 6 in the face to face interviews. For phone interviews the respondents did not have access to the prompted answers before the interview, the alternatives were only discussed orally. For written interviews the respondents were provided with a table where they could rate the different alternatives.





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