



**Clean  
Clothes  
Campaign**



**Mr Neven Mimica**

European Commissioner for International Cooperation & Development

**Mr Klaus Rudischhauser**

Deputy Director-General of DG Development and Cooperation

Copied to :

**Mr Jean-Claude Juncker**

President of the European Commission

**Ms Cecilia Malmström**

European Commissioner for Trade

**Ms Federica Mogherini**

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR)

**Ms Marianne Thyssen**

European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility

And :

DG NEAR, DG GROW, DG TRADE, DG EMPL, DG JUST and DG ENV

10 March 2015

**EU Flagship initiative for the responsible management of the supply chain in the garment sector**

Dear Excellences,

On 23<sup>rd</sup> January we were invited by DG DEVCO to an informal stakeholders meeting aimed at discussing the launch of a *Flagship initiative* for the *responsible management of the supply chain in the garment sector*. We welcome the European Commission's willingness to address this very serious topic.

The undersigned organizations work closely with various actors within the textile supply chain in order to improve the respect of Human and Workers rights.

We would like to stress once again that the textile supply chain is a very complex one: different stages of the value chain can occur in different countries and human rights abuses may occur at every stage of the chain, from raw material production to finishing of the garment. The garment industry is sadly renowned for its tragic deadly catastrophes due to the lack of respect of health and safety obligations, widespread poverty levels among farmers and workers, systemic abuse of human rights and considerable environmental impacts throughout the production chains it operates

However, based on what has been said in this meeting, we see the need to underline the absolute necessity to **focus all available energy on actions that will deliver actual results in substantially improving the terrible realities existing today in global garment supply chains in all regions of the world including in Eastern and Central Europe and in the EU itself. This must first and foremost include a set of legislative initiatives addressing (1) the need for transparency and traceability, (2) mandatory due diligence, (3) effective remediation and (4) concrete actions for specific cases, the most pressing being the EU taking leadership to guarantee due compensation to Rana Plaza victims. All these actions can be (5) initiated or monitored by an ombudsperson mandated by the European Commission to assess and remedy human rights violations in the garment supply chain.**

We are concerned of the risk of establishing yet another multi-stakeholders platform, which could jeopardize concrete progress in this area. In our view, the process has to be ambitious and targeted, and avoid being merely a public relations exercise aimed at promoting past efforts. The 2015 Year for Development and future EU CSR strategy should not be limited to several meetings of stakeholders with conflicting interests which in the end result in no clear decisions or actions. Political will and vision are needed to clearly define the scope and aim of the initiative. The only acceptable aim of this initiative for us would be to deliver concrete improvements to the lives of workers and the farmers on the ground.

Many stakeholders can and do already contribute to efforts for more responsible supply chains, sometimes with the support of the European Commission, through studies, conferences, meetings and all kinds of actions, with mixed results. In this area, however, the European Commission should use the tool that no other stakeholder in the EU has: legislative initiative and effective leverage on companies and third governments.

This is achievable: The European Union has already shown it is able to play a useful role in supporting solutions to problems and issues found within complex global supply chains. One example of this is the FLEGT action plan on illegal timber, which incentivises producing countries to improve compliance while also pressuring importing and selling companies to comply with binding due diligence, controls and sanctions. **If the EU can deliver such an approach on illegal timber, thereby preventing European consumers from being party to unacceptable practices in that industry, why could it not adopt a similar approach to tackling violations of international fundamental workers rights within the manufacture of garments and textiles?**

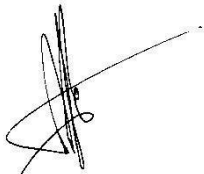
President Juncker said *This is the last-chance commission for Europe. Either we win back the citizens of Europe [...] or we fail.* Citizens want Europe to seriously serve the people, both in Europe and abroad. 94% of citizens favour *strengthening international rules to make companies around the world provide better wages and labour conditions*<sup>1</sup>. The EU is the biggest consumer market in the world, therefore, it has both the leverage needed and a duty to act, as has been outlined within the UN framework of Business and Human Rights, to ensure a global garment industry that respects human rights. The EU must show international leadership in this field by taking the steps needed to enable it to bring convincing results to the table of the global supply chain discussion at the 2016 Convention of the ILO.

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<sup>1</sup> Global Poll 2014 [http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/ituc\\_global\\_poll\\_2014\\_en\\_web.pdf](http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/ituc_global_poll_2014_en_web.pdf)

We are ready and willing to support a process that has the potential to live up to these expectations. We would like to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss in more detail how to improve living conditions for workers and farmers employed within the global garment supply chain.

Best Regards,



**Carole Crabbé**

**achACT & Clean Clothes Campaign**

*achACT is the national coalition of the Clean Clothes Campaign in French-speaking Belgium.*

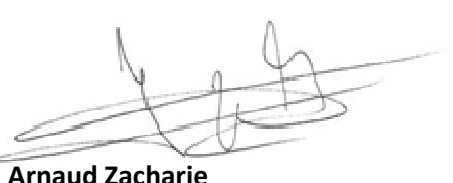
*Clean Clothes Campaign is a global alliance of 250 organisations, including trade unions, NGOs and consumers' organisations, dedicated to improving working conditions and supporting the empowerment of workers in the global garment and sportswear industries. Clean Clothes Campaign has national coalitions in 16 EU countries.*



**Jérôme Chaplier**

**European Coalition for Corporate Justice**

*With 21 member groups who represent over 250 organisations from 15 countries, ECCJ brings together European campaigns and national platforms of NGOs, trade unions, consumer organisations and academics to improve the EU legal framework on corporate accountability.*



**Arnaud Zacharie**

**CNCD 11.11.11.**

*CNCD 11.11.11. is the Belgian NGO platform*



**Jean-Philippe Ducart**

**Test-achats**

*Test-achats is the Belgian consumers' organisation*



**Luisa Crisigiovanni**

**Altroconsumo**

*Altroconsumo is the Italian consumers' organisation*



**David Miguel Ortega**

**Organización de Consumidores y Usuarios**

*OCU is the Spanish consumers' organisation*