



FLOWERS NEWS 4
June 2007



Newsletter by the Secretariat of the Review Committee FFP

Dear readers:

The creation of this newsletter is to inform you about the latest news in the flower industry around the whole world. Our writers are the members of the Review Committee of FFP and sympathising organisations. Below each article you will find the name of the writer and his/her e-mail address in case you want to know more about the subject.

Enjoy it and don't hesitate to contact us if you have any comment and/or question about this newsletter.

King Regards,

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News from FFP bodies:

Secretariat – Amsterdam

🚩 Flowers News on internet

Since April 2007 you can find Flowers News on www.flowercampaign.org under the news of NGOs / Trade Unions.

By Betsabé Lugo: b.lugo@fairflowersfairplants.com

🚩 Meeting with the observers from The Netherlands (May 15th 2007)

The Secretariat of the Review Committee of FFP and two Review Committee members (Kees Hoek and René Kouwenhoven) had a meeting with the observers from The Netherlands in Utrecht to discuss with them the modifications that the Review Committee have made to the manual of observers.

We also talked about the allowance they receive to participate in an audit and the way this allowance will be paid.

By Betsabé Lugo: b.lugo@fairflowersfairplants.com

🚩 Review Committee teleconference (May 22nd 2007)

The Review Committee of FFP had a teleconference via skype to talk about the Board agenda for the meeting of May 23rd 2007 in The Netherlands.

By Betsabé Lugo: b.lugo@fairflowersfairplants.com

✚ **ILRF (International Labor Rights Fund) into the Review Committee**

The American organisation ILRF based in Washington is a new member of the Review Committee of FFP since June 2007. The organisation will be represented by Nora Ferm, e-mail: nora.ferm@ilrf.org website www.laborrights.org
By Betsabé Lugo: b.lugo@fairflowersfairplants.com

✚ **Benchmark against FFP standards (18th - 21st June 2007)**

From 18th till 21st June a workshop was held in Amsterdam to benchmark other standards and codes against the FFP standards. The participants were the members of the Review Committee of FFP and its Secretariat. During the four days, they reviewed and benchmarked MPS-SQ, from MPS, a certification organisation that applied for it.

By Betsabé Lugo: b.lugo@fairflowersfairplants.com

Secretariat – Nairobi

No news

Board

✚ **Board meeting in Aalsmeer, The Netherlands (May 23rd 2007)**

Points of discussion:

- FLP
- Proposal certification Italian greens
- Letter to the Board and the Chair from the Review Committee
- Report ETI in Colombia
- Statement of confidentiality for observers
- Annual financial statement of account 2006

Next meeting by skype or telephone: August 8th, 2007.

By Regina Dinkla: r.dinkla@fairflowersfairplants.com

FFP office – Honselersdijk

✚ **Industry Committee**

Next meeting: September 28th 2007

By Regina Dinkla: r.dinkla@fairflowersfairplants.com

✚ **First Dutch exporter selling in France**

The export company Hukra from Aalsmeer, The Netherlands started together with their customers the sale of FFP-products in France. Being the first Dutch exporter who started in France, sales go via 29 French florists and via some locations of the French garden centre organisation 'Delbard'.

By Regina Dinkla: r.dinkla@fairflowersfairplants.com

✚ **Arena Flowers in the UK**

Recently Arena Flowers, the FFP web shop florist in the UK, went to a special event hosted by the investment bank ABN Amro to raise awareness amongst their staff and clients regarding ethical sourcing and climate change. Arena Flowers was invited to explain the benefits of buying Fair Flowers Fair Plants flowers and plants and to illustrate the supply chain that FFP accredited flowers or plants go through.

By Regina Dinkla: r.dinkla@fairflowersfairplants.com

✚ **FFP participants**

Until June 25th 2007 the number of FFP participants was as follow: 216 producers, 106 traders and 296 retailers. In total 618 companies that have registered with FFP. Only part of them is active at the moment via the pilots.

By Regina Dinkla: r.dinkla@fairflowersfairplants.com

News from Africa:

Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia

No news

News from North America:

United States

✚ ILRF in Colombia for ETI forum (April 2007)

ILRF staff traveled to Colombia in April to attend the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI)'s multi-stakeholder forum on ethical trade in the flower industry, and to participate in a two-day strategy workshop with the Untraflores union and US-based NGO and union partners.

By Nora Ferm: nora.ferm@ilrf.org

✚ Flower power. A blooming movement for change (CBC News in Canada, May 9th 2007)

Canadians, Americans, Europeans and others are giving each other roses, carnations and chrysanthemums — the big three of cut flowers — like never before. One reason is cost. Flowers became cheaper as production shifted to dozens of low-wage countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. These countries have been piling into the industry, switching from food crops to vast fields of gently swaying rosebuds or endless rows of chrysanthemums. Another is the relative ease of sending a bouquet by using the internet to order and pay. By the end of the last decade, the cut flower business was growing by 10 per cent a year. See the full text in <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/fair-trade/flower-power.html>

By Nora Ferm: nora.ferm@ilrf.org

✚ Sustainable Living: The not-so-sweet smell of floral imports (Times Herald Record, May 13th 2007)

Flowers are big business. The U.S. floral market is a \$20-billion-a-year industry, yet the vast majority of the 4 billion flower stems sold here every year come from Latin America. Colombia, Ecuador and Peru have been exporting flowers to us duty-free since the 1980s. As part of the "war on drugs," import taxes on South American flowers were eliminated to give farmers a profitable crop to replace cocaine. See the full text in <http://www.recordonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070513/NEWS/705130329>

By Nora Ferm: nora.ferm@ilrf.org

News from Latin America:

Colombia

✚ CBA negotiations with DOLE in Colombia

In May, ILRF worked to support CBA negotiations at Splendor-El Rosal plantation in Colombia, and to pressure Dole to negotiate in good faith with the Untraflores union. An urgent action has been posted at <http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/mothersday07/> for anyone interested in sending messages to Dole in support of the union.

By Nora Ferm: nora.ferm@ilrf.org

Ecuador

🚩 FUNDESS (Fundación para el Desarrollo Social Sustentable - Foundation for Sustainable Social Development)

ILRF has helped the Ecuadorian-based NGO FUNDESS, which opened a legal support centre for flower workers in Cayambe in early 2005, to get its first website up and running. See www.fundess.org for information about FUNDESS's history and current work (web site is in English).

By Nora Ferm: nora.ferm@ilrf.org

🚩 Formation and Fortification of the Union Organisation of the workers in the floriculture, FENACLE (Federación Nacional de Trabajadores Agroindustriales, Campesinos e Indígenas Libres de Ecuador – National Federation of Agro-industrial Workers, Farmers and Free Natives of Ecuador)

In February 2007 the Dutch Union Federation - FNV approved a FENACLE's project denominated "Formation and Fortification of the Union Organization of the workers in the floriculture", whose objective is to improve their labour conditions. To develop the project the workers will be trained in labour rights; information about the floricultural workers will be spread in local mass media; dialogues between government, industry and workers will be arranged; and legal advising for the workers will be provided.

The beneficiated provinces are the Pichincha Cantón Cayambe and the Cantón Pedro Vicente Maldonado. The Project started on February 15th 2007 and it will end on January 15th 2009.

For more information: www.fenacle.org.ec

Original version in Spanish by Marcelo Arcos: marceloarcos@indes.org

🚩 Labour legislation seminar (Conocoto, 23rd and 24th June 2007)

ISCOD (Instituto Sindical de Cooperación al Desarrollo - Union Institute of Cooperation to the Development) and FENACLE supported a labour legislation seminar in Conocoto, Ecuador attended by 27 union members of the company FinaFlor S.A. The issues of the seminar were: individual and collective contracts, rights and obligations of the workers, labour conflicts, Collective Bargaining, conclusion of the work contract, risks of work and supervisory responsibility, Social Security and the social benefits.

Original version in Spanish. For more information www.fenacle.org.ec

Contact person: Marcelo Arcos marceloarcos@indes.org

Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras

No news

News from Asia:

Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Vietnam

No news

News from Europe:

Netherlands

🚩 The International Flower Campaign in Basel, Switzerland (April 23rd 2007)

Following a meeting with IFC in Basel, OLAA and FNV Bondgenoten decided to break their association with FIAN Germany and not participate any more in the IFC meetings. This decision was taken because some appointments were broken, especially with regard to not attack each other publicly.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

✚ **Meeting between FNV Bondgenoten, OLAA and MPS (April 24th 2007)**

The discussion points were the problems we frequently encounter during the audits as regards the temporary workers, the working agencies, the foreign workers etc. Furthermore we discussed a recent case in which a grower refused an observer from FNV Bondgenoten and asked explicitly for an observer of other union. The number of observers was also another point of discussion and the question was if we will accept the attendance of one observer instead of two, in especial cases, for instance when there are five or less workers in the farmer.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

✚ **Informal meeting with some NGOs on CSR (April 26th 2007)**

The Clean Clothes Campaign, the Coffee Coalition and OLAA among other organisations discussed together their initiatives in an informal meeting to look in the problems they have in common and to see if is any room for cooperation to support each initiatives.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

✚ **Observer's experience in a farm in The Netherlands (May 24th 2007)**

Kees Hoek as an NGO observer went to an audit in Rotterdam in a very special farm. It was some kind of social welfare workplace, belonging to the municipality of Rotterdam, with more than 90 workers. Most of them had either some physical or mental handicap. They require specialised coaches. This kind of workplace has its own CBA, although it should earn enough money to be self-sufficient, it is not a profit oriented workplace. People can only work there with a special indication from the local authorities. It supplies and takes care mainly to the public green areas in the municipality of Rotterdam. Although quite different from other plantations, the code proved to be useful for this plantation as well.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

✚ **Bloom, formerly known as Tele Flower Auction (May 29th 2007)**

Kees Hoek visited Bloom following invitation from the director of Bloom to update him on FFP. Bloom has recently joined Auction which sells a lot of FLO certified flowers to mainly Supermarkets in other European countries. The director is very open for cooperation with FFP and regrets the fact the review committee has some difficulties with FLO on flowers. He offered to ask FLO to contact the RC and to resume discussion with the RC. They agreed to update each other once a year.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

✚ **Meeting between FNV Bondgenoten, OLAA and MPS (June 1st 2007)**

Martin Siecker (FNV Bondgenoten) and Kees Hoek (OLAA) had a meeting organized by MPS. Some producers already certified by MPS-SQ were present too and were very critical with regard to MPS-SQ certification. We discussed various items already mentioned in our meeting on April 24th 2007. The producers explained why they were or were not interested in certification. It was remarkable that the producers who opposed certification were confusing national law with the content of the code. It was useful to meet each other and to discuss frankly all kind of problems related to the code. Hopefully we will be able to continue this kind of meetings.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

✚ **Aalsmeer auction feels the competition of Africa (Het Financieele Dagblad, June 1st 2007)**

The Aalsmeer auction is worried about the quantity of flowers and plants that are sold outside the auction. Last year the trade volume in Aalsmeer decreased with 6%, whereas the world production of ornamental cultivation was increasing.

Original text in Dutch by Henk Engelenburg and Jan Verbeek.

By Nathalie Van Haren: nh@bothends.org

✚ Meeting between OLAA, Both Ends and Stichting Natuur en Milieu (June 5th 2007)

Nathalie Van Haren (Both Ends) and Kees Hoek (OLAA) had a meeting with Ms. Plumers of Stichting Natuur en Milieu. This environmental organisation is behind the ecological flowers which can be bought in the Netherlands. The Stichting Natuur en Milieu criticized FFP at the launch of the initiative for not having strict environmental criteria. It is a rather well known and influential Dutch NGO.

Stichting Natuur en Milieu approached us for a discussion on an initiative of another organisation to certify retailers selling flowers. In the presence too was Sjef Langeveld. They spoke with the new person responsible for flowers within Natuur en Milieu. After the meeting there was a positive feeling and hope of working together in future.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

✚ Meeting between OLAA, Both Ends and Stichting Milieukeur (June 7th 2007)

Both ENDS, represented by Nathalie Van Haren, FFP, represented by Sjef Langeveld, and OLAA, represented by Kees Hoek, were invited to attend a kind of advisory commission to discuss a new initiative of the Stichting Milieukeur. Stichting Milieukeur will certificate retailers selling sustainable flowers. They made a first draft of standards and discussed this with various organisations, among them Both ENDS, OLAA and Stichting Natuur en Milieu. Their main comments centred around four items:

- Rather low and unambitious standards;
- Sustainable takes also social issues into account, which were not in the draft version;
- The fact that for sustainable flower they accept MPS A, ecological flowers and in future perhaps FFP flowers. This does not give any incentive for producers to get certified with MPS A, it is already sufficient to benefit from the shop label.
- It was directed mainly to Dutch producers. Producers from other countries were not literally excluded from the initiative, but their interests were not really taken into account.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

✚ Both Ends and OLAA in Paris with Peuples-Solidaires (June 22nd 2007)

Nathalie Van Haren and Kees Hoek went to Paris to meet the French NGO Peuples-Solidaires. They were invited to give them a presentation on FFP. Peuples-Solidaires has 80 active local committees in France and it has a lot of experience with various CSR initiatives in which they participate in Europe. They know the international flower campaign and they have good contacts with FENACLE in Ecuador. The French NGO will take a decision on possible cooperation with us.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

Italy

✚ International Conference. Towards a social & environmental certification for local flowers (Fiori e Diritti, May 11th, 2007)

Last May the 11th, an International Conference took place in San Remo, Italy. Organized by Movimento Fiori e Diritti, the Conference was entitled "Towards a social & environmental certification for local flowers" and was aimed to promote a debate between all the stakeholders involved in flowers production in Liguria.

During the morning a group of experts gave a general framework about international situation in flower market and production, especially regarding Africa and Latin America, as well as global certification processes and criteria. From FFP were present Regina Dinkla (FFP project manager), Sue Longley (member of the Board and the Review Committee), Nathalie Van Haren, Kees Hoek (Review

Committee members) and Betsabé Lugo (Secretariat of the Review Committee). In the afternoon a "multistakeholders forum" took place, at the presence and with the active intervention of local producers, international traders, civil society also with the attendance of Giancarlo Cassini, member of the Regional Government.

By Paolo Trucco: direzione@fioriediritti.org, informazioni@fioriediritti.org

Fiori e Diritti in Ecuador (from 21st to 28th May 2007)

Fiori e Diritti visited Ecuador for a research in flowers sector. Interviews and photos have been collected in several plantations like Nevado Roses, Agrocoex, Agroful, Florequisa, FinaFlor. During the visit Cristiano Calvi participated in a workers' assembly in Conocoto, organised by the local trade union FENACLE. These workers, affiliates to FENACLE in FinaFlor plantations, are receiving pressure from the company to dismiss the trade union.

By Paolo Trucco: direzione@fioriediritti.org, informazioni@fioriediritti.org

Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, UK

No news

Have good vacations!

Dear Writers:

The next deadline to send your news is on **Augustus 6th, 2007**. Don't forget it, this newsletter is for you!!

Thanks,

Betsabé Lugo and Sebastian Odanga
Editors