

**PRESS CONTACT**

Candice Menant-Fernández
+33 7 69 02 95 87

PRESS KIT

INTRA-EUROPEAN FAIR TRADE

*A tool to mainstream the social
and solidarity-based economy in Europe*

- ☒ **PRODUCED IN THE EU**
- ☒ **PAYS PRODUCERS FAIRLY**
- ☒ **CLEARLY INFORMS CONSUMERS**
- ☒ **VALUES AN ETHICAL COMPANY**
- ☒ **ACCELERATES THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION**

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISCAL AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON THE INTERNAL MARKET
AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

VICE-CHAIR OF THE SOCIAL ECONOMY INTERGROUP

Born in a dairy farm in the south of France based on a traditional system, Claude Gruffat is a pioneer of organic farming in France. He started out as an agricultural advisor for the Association of Organic Agriculture Advisors and then as an inspector for Ecocert. In 1994 he joined Biocoop, a distribution network for organic products, where he took on decision-making and then economic responsibilities. From 2004 to 2019 he was President of the Biocoop Group.

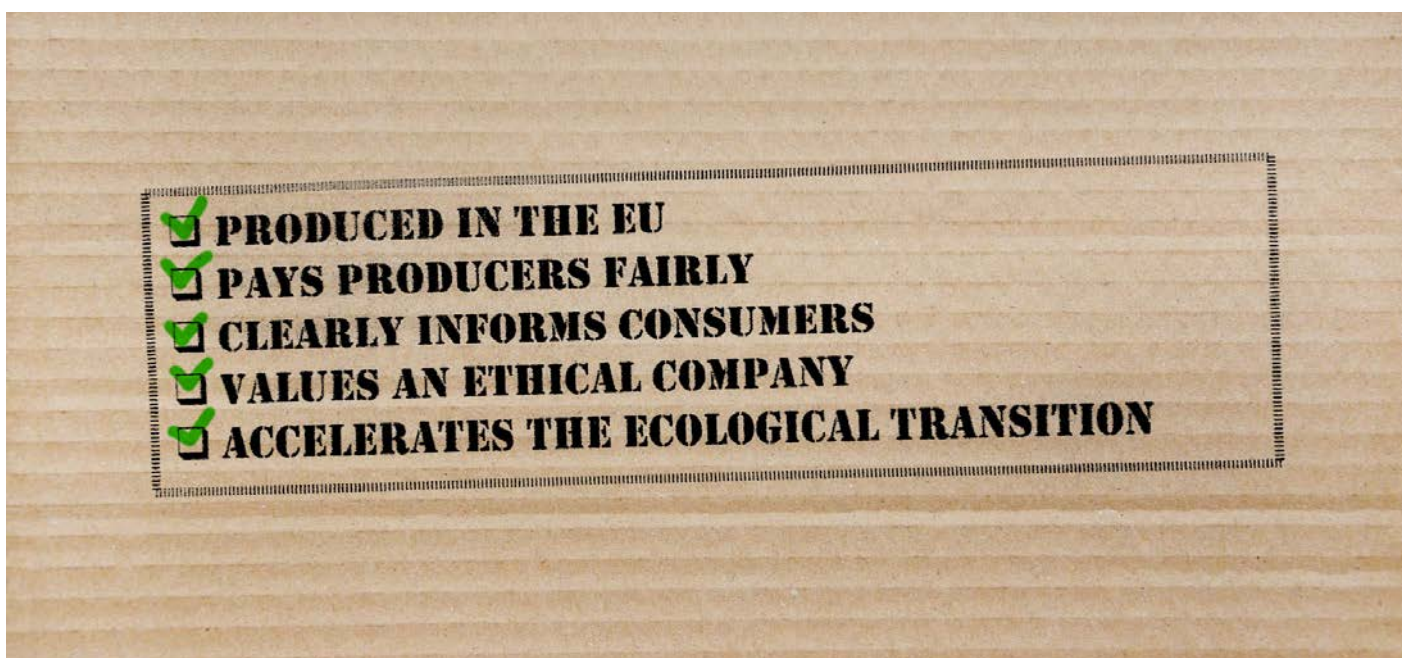
He was elected to the European Parliament in early 2020 following the Brexit.

He works for the convergence of the economic and ecological agendas, which he calls for to stop opposing each other.

In particular, he defends SMEs, which are the real creators of jobs in European territories and are too often neglected by European policies in favour of multinationals.



INTRA-EUROPEAN FAIR TRADE : A TOOL TO MAINSTREAM THE SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY-BASED ECONOMY IN EUROPE



In order to help consumers to better compare the ecological and social balance sheets of European products, I propose the construction of a genuine intra-European Fair Trade label (also called North-North).

The concept of fair trade is now well understood when it comes to buying handicrafts or food products from developing countries. It is time to imagine a similar concept here at home. Indeed, if we know how to ensure a fair remuneration to certain producers in the South, we have never developed an equivalent to **ensure European workers and producers in general, a salary and working conditions that allow them to live decently**, particularly in the agricultural sector.

As a member of the ECON (Economic and Monetary Affairs) and IMCO (Internal Market and Consumer Protection) committees of the European Parliament and especially as **Vice-President of the Social Economy Intergroup**, I am working to structure this approach.

A Fair Trade label to protect consumers from «social washing»

Consumers are ready to change their purchasing habits for food, textiles and cosmetics, even if it means paying a little more, as long as it benefits the environment and our European producers. The brands have understood this. This is why they are communicating more and more about the supposed benefits of their approach. But one obstacle is regularly mentioned: trust and the lack of visibility in the labels that are supposed to certify virtuous practices.

Does this milk really pay the farmer a fair price? Is the ethics claimed by this clothing brand verifiable?... It is essential to be able to **rely on the European Union to sort things out** and to **accompany the transformation towards a truly sustainable economy**. Today, **manufacturers award themselves good points** in the form of self-assigned labels. This is why I defend the creation of a single European fair trade label to **bring clarity**.



A Fair Trade label to transform our economy

The European Union is for me a good level because certification at European level could offer greater recognition and, through economies of scale, open up more interesting markets for companies that engage in more sustainable and fair trade products.

To do this, I propose to build on what already exists, particularly in France, where interesting initiatives are emerging, such as the Bio Equitable France label or Max Havelaar, which has decided to label French products «fair trade». **The commitments of Fair Trade as defined by French law are also a good basis for work at European level:**

- **Remunerative prices for producers**, based on production costs and balanced negotiations.
- A **multi-annual commercial commitment** between producers and buyers.
- The payment of **an additional amount** (called a co-development premium) **to finance collective projects**.
- **Producers' autonomy** through the establishment of democratic governance in their organisations.
- **Transparency and traceability** in the supply chains.
- **Raising consumer awareness** of socially and environmentally sustainable production methods.
- **The promotion of production methods** that respect the environment and biodiversity, such as agroecology.
- The use of **guarantee systems or labels** recognised by laws and decrees in the States or by regulation within the EU.



Interview: Towards a European Fair Trade label (in French)

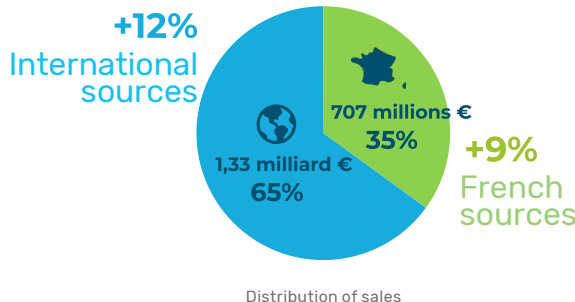
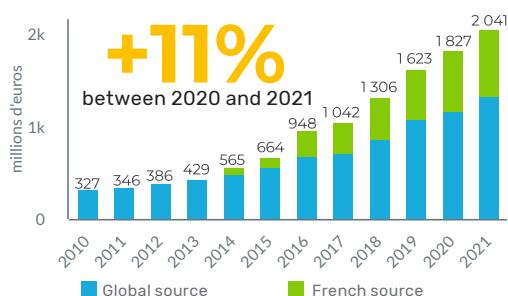
I was invited by a French TV to present this fair trade approach that I am currently promoting at European level.

https://youtu.be/MvY_u_EW9Zc

The French Fair Trade Market in 2021

2,041 billion €

Amount of sales of Fair Trade products in France in 2021



Source : © Commerce Équitable France

A Fair Trade label to boost ethical businesses

As can be seen in these specifications, the fair trade approach can be applied to a wide range of sectors and is not confined to food. It is **a complementary approach to the SSE as developed in France (Social and Solidarity-based Economy)**. For a large number of SSE actors, committing to this approach would be **a guarantee that their commitments would be valued by consumers**.

It would also be a good way to **give meaning to work**. Indeed, various aspects of certification, such as the involvement of employees in company decisions, are likely to **make companies attractive** to people seeking meaning in their work. This is a growing phenomenon at the moment and will certainly increase in the future.

A Fair Trade label for the ecological transition

Valuing companies as players in a virtuous and localized economic fabric brings **benefits that go far beyond a simple client-supplier relationship**. It anchors the structures in their territory of establishment and allows the stakeholders they federate to project themselves together into a common future. A direct consequence of this **long-term vision** is the increased attention paid to territorial resilience and all that goes with it (social fabric, preservation of the living environment, sustainable use of extracted resources, production processes that respect the living environment, etc.). Thus, ensuring **transparency on the social specifications of a product's manufacturing cycle** is also a way to ensure a better ecological balance.

To be beneficial to the greatest number of people, **the ecological transition cannot only be environmental, it must also be social**. This is what is at stake in intra-European fair trade.



My visit to Éthiquable, an inspiring Fair Trade company (In French - English subtitles)

I was at the Éthiquable cooperative, in the south of France, to discover the first Fair Trade chocolate factory in Europe. An important visit in the framework of the process I initiated.

<https://youtu.be/Jl4ojXCexoE>