



**Buy Fair -
European public procurement
guidelines for Fair Trade**



Case study

**Fair Trade option for catering services for the EU
Presidency**

***Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment
and Water Management (Lebensministerium) & Federal
Procurement Office of Austria (BBG)***

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Fair Trade in Austria

Austria's nine *Bundesländer* ('States') have been actively promoting Fair Trade products for the last few years. Four have already issued resolutions supporting Fair Trade in public procurement. Steiermark, for instance, is targeting a 25% share of Fair Trade products in its relevant public purchases. Four municipalities in Steiermark are also part of a project that aims to include Fair Trade in public tendering¹. The regional capital, Graz, celebrates a Fair Trade day every year, and soon most of the vending machines will only serve Fair Trade coffee. As well as consuming Fair Trade products at regional council meetings, Lower Austria ('*Niederösterreich*') is currently engaged in a major awareness raising campaign. Upper Austria ('*Oberösterreich*') which is supporting a Fair Trade campaign, is using Fair Trade products in its canteens and in the vending machines of its buildings. Vienna is increasingly introducing Fair Trade products in retirement homes and hospitals through the "*ÖkoKauf Wien*" project².

Yet despite the considerable promotion and purchase of Fair Trade products, Fair Trade in public tendering is currently still relatively rare, though many authorities purchase such small amounts that this is not done through a tendering process.

Introduction to case study

Austria is taking over the EU Presidency in the first half of 2006. In order to organise the many events related to the EU Presidency in a sustainable manner, the Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management - *Lebensministerium*) Josef Pröll launched an initiative called "Greening the presidency – Greening Events"³. 'The Guideline for Green Conferences' contains concrete recommendations and practical instruction for different operational areas. Each of the twelve subject areas includes also 'priority measures'⁴ which should be applied. For the section 'Food' two measures are regarded as a priority⁵:

- *The use of 'Organic' (= 'Bio') brands, regional juices and Fair Trade products (E.g. Coffee, tea, juices)*
- *The selection of catering partners in consideration of defined criteria, and the formulation of respective tenders accordingly (E.g.: 30% organic food: Fair Trade food etc.)*

In line with 'The Guideline for Green Conferences', the Federal Procurement Office (BBG)⁶ requested in the "Tender for catering service for Austria's EU Presidency"⁷ a Fair Trade Option, meaning each Federal Agency holding an EU Presidency-related event at the Hofburg Palace in Vienna would have the possibility to opt for Fair Trade alternatives for a defined range of products.

Fair Trade products are also offered at official meetings/sessions in Brussels.

¹ Gleisdorf, Feldbach, Weiz and Fürstenfeld – For more information: Welthaus Diözese Graz-Seckau - <http://graz.welthaus.at>

² For more information – Fairtrade Austria/Unternehmensservice: Gertraud Akgün-Krenn - e-mail: gertraud.krenn@fairtrade.at

³ Lebensministerium V/8 21. Oct. 2005 *Leitfaden für die umweltgerechte Organisation von Veranstaltungen* – online: <http://www.lebensministerium.at/article/articleview/33496/1/7246/>

⁴ "Priorität-1-Maßnahmen" - see *Leitfaden für Green Conferences während der Präsidentschaft Österreichs* - online: [lebensministerium.at](http://www.lebensministerium.at)

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Bundesbeschaffung – www.bbg.portal.at/

⁷ "Catering für den EU Ratsvorsitz Österreichs 2006" - GZ 4400.00282

Implementation

Subject matter: Tender for catering service for Austria's EU Presidency
Contract period: 19 December 2005 to 30 June 2006
Type of contract: Supply contract

Technical Specifications: *“Every user has the opportunity to demand that*
a) coffee breaks
b) session catering
c) various drinks and
d) catering for journalists
use the “Fair Trade” option, meaning that drinks available on the
“Fair Trade” market are being offered. For these products lump
sums and flat prices have been fixed as well.”⁸

Fair Trade products: The following products are concerned:
Coffee, chocolate (cocoa), tea, orange juice
Neither definition nor reference is given about what is meant by
Fair Trade

Key actors involved

The Life Ministry was the main key actor. The actual tender of the catering was issued by the BBG. Originally, Fair Trade or organic products had not been foreseen but they have been inserted later as an option by the BBG and the team of the Foreign Ministry.

Difficulties encountered

Initially, there were some demonstrations by sugar beet farmers who were protesting against the purchase of agricultural products from foreign countries. However, only sugar from Austrian production is used at the events.

Complementary Measures

Apart from an awareness raising event on “Greening the presidency”, the Life Ministry published a ‘Guideline for Green Conferences’ in view of Austria's EU-Presidency.

Info-stands on Fair Trade are located inside the Hofburg Palace in Vienna, where the major events related to the EU Presidency are taking place.

Life Minister Josef Pröll addressed in a letter all persons involved in the organisation of the event, asking them to organise the EU Presidency in the most sustainable manner possible. In addition, a respective letter has been sent by the Secretary General to the directors of all the departments.

Results achieved

Many agencies are currently opting for Fair Trade and organic products. After the EU Presidency an evaluation will be carried out in order to find out about the exact number of agencies that requested these products.

⁸ The Austrian Federal Procurement Company Ltd (BBG - Bundesbeschaffung GmbH) 22 September 2005
“Generelle Information zum Vertragsabschluss ‘Catering for Austria's EU Presidency 2006’”

Further information

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