

INVOLVING

Campaigning for Clean Clothes



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Although the cost of living in the majority of garment-producing countries is cheap, workers are often not paid enough to cover their basic needs, such as food, shelter, or clothing. In an estimate of a €100 pair of sports shoes made in the Far East, just €0.50 goes to production workers' wages.

The Clean Clothes Campaign is dedicated to ensuring that factory workers are fairly treated and decently paid. It acts as an urgent action network and sounds the alarm when workers' rights are violated – these can range from poor working conditions, low or no wages, harassment, violence, suspension, dismissals and – in some cases – death.

Based on the premise that the public has a right to know where and how their clothes and sports shoes are produced, the EU has supported this defence of workers' human rights over three years.

Cases recorded by the CCC early last year include daily harassment and threats to workers protesting against conditions that include working

weeks in excess of 80 hours with no sanitary provisions, wages below survival level, unsafe buildings and lack of ventilation. Two cases concerned the killing of 85 workers.

The CCC relies on a network of trade unions and NGOs in 15 European countries, and more than 200 unions, individuals and organisations to identify local problems and objectives in most countries where garments are produced. The CCC does not generally endorse boycotts which rarely change anything and often lead to workers losing the little income they have. Rather, the CCC urges well known brands to work out improvement plan with factories to meet good labour standards.

The CCC has taken up more than 250 cases and many have been resolved: health and safety conditions improved; dismissed workers reinstated; unions recognised and activists released from prison. Some brand name companies have responded by adopting codes of conduct and drafting policies on corporate responsibility, considered an important first step in the process of abolishing sweatshop conditions.