

# **CODE OF CONDUCT**

## **A charter of the social partners in the footwear sector**

### **PREAMBLE**

Following the Charter on child labour in the footwear sector signed between the CEC (European Confederation of the Footwear Industry) and the ETUF:TCL (European Trade Union Federation of Textiles, Clothing and Leather) on March 7, 1995 and updated on October 21, 1997, considering the ILO declaration of June 18, 1998, the partners decided to extend the above-mentioned Charter.

The CEC and the ETUF:TCL, meeting in the sectoral social dialogue at European level, re-affirm their earnest allegiance to the respect of human rights at the workplace.

The European signatories of this Code are in favour of open and fair world-wide trade based on the international principles pertaining to human rights and human dignity and to the ILO.

The partners decide to work towards a European footwear sector that is productive, internationally competitive and based on the respect of human rights.

They further recognise their responsibilities towards workers, considering the conditions in which they manufacture products or provide services that are sold or distributed by companies affiliated to their member organisations.



### **ARTICLE 1 - Content of the Code**

The CEC and the ETUF:TCL call on their members to actively encourage companies and workers of the European footwear sector to comply with the following ILO Conventions:

#### **1. Prohibition of forced labour** (Conventions 29 and 105):

Forced labour, slave or obligatory labour is forbidden.

#### **2. Freedom of association and the right to negotiate** (Conventions 87 and 98)

The right for workers to form and join a trade union, as well as the right for employers to associate, are recognised. Employers and workers can negotiate freely and independently.

#### **3. Prohibition of child labour** (Convention 138)

Child labour is forbidden. Children under the age of 15 or under the age of compulsory schooling enforced in the countries concerned shall not be admitted to work.

#### **4. Non-discrimination of employment** (Conventions 111)

Workers are employed on the basis of their aptitude for the work, regardless of their race, individual characteristic, creed, political opinion or social origin.

## **ARTICLE 2 - Circulation, promotion and implementation**

Implementation refers to all the activities likely to be carried out in order to apply the Code at all levels.

- 2.1 The CEC and the ETUF:TCL commit to promote and to circulate the Code in the relevant languages and at all levels by ... at the latest.
- 2.2 The CEC and the ETUF:TCL shall call on their respective member organisations (see list in annex) to adopt this Code and to encourage its gradual implementation at company level.
- 2.3 The CEC and the ETUF:TCL shall organise, if needed, training and awareness programmes.
- 2.4 The CEC and the ETUF:TCL shall call on their member organisations and companies to include this Code as a prerequisite into all contracts with suppliers or sub-contractors. The CEC and the ETUF:TCL shall encourage companies to ensure that the Code is understood by the said suppliers / sub-contractors and by their respective workers.

## **ARTICLE 3 - Follow-up, assessment and appeal mechanisms**

- 3.1 The CEC and the ETUF:TCL agree to follow up, in the framework of the sectoral social dialogue at European level, the gradual fulfilment of the implementation of this Code of conduct. In case of complaints, it is asked for a communication to be addressed to one of the social partners, specifying the nature of the complaints; a discussion will follow in the framework of the European social dialogue.
- 3.2 To this effect, the CEC and the ETUF:TCL will conduct an evaluation of the implementation of the present Code, at least once a year in the framework of the European social dialogue; the first evaluation will take place no later than 17/11/2001. They could ask the Commission and Member States to provide the necessary assistance in order to carry out the evaluation.
- 3.3 The CEC and the ETUF:TCL agree that, in case of control, the implementation of the results of the Code will have to be monitored by institutes or organisms that are recognised and active on a world-wide level and that are independent of industry and of trade unions, hence guaranteeing the credibility of the control to all interested parties. The selection of such institutes or organisms will be decided upon in common agreement between the CEC and the ETUF:TCL.
- 3.4 The CEC and the ETUF:TCL can decide, jointly and freely, to consider, in the framework of the European sectoral social dialogue, any new initiative that might be carried out as an extension of the Code's implementation.

## **ARTICLE 4 - More favourable provisions**

The CEC members or affiliated companies can introduce more favourable provisions in their respective Code of conduct, whenever there is such a Code. The implementation of the present Code can in no circumstances be used as an argument for limiting more advantageous provisions already in place.

Signed 17/11/2000