

News

Are your shoes ethical and sustainable? Change your shoes!



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Author: Luci Vega (Suport Associatiu)



"Change your shoes" campaign poster.



"Change your shoes" campaign logo .



Frame of "Change your shoes" campaign video / Labour Behind The Label.

Organisations from around Europe and Asia are pushing forward a campaign to fight human and labour rights abuses in the shoe industry and to demand transparency and changes in EU regulations.

For 8 years, Wanti has been working at home, in Indonesia, **sewing shoes** for the German brand Ara. If she is able to work **10 hours a day** she will make around 800,000 rupees a month (the equivalent of around €60). This does not even meet the Indonesian living wage of around €300 and **keeps her living in poverty** despite her long working hours. Workers like Wanti don't have a contract either, or labour benefits or a medical insurance.

Wanti's situation **is no exception** in the shoe industry. This is why a **coalition of 18 human and labour rights organisations** from Europe, India, China and Indonesia are promoting the campaign "[Change your Shoes](#)" with the aim of **fighting labour right abuses** in the industry by putting **pressure** on brands, **raising awareness** among citizens and doing **political advocacy** at public institutions.

Low wages, excessive extra hours, the use of products that **harm their health** and the lack of security are part of the everyday lives of many people manufacturing shoes in most of the countries producing leather and shoes.

Although the working conditions in this sector are similar to the ones found in the textile industry, the main difference is there is not the same level of awareness or sensitivity. "It is shocking **how little** consumers know about the production of shoes", says José Luís Mariñelarena, a member of the [Federación Setem](#) and the coordinator of "Change your Shoes" in Spain. To try and counter this lack of awareness, since last year the campaign publishes a series of **factsheets** to explain this situation and has launched several actions like **open discussions**, the gathering of signatures, etc.

Networking for a greater impact

"Change your Shoes" is promoted through a **European project** funded by the [European Union](#). Thanks to this, organisation that for years have been working in the fields of responsible consumption, labour rights and fair trade such as the Federació Setem in Spain, [Sudwind](#) in Austria, [Labour behind the Label](#) in the United Kingdom, [Pro Ethical Trade](#) in Finland or [Fair Trade Center](#) in Sweden, and many more, have been able to **pool their experience** and together launch an **initiative with a greater outreach** like this one.

"Networking has also given us greater strength and impact in all our **advocacy** tasks, which are one of the basic pillars of the campaign" says [Alba Trepát](#), the person responsible for communications for the campaign in Spain. In fact, through this initiative, Wanti was able to directly give her own testimonial before members of the European Parliament last April in Brussels, accompanied by the [Trade Union Rights Center](#) of Indonesia.

The campaign also demands **regulatory changes** from the European Union to force shoe manufacturers and retailers to provide accessible and easy-to-understand information on the conditions under which shoes are manufactured. "We want **more transparency** throughout the supply chains, strict requirements for the entry of merchandise into the European Union and more information on shoe labels", Trepát concludes.

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