

**NEVEN MIMICA**

MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels,  
CAB D(2016) Ares

Honourable Members of the European Parliament,

I would like to thank you for your interest in the European Commission Development Education and Awareness Raising programme. The promotion of development in the European Union and the awareness of the interdependence of our world are more than ever important. The universality of development was made a cornerstone of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015.

The "Change your Shoes" project was approved by the European Commission at the end of 2014. It is implemented by a large consortium of European and Asian NGOs and aims at raising the awareness of European Union citizens on the working conditions and well-being of people employed in the production chain of the shoe industry. It receives financial support from the European Union, notably a grant of 3.802.734 euro, as well as from several Member States, in total 4.473.805 euro.

According to the project, some research reports are planned to be carried out on Indonesia, India, China and Italy. The first report was produced on Italy and published by the consortium. The financial rules for grants foresee that these reports remain the property of the author, and not of the European Commission. Therefore the author can publish them without the Commission's prior authorisation. Once published, the report met with severe claims of inaccuracy and lack of quality by the industry. The European Commission services also had concerns about the quality of the report.

Ms Maria Arena,  
Ms Renata Briano,  
Mr Sergio Cofferati,  
Mr Fabio De Masi,  
Mr Pascal Durand,  
Ms Laura Ferrara,  
Ms Eleonora Forenza,  
Ms Elena Gentile,  
Ms Ana Maria Gomes,  
Ms Tania Gonzalez Penas,  
Ms Agnes Jongerius,  
Mr Jean Lambert,  
Ms Ulrike Lunaček,

Mr Curzio Maltese,  
Mr Edouard Martin,  
Mr Emmanuel Maurel,  
Ms Alessia Mosca,  
Mr Dimitrios Papadimoulis,  
Mr Evelyn Regner,  
Ms Judith Sargentini,  
Ms Elly Schlein,  
Ms Barbara Spinelli,  
Mr Josep-Maria Terricabras,  
Mr Miguel Urban Crespo,  
Mr Ernest Urtasun,  
Mr Josef Weidenholzer

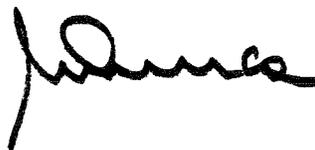
Members of the European Parliament

The European Commission services therefore decided to bring the two sides together to discuss the matter. According to the contractual documents, inter-action between the consortium and industry representatives was planned in the project activities. This exercise resulted in the consortium's decision to voluntarily withdraw the report from the websites. After a second round of discussions did not lead to an agreement though, the report was put back on the website. To date the report is still online<sup>1</sup>.

The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of the consortium and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

Regarding payments related to the above mentioned project, standard rules, procedures, and timing are being followed. A request for payment is being processed and is passing through the analysis of eligibility of costs in accordance with Financial Regulations. It implies, on the one hand, verification of sound contractual and financial management, and on the other hand, verification of contractually agreed deliverables, including their quality. The grant can be paid in several instalments throughout the project implementation. For the on-going interim payment, the grantee requested 1.308.806 euro. The Commission already paid 1.000.000 euro in June and kept 308.806 euro for verification of the compliance with the contractual conditions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Durand', written in a cursive style.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.abitipuliti.org/changeyourshoes/2015/12/16/2015-report-una-dura-storia-di-cuoio/>