

Benetton Group takes legal action against the newspaper *Corriere della sera* on the “case” of child labour in Turkey

Ponzano, 5th November 1998. Regarding the Turkish matter, after an in-depth examination of the documentation held by Benetton, the company, with the assistance of the lawyer Oreste Dominioni, has decided to take legal action against the journalist Riccardo Orizio and the daily newspaper *Corriere della Sera*. Benetton will sue them for defamation, arising from the false allegations and distortion of facts contained in the articles published in the *Corriere della Sera* on 12th October 1998, and following other serious statements released by Orizio on different occasions.

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Firstly, Benetton points out that in the articles in question, through explicit, allusive or equivocal declarations, it has been made to appear that Benetton was directly involved in alleged exploitation of child labour, whereas the reality, which is amply documented, is that the manufacturing activities in Turkey are controlled by a Turkish company which operates with an independent organisation and decision-making process.

Great perplexity arises from the fact that images published by *Corriere della Sera*, relating to alleged child workers in the company Bermuda (subcontractor of Bogazici Hazir Giyim, Turkish licensee of the Benetton Group) made unbelievable errors in the identification of the people concerned and, a much more serious matter, indicated an age inferior to the real age.

The Turkish Labour Inspectorate has set up a thorough investigation into these alleged violations. The results will be evaluated jointly, in mid-November, together with all the evidence held by Benetton, the Turkish contractor, the Italian and Turkish trades unions and the Turkish Department of Labour. At this meeting, Benetton and the Italian trade unions have also requested the participation of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The aim is to clarify, with maximum transparency, this serious issue, where misinformation has severely damaged the international reputation of Benetton, which for many years has been committed to social and ethical issues.

Benetton Group has reserved the right to take civil action for the recovery of damages suffered.