

13th July 2020

Rt Hon Philip Dunne MP
Chair
Environmental Audit Committee

Dear Mr Dunne,

Re: Statement regarding ETI and Boohoo

Thank you for your enquiry of 9th July where you enquired if Boohoo became a full member of the ETI and if they now formally recognise trade unions. You quoted Boohoo saying this:

“We are taking steps to gain membership of the ETI. We have submitted our initial application to join the ETI. We are also meeting with the ETI on 13 August 2019. We look forward to sharing more information with the ETI and helping the ETI carry out further due diligence during that meeting.”

Overall we have only received two approaches from Boohoo, both after they have received attention from either the EAC or campaign groups. Last summer, following their submission to the EAC, we were invited to a small number of exploratory initial conversations with Boohoo at a senior level. At that time, we expressed our desire for meaningful two-way communication between Boohoo and USDAW trade union relating to freedom of association. Disappointingly, we were not able to persuade them to engage with USDAW. Subsequently, they withdrew from direct communication with us and hired a management and business consultancy to contact us. Though we would not have invited it at that time, we did not receive any formal application from them to join ETI.

Later we understood that they had communicated with Burnley Council stating that they had joined an alternative organisation. Our understanding is that this alternative is an audit-based body that does not have a progression framework and does not hold its members to account.

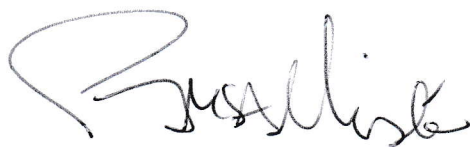
Earlier this year, following discussions between Labour Behind the Label and Boohoo, we received another approach from their Sustainability Director. Another exploratory meeting was set up, but this was postponed due to COVID-19 lockdown. Since then, we have had no further contact.

In our years of discussions with members on the challenges faced within the UK Garment Industry we have received regular concerns about the type of business practices that have been reported in the last weeks in Leicester. Development of any discussions in relation to potential Boohoo membership of ETI would have

necessitated a robust examination of company operations as we are not convinced that they would meet a number of critical aspects essential to ETI membership.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any further information or clarification.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. McAllister', with a large, stylized initial 'P'.

Peter McAllister
Executive Director
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