

Trade groups and NGOs have written a joint letter to U.K. retailers highlighting their concern over the trend of decreasing prices paid for bananas.

The letter was signed by Gilbert Bermudez, Coordinator of The Coordinating Body of Latin American Banana and Agro-industrial Unions ([Colsiba](#)) and Alistair Smith, Coordinator of The intercontinental Banana Action Network ([Euroban](#)).

An analogous letter has also gone today to German and other European retailers from a collection of German and international NGOs.

The groups said that in recent weeks they have received reports that Aldi is aiming to reduce the purchase price of bananas by almost 9% from €12.41 to €11.33 for its global 2021 contract.

"This news has been preceded by years of fierce price wars over bananas across the entire food retail trade, especially in Northern Europe. The clear trend is ever-decreasing purchase prices," they said.

"We have deep concerns about the consequences of this trend, which cannot of course just be laid at the door of Aldi, even if the company has become the unofficial banana price-setter for European and UK supermarket buyers."

They said they have welcomed process in recent years by supermarkets who have increasingly made commitments to and reported on the implementation of human rights due diligence obligations, and in some cases made significant progress in their public reporting.

However, the example of banana prices shows that despite these commitments, human rights due diligence practices have apparently not yet been integrated into commercial buying practices, they say.

"Adequate human rights due diligence must also be reflected in reasonable purchase prices and contractual conditions in order to enable these basic rights to be realized. Especially with regard to living wages, there is a direct connection between low purchase prices and human and workers' rights violations," they said.

"Lower purchase prices also stand in contradiction with the voluntary commitments by German, British and Dutch supermarkets to ensure the payment of living wages for all men and women employed in the chains that produce the food and other goods they sell to consumers."

"The current situation has been denounced by the Latin American banana industry and points to the need for legally binding due diligence requirements to ensure purchasing practices are aligned with companies' obligation to respect human rights and the environment."

But they say that in their view, the current situation also represents an opportunity for the retail sector.

"The industry can show that it has understood that human rights due diligence cannot go hand in hand with ever lower prices paid to producers," they said.

"Reasonable purchase prices must cover production costs in order to contribute to avoiding human rights violations and negative environmental impacts."