



## Will there still be coffee tomorrow?

### Tchibo calls for joint solutions for the future of coffee and cocoa

- A dialogue event brings together politicians, NGOs, academia and consumer protection groups
- The focus: how coffee and cocoa can retain a future for millions of people working in agriculture despite the climate crisis and price pressures
- Tchibo expands its “Coffee2Stay” programme and focuses on responsibility beyond certification labels

Hamburg, 17th April 2026 – On 14 April in Berlin, the future of two favourite products was discussed: coffee and chocolate. Under the key question “Will there still be coffee tomorrow?”, Tchibo, together with Ritter Sport, brought key players from politics, civil society, academia, consumer protection and business together at the Data Space. The backdrop to this is the massive risks facing coffee and cocoa cultivation due to climate change, poverty and volatile global markets. Tchibo made it clear that, with its “Coffee2Stay” programme, the company aims to source all its green coffee responsibly by 2027, deliberately focusing not just on certification labels but on direct impact at source.

#### Responsibility for a favourite product at a tipping point

Coffee is considered one of the agricultural products most vulnerable to climate change. At the same time, coffee is a vital livelihood for millions of people. Similar challenges are emerging in cocoa farming.

*“Whether there will still be coffee tomorrow is decided today on the farms at source. If millions of people no longer have economic prospects, our favourite drink has no future either,”* said Pablo von Waldenfels, Director Corporate Responsibility at Tchibo, in his introduction. *“That is why, through our ‘Coffee2Stay’ programme, we are investing directly in more resilient farming methods and fair structures that go beyond mere certification schemes, and are*



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*working with partners in politics, civil society and business to develop prospects for the future.”*

### **Tchibo focuses on direct responsibility in the supply chain**

Tchibo has made a clear commitment to its responsibility at source. Through the coffee programme, the family-owned company aims to source 100 per cent of its green coffee responsibly by 2027. Tchibo already works with around 22,000 coffee farms in nine origin countries. Pablo von Waldenfels: *“It is a new approach, a different approach: instead of outsourcing responsibility, for example by purchasing certified goods, we go directly into our supply chains, invest in adapting cultivation – for example to climate change – better productivity, better quality for the farmers, and in doing so we lay the foundations for genuine sustainability in cultivation.”*

### **Impact over symbolism**

A central theme of the evening was the question of how sustainability can be credibly demonstrated. Tchibo emphasised that certifications have enabled important progress, but do not solve structural problems on their own. Precisely because a proprietary, impact-oriented approach requires explanation, trust plays a special role.

There was consensus that sustainable supply chains can only be created through long-term partnerships and investment at source.

Andreas Ronken, CEO of Alfred Ritter GmbH & Co. KG, emphasised:

*“We source our cocoa not only through certification, but also from established programmes. Quality and the conditions under which people work can only be guaranteed if you are regularly on the ground. You have to go there; you have to be present. Our approach is also, like Tchibo’s, a demanding path that we have been following for a long time. We focus on concrete, long-term partnerships with local cooperatives.”*

At the same time, Ronken was critical: the chocolate industry had left consumers in a marketing bubble for too long and never really informed them about cocoa as



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a raw material (and the challenges associated with it). This is what is causing so much discontent among consumers today regarding high chocolate prices:

*“For a long time, the chocolate industry didn’t talk about cocoa. Instead, the focus was on Alpine milk, nuts or marzipan. Yet most people know more about wine-growing than about cocoa farming. The hard work of cocoa farmers has been far too little appreciated.”*

### **Livelihood-sustaining incomes as the key to transformation**

Melanie Rutten-Sülz, Managing Director of Solidaridad Deutschland e. V., emphasised the importance of economic prospects for producers:

*“We can implement many projects and activities to support farmers – for example, through training, productivity and quality improvements, or measures to ensure stable incomes. But as long as there is no clear commitment to a living income and this is not firmly embedded in purchasing practices, the systemic challenges will not be resolved.”*

In doing so, she made it clear that sustainable change can only succeed if responsibility is embedded in the core business.

### **Reliable political framework conditions remain crucial**

The role of politics was also discussed at length. Dr Olaf Deutschbein, Head of the UNIDO Berlin Office, emphasised the importance of binding standards:

*“The idea behind the Supply Chain Act was to establish a minimum standard so that no one slips through the net. Companies such as Tchibo and Ritter Sport, which are pioneers in their sectors, should not have to compete with rivals who profit from child labour, forced labour or exploitative conditions.”*

Despite criticism of bureaucratic requirements, the goal remains central:

*“Even if parts of the regulation are perceived as bureaucratic, it remains crucial to consistently rule out such conditions and protect responsible companies.”*

### **Consumer protection: transparency and trust provide guidance**

Markus Kamrad, Director of the Berlin Consumer Advice Centre, assessed the efforts from a consumer perspective:

*“I understand when companies go their own way, beyond certification schemes, in ways that may initially seem unconventional, in order to meet the challenges of sustainability.”*

At the same time, he warned against placing the burden of responsibility solely on consumers:

*“There is no such thing as a fully informed consumer. Labels are therefore an important guide – insufficient, but currently the best we have. At the same time, I can understand when companies say that labels are not enough. But communication becomes difficult.”*

### **Shared responsibility for the future of coffee and cocoa**

The discussion made it clear: the transformation of global supply chains can only succeed through close cooperation. Companies, politicians, civil society and consumers all share responsibility.

- Documentation of the event (including videos, magazine and reports) can be found here: [KLARTEXT | Tchibo Dialogue Event](#)
- Coffee Magazine: [What the future needs](#)

Image attached (from left to right): Dr Olaf Deutschbein, Melanie Rutten-Sülz, Pablo von Waldenfels, Andreas Ronken, Vern Long, Karel J. Golta, Markus Kamrad, Katja Weber (moderator)



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About Tchibo:

Tchibo is known for its unique business model. Through its multi-channel distribution system, Tchibo offers not only coffee and the single-serve systems Cafissimo and Qbo, but also a weekly changing range of non-food products and services. Tchibo operates around 900 shops and local online stores across eight countries. Across Germany, Tchibo is also represented in around 16,000 outlets in specialist and food retail outlets, with around 8,000 of these also stocking household goods. Founded in Hamburg in 1949, the family-owned company achieved a turnover of €3.36 billion in 2024 with 10,452 employees worldwide. Tchibo is the market leader in roasted coffee in Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and Hungary, and is one of the leading e-commerce companies in Europe. Tchibo has received numerous national and international awards for its sustainable business practices.