

WTO negotiations on agriculture: position of the European Platform for Food Sovereignty (EPFS)

25 November 2005

Each country must be given the possibility to practice food sovereignty by supporting and protecting sustainable food production for domestic consumption in order to realise / ensure the right to food for its citizens.

Maintaining a local food production system is vital for every country. Decentralised and environmentally sound small-scale family agriculture is an essential part of rural development. Not only does it produce healthy food, but it also fulfils various beneficial services such as maintaining the landscape, guaranteeing rural development, and preserving biodiversity.

Currently only 10% of the volume of the world's food production is exported. Domestic markets therefore remain the most important markets for farmers and consumers. International agricultural trade rules need to address existing problems, in particular dumping and depressed commodity prices. They must not undermine food security that is based on local food production and access for farmers to their local and regional markets.

International agricultural trade rules should be based on respect for each country's right to protect and support sustainable food production for domestic consumption and thus support the long-term goals of sustainable development.

Governments in Europe and the European Commission should make sure that international trade rules and the European agricultural policy are based on the principles described above, so that they no longer adversely affect family farms in Europe and especially those in developing countries.

Promoting further agricultural liberalisation and agricultural exports as a development strategy via WTO or other agreements will continue to lead to competition between farmers in North and South, stimulating more surplus production and lowering commodity prices even further. This will be disastrous for the majority of farmers worldwide and it will lead to greater poverty in the south and more concentration and a faster decrease of the number of farms in developed countries. The beneficiaries of this system are transnational corporations in the food chain and farms, which are large enough to operate in such a system. Besides family farmers the consumers and the environment will lose out as well.

What family farmers and agricultural workers both in Europe and other parts of the world demand are remunerative food and commodity prices, stable markets and long-term perspectives. Farmers and agricultural workers are able and willing to take up their roles as crucial contributors to rural development and the local economy.

The food sovereignty platforms (a network of platforms working in 8 different EU member States which includes organisations such as farmers, developmental, consumer, environmental organisations and trade unions) demand an end to the ongoing process of harmful liberalisation of agricultural markets. The way in which WTO negotiations are moving is opposed to the interests of sustainable family farmers, landless people, food workers, consumers and the environment both in Europe and the rest of the world, and continues to favour agri-business, supermarkets and unsustainable farming technologies and cannot ensure access of people to healthy and culturally adequate food. Agriculture should not be a trade off against other priorities in the WTO.

Who are we?

Our platforms are composed of five 'families' of stakeholders: farmers unions, consumers' associations, development NGOs, environmental organisations, and workers' unions (industry or agriculture).

These platforms exist in various EU countries and, to date, platforms from the following countries have joined the European Platform For Food Sovereignty: France, Belgium, Austria, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Luxembourg, and United Kingdom.

More than 150 European civil society organisations are represented in the European platform.

We ask our governments and the EU Commission to

1. Adopt international trade arrangements, which ensure that each country maintains the required national policy space to practice food sovereignty and to realise the right to food and the other human rights.
2. Defend the right that each country can protect and support sustainable agricultural production for domestic consumption with the aim to fulfil its obligations to realise the human right to food. This entails allowing countries to use instruments such as tariffs and import quotas.
3. Eliminate all forms of dumping of food into third markets. This involves the abolition of any kind of export subsidy/support and of the abuse of food aid to dump surplus production.
4. To allow the granting of non-reciprocal trade preferences based on the different levels of development.
5. To push the implementation of effective instruments of market regulation and supply management with the aim to address the issue of fair prices for commodities both at the national and international level.
6. Develop a European common agricultural policy that ensures sustainable agricultural production for domestic consumption, favours access to local and regional markets and favours rural development. Governments should be allowed to support these aspects of their agricultural sector financially.
7. Develop rules and mechanisms that control and limit the ever increasing and overwhelming market power of supermarkets and transnational corporations in agribusiness.
8. Ensure the access of small and family farmers to natural resources such as land, water, and seeds. No favouring of export oriented agriculture above agriculture for domestic food production.
9. Reform the negotiation process on international agreements for agriculture to make it transparent and democratic and involve all affected parties.

The current farm and food crisis demands a response from the governments – in particular in the EU – to ensure socially, economically and ecologically sustainable family farming is possible in all the European regions and also in other parts of the world.

In our view, a new Common Agricultural Policy should respect the following principles, jointly:

1. Respect for human rights and food sovereignty¹;
2. Food and agriculture products are no mere merchandise. The market should be regulated and subjected to the principles mentioned below;
3. Maintaining socially, ecologically and economically sustainable family farming in all the European regions;
4. Promoting ecologically, socially and economically sustainable systems of production that produce healthy food and respect animal welfare;
5. Remunerative farm prices that cover all production costs and ensure a fair income to farmers;
6. A CAP based on adequate supply management tools to meet internal demand for basic products and end all dumping practices;
7. Favours regional and local markets. In a new CAP the principle of community preference should apply to products under a supply management regime: the regional level (Europe) is adequate for establishing agricultural policies in general;
8. As far as solidarity with farmers within and outside the EU is concerned: rejection of dumping practices and maintenance of the principle of preferential agreements for imports from developing countries in a way that respects their sustainable development. Dumping could be reduced greatly by prohibiting all direct and indirect export subsidies and by ending damaging food aid practices;
9. An underlying principle for the points mentioned above is the equal right to access to natural resources such as the soil, water and seeds. Because patented GMOs would not allow to guarantee this right, we are opposed to their introduction.

(Footnote)

¹ *Food Sovereignty is the right of peoples, communities, and countries to define their own agricultural, labor, fishing, food and land policies which are ecologically, socially, economically and culturally appropriate to their unique circumstances. This must be done without dumping on third markets. It includes the true right to food and to produce food, which means that all people have the right to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food and to food-producing resources and the ability to sustain themselves and their societies.*

Members of the European Platform for Food Sovereignty are the national platforms listed below

AUTRICHE : Agrarbündnis Österreich

AGEZ (Arbeitsgemeinschaft EntwicklungsZusammenarbeit) - Arche Noah - ARGE Schöpfungs-verantwortung - ATTAC Österreich - Bio Ernte Austria - DemeterBund Österreich - die Umweltberatung Österreich - EVI St.Pölten - FIAN Österreich - FreundInnen der Bundesanstalt für Bergbauernfragen - Klimabündnis NÖ und Kärnten - ÖIG (Österr. Interessengemeinschaft für die Biologische Landwirtschaft) - Ökologie und Lebensstil - Ökowitz / Informationsservice - Österreichische Bergbauern und Bergbäuerinnen Vereinigung - Österreichischer Unabhängiger Bauernverband - SOL / Menschen für Solidarität - Südwind - WWOOF (We're Welcome on Organic Farms)

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BELGIQUE

Plate-forme pour la Souveraineté Alimentaire

Action chrétienne rurale des femmes (ACRF) - Apiculture sans frontières - AVES - Centre d'études et de formation en écologie - Comité pour des accords de pêche équitables (CAPE) - Confédération belge des betteraviers - Conseil de la jeunesse catholique (CJC) - Centre national de coopération au développement (CNCD) - Collectif Stratégie Alimentaire (CSA) - Collectif d'échanges pour la technologie appropriée (COTA) - Entraide et fraternité - Foodfirst information and action network (FIAN) - Front uni des jeunes agriculteurs (FUJA) - Fédération des jeunes agriculteurs (FJA) - Fédération Wallonne de l'agriculture (FWA) - Guide nature - Institut d'éco-conseil - Inter environnement wallonie - Jeunesse et écologie - Les amis de la terre - Le monde selon les femmes - Ligue royale belge pour la protection des oiseaux (LRBPO) - Magasins du monde-Oxfam - MAP - Max Havelaar - Miel Maya - Mouvement chrétien pour la paix (MCP) - Nature et progrès - Oxfam-Solidarité - Pesticides Action Network (PAN) - Petit pas - Peuples solidaires - Réseau Foi et Justice Afrique Europe (AEFJN) - Réseaux des consommateurs responsables (RCR) - Solidarité Socialiste FCD - Sorghal - SOS-FAIM - SOS-pro gentibus (SOS-PG) - Vétérinaires sans frontières (VSF) - Vie féminine - Vredeseilanden

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Plate-forme flamande pour la souveraineté alimentaire

Vredeseilanden - FIAN Belgium - Wervel - Oxfam-Solidariteit - Oxfam Wereldwinkels - Vereniging voor Ecologische Leef- en Teeltwijzen (VELT) - Voor Moeder Aarde/Friends of the Earth - 11.11.11

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ESPAGNE : La Plataforma Rural

Amigos de la Tierra - Caritas Española - CAS (Colectivos de Acción Solidaria) - CAS (Colectivos de Acción Solidaria) - CECU (Confederación de Española de Consumidores y Usuarios) - CERAI - Ciconia - COAG (coordinadora de Organizaciones Agrarias y Ganaderas) - COCEDER (Confederación de Centros de Desarrollo Rural) - Coordinadora Catalana de Comercio Justo - Ecologistas en Acción - Entrepueblos - Movimiento de Jóvenes Rurales Cristianos (MIJARC) - Movimiento Rural Cristiano (FIMARC) - SEAE (Sociedad Española de Agricultura Ecológica) - SL (Sindicato Labrego) - SOC (Sindicato de Obreros del Campo) - Sodepaz-Sodepau - Veterinarios Sin Fronteras

Contact: Fernando Fernandez - ffernandez@cdrtcampos.es - http://www.cdrtcampos.es/plataforma_rural/indice.htm

FRANCE : Plate-forme pour des agricultures durables et solidaires

Coordination Sud - Comité Catholique contre la Faim et pour le Développement (CCFD) - Comité Français pour la Solidarité Internationale (CFSI) - Centre de Recherche et d'Information pour le Développement (CRID) - Groupe de Recherche et d'Echanges Technologiques (GRET) - Fédération Artisans du Monde - Agir ici - Réseau Foi et Justice Afrique Europe - Afrique Verte - Vétérinaires Sans Frontières-Centre International de Coopération Agricole (CICDA) - Max Havelaar France - Peuples Solidaires - Solidarité - Confédération Paysanne - Chrétiens dans le Monde Rural (CMR) - Mouvement Rural de Jeunesse Chrétienne (MRJC) - Association de Formation et d'Information pour le développement des Initiatives Rurales (AFIP) - Réseau Agriculture Durable - 4D (Dossiers et Débats pour le Développement Durable) - Les Amis de la Terre - Réseau Action Climat France - Réseau Cohérence - Confédération Syndicale des Familles - Alliance Paysans Ecologistes Consommateurs - A l'écoute de la nature - Accueil Paysan - Adéquations - Action Consommation - Action Information Ecologie 17 - Association pour un contrat mondial de l'eau - ATTAC - CEIPAL - Collectif Saône Doubs Vivant - Femmes et changements - Fondation France Libertés - Forum des Organisations de Solidarité Internationale Issues des Migrations (FORIM) - Initiative de Développement Stratégique - Institut de Recherche et d'Application des Méthodes de Développement (IRAM) - Mouvement National de Lutte pour l'Environnement - Mouvement pour les Droits et le Respect des Générations Futures - Rapsode

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HOLLANDE : Platform ander landbouwbeleid (PAL)

Platform Aarde Boer Consument - Nederlandse Akkerbouwvakbond (NAV) - Nederlandse Melkveehouders Vakbond (NMV) - Kritisch Landbouw Beraad (KLB) - Werkgroep Landbouw en Armoede (WLA) - Steunpunt Landelijke Boerinnenbelangen (LBB) - Milieudefensie/ Friends of the Earth Netherlands - Afrika-Europa Netwerk - y min y Solidarity Fund

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ITALIE : Campagna italiana per la sovranità alimentare

ACLI (Associazioni Cristiane Lavoratori Italiani) - AIAB (Associazione Italiana per l'Agricoltura Biologica) - ARCI (Associazione Ricreativa Culturale Italiana) - ARI (Associazione Rurale Italiana) - CDG (Consiglio dei Diritti Genetici) - FLAI-CGIL (Federazione Lavoratori Agro-Industria - Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro) - FAI-CISL (Federazione Agricola alimentare ambientale industriale - Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori) - UILA-UIL (Unione Italiana Lavoratori Agroalimentari - Unione Italiana Lavoratori) - CIC (Centro Internazionale Crocevia) - Legambiente - Volontari del mondo - FOCSIV (Federazione Organismi Cristiani Servizio - Internazionale Volontario)

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LUXEMBOURG

- Bauernallianz, Centrale Paysanne Luxembourgeoise, Fédération des Herdbooks Luxembourgeois, Fräie Lëtzebuenger Baureverband, Lëtzebuenger Jongbaueren a Jongwenzer, Service Jeunesse de la Centrale Paysanne Luxembourgeoise, Veräin fir biologesch-dynamesch Landwirtschaft, Vereenegung fir biologesch Landwirtschaft Letzebuerg
- Fondation Greenpeace Luxembourg, Lëtzebuenger Natur- a Vulleschutzliga,
- Action Solidarité Tiers Monde - ASTM, Aide à l'Enfance de l'Inde, Association Solidarité Luxembourg Nicaragua - ASLN, Cercle de Coopération des ONG de Développement, Frères des Hommes, Lëtzebuenger Jongbaueren a Jongwenzer - Service Coopération a.s.b.l., SOS Faim, TransFair Minka a.s.b.l.

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ROYAUME-UNI : UK Platform on Food Sovereignty

- Banana Link - Catholic Institute for International Relations - ETC Group (formerly RAFI) - Farm Crisis Network - Farmers Link - Find Your Feet - GAIA foundation
- Genetic Food Alert - Grassroots Action on Food and Farming - HDRA International Programme - New Economics Foundation - Pesticides Action Network-UK - War on Want - Women's Environment Network

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