

PUBLIC DEBATE
**EU and Andean countries relations: impacts on regional
integration and possible alternatives**

Wednesday 23 September 2009
European Parliament. Room: A 5 G2
9:30AM to 6:00PM
SP - ENG

Convened by

**Alianza Social Continental (Social Continental Alliance), ALOP, Friends of the Earth -
Europe, Grupo SUR, Asociacion El Andino**
**Bi-regional Network Europe- Latin America and Caribbean Enlazando Alternativas,
CAN –UE Alliance for access to medicines**
EU –CAN Network, Transnational Institute

With the support of Heinrich Böll Foundation

and the Members of the European Parliament

Bart Staes, Ulrike Lunacek, Isabelle Durant, Willy Meyer.

Between September 21st and 25th, the VI round of negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement between the European Union (EU) and Colombia and Peru will take place. After the collapse of the region-to-region negotiations for an Association Agreement between the EU and the Andean Community (CAN), the European Commission decided, early in 2009, to start a rushed process of bilateral and simultaneous trade liberalisation with those Andean countries that accepted the new framework, agenda and conditions of the negotiations with the EU. Only Peru and Colombia accepted them. Bolivia and Ecuador withdrew from the negotiations in 2007 and 2008, respectively, since both governments have not accepted a Free Trade Agreement as that imposed by the European Commission.

The negotiation with the CAN has corroborated that the EU is willing to negotiate only with those that accept unconditionally its requirements. Even though the EU negotiation mandate declares as its purpose to strengthen the Andean regional integration, in practice, the process of negotiations between the EU and the Andean countries has actually given a serious blow to the integration attempts in the region.

Also, during the negotiation process, interesting proposals put forward by the Bolivian and Ecuadorian governments, that may have lead to a new framework for the Agreement, went unanswered. Similarly, civil society expressions in both regions have expressed their concerns in relation to the contents of the negotiations and its potentially negative impact.

In this context, the above mentioned organisations and networks, together with the MEPs Bart Staes, Ulrike Lunacek, Isabelle Durant and Willy Meyer, are organising a public debate parallel to the VI round of negotiations in Brussels, with the participation of representatives from the Bolivian and Ecuadorian governments and civil society organisations from both regions, to debate the impact of the Global Europe strategy on the Andean integration process and possible alternative relations between the EU and the Andean countries. These proposals also represent alternative representative models, since they have been born out of a genuine participation of civil society. Therefore, this forum aims also at making visible those who have been excluded from the formal negotiations and whose proposals are not taken into consideration for the bulk of the citizens.

Registration is mandatory in order to access the European Parliament. Please send: your full name, date of birth, passport number and nationality before Thursday 17th of September to the following e-mail addresses: ctovar@alop.org.mx, gustavo.hernandez@11.be