

Declaration

Social movements from Latin America and Europe reject the resumption of negotiations of the European Union-Central American Association Agreement

Following the informal meetings of the European Commission and representatives of Central American countries on the 23rd and 24th of April in Brussels, and the intention to maintain "mini-rounds" over the trade chapter, social movements and civil society organizations from Latin America and Europe, part of the Hemispheric Social Alliance and the Bi-regional Network Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean *Enlazando Alternativas*, **reiterate our strong opposition to free trade and the resumption of negotiations of the Association Agreement between the European Union (EU) and Central America . We regret Nicaragua's return to the negotiating table and we call on all Central American governments to withdraw from the negotiating process.**

The current global crisis has shown that the neo-liberal model has failed. While the financial crisis and its consequences are deepening, the EU continues to defend the 'free market' as the solution, putting at risk marginalized populations in the Central American region, especially indigenous peoples and women, placing them in a situation of high vulnerability and hence increased poverty. The Association Agreement that the EU is still negotiating with Central America continues to propose extreme financial deregulation, which prevents countries from achieving economic sovereignty and from reforming their financial sectors. The negotiations include the absolute liberalization of financial transactions such as trade with "derivatives" (i.e. sub-prime mortgages) through "over the counter" mechanisms (private contracts not subject to regulations). Furthermore, the agreement allows for speculation on food prices, precisely the opposite of what we are urgently seeking.

We denounce the fact that these negotiations are conducted under the mandate of the European Commission called "Global Europe: Competing in the World," which reveals an aggressive strategy of trade and investment policies, in which clearly the interests of big business prevails to the detriment of the people, dismantling environmental and social regulations. The major beneficiaries of an agreement between the EU and Central America would be the European corporations who will gain free legal access to introduce their products in the Central American market, threatening the social and economic fabric of these countries which lack the necessary competitiveness to confront European businesses.

These agreements subsume the political dialogue and cooperation chapters to the commercial interests. The analysis of the "development" components included in the Association Agreements of the EU with regional blocs and countries of LAC, whether is regional integration, development cooperation, or political dialogue and social cohesion, shows that these elements are used as tools to forward and ensure greater market liberalization and to strengthen trade and investment interests of European transnational corporations. Accordingly, the Association Agreements undermine the economic, social and cultural rights of the peoples of the signatory countries, for example through the privatisation of public services and the destruction of social security systems.

Furthermore, we have seen with great concern that in the Central American region there are at least 80 European companies present, which have generated negative impacts, violating human rights, like in the cases of UNION FENOSA, ENEL or LAFARGE. EU interests are directed towards better protection of European investments, giving priority to the interests of transnational corporations over the people and their welfare.

In the area of agriculture, they seek to impose a predator, agro-exporting-oriented model, which is highly dependent on European technology and financial capital. This agreement, while encouraging a pattern of

specialization in the export of primary products and monocultures in agricultural production, through patents proposed in the chapters on intellectual property, would jeopardize the production and preservation of indigenous seeds, ancestral knowledge, food sovereignty and the production of healthy food.

Although the participation of citizens, in general, is considered the cornerstone of democracy, the broad social movement in the EU and Central America, and particularly women's movements, who question these negotiations do not have a significant platform for their voices to be heard in the negotiating process. Under these conditions, there are no chances that the Association Agreement will meet their needs. We denounce once again the exclusive nature of the negotiations and we **demand the immediate suspension of the negotiating process. We demand the initiation of consultation process in each country, with the real participation and involvement of civil society.** We call on the governments of the Central American Integration System to take into account the demands made by the social organizations in the region, to maintain channels of dialogue, analyze the various documents that have been submitted and to seriously discuss at this meeting the possibility of withdrawing from the process.

We call upon European and Latin American social movements to redouble the political pressure and social mobilization to ensure trade relations that are not based on the logic of free trade and promote, instead, an economic system based on solidarity, sustainability, social justice and mutual respect.

SIGNATORY ORGANIZATIONS/NETWORKS (UNTIL NOW)

- Alianza Social Continental- ASC (Américas)
- Movimiento Nicaragüense Otro Mundo es Posible (Nicaragua)
- Grito de los Excluidos/as Mesoamérica (Centroamérica)
- Alianza Social Continental Centroamérica (Centroamérica)
- ACSUR-Las Segovias (Estado Español)
- Ecologistas en Acción (Estado Español)
- Observatorio de la Deuda en la Globalización-ODG – Catalunya (Estado Español)
- Observatorio de las Multinationales Españolas en América Latina – Paz con Dignidad-OMAL (Estado Español)
- SETEM Catalunya (Estado Español)
- Transnational Institute -TNI (Holanda)
- Comité de mujeres de la ASC, Capítulo Centroamericano (Centroamérica)
- Red Internacional de Género y Comercio-IGTN
- ATTAC Francia (Francia)
- Latinamerikagrupperna/Solidaridad Suecia-América Latina-SAL (Suecia)
- Red Mexicana de Acción frente al Libre Comercio-RMALC (México)
- Coordinadora Europea Via Campesina (Europa)
- Dítso (Costa Rica)
- Veterinarios Sin Fronteras (Estado Español)
- Asociación A SUD (Italia)
- Confederación de los pueblos de la nacionalidad Kichwa del Ecuador-ECUARUNARI (Ecuador)
- REMTE (Brasil)
- Ceiba-Amigos de la Tierra (Guatemala)
- Red de Género y Comercio (Guatemala)
- Red Sintitechan (El Salvador)
- Bloque Popular de Honduras (Honduras)
- Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña – UNES (El Salvador)
- Centro de Investigación sobre Inversión y Comercio –CEICOM (El Salvador)
- Cedarena CT (Costa Rica)
- Movimiento por los derechos de la Diversidad de Nicaragua (Nicaragua)
- Centre Tricontinental (Bélgica)
- Latin American Solidarity Centre (Irlanda)
- FDCL - Centro de Investigación y Documentación Chile-América Latina (Alemania)
- Grito de los Excluidos-as Continental (América)
- Amigos de la Tierra – Europa (Europa)

- SODEPAZ-Balamil de Valladolid (Estado español)
- Educació per a l'Acció Crítica (EdPAC) – Catalunya (Estado español)
- AITEC (France)
- Izquierda Anticapitalista (Estado español)
- Red Solidaria ITACA (Estado español)
- Centro de Defensa del Consumidor (El Salvador)
- Red de Semillas "Resembrando e Intercambiando" – Sevilla (Estado español)
- Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña, OFRANEH (Honduras)
- ALBA SUD - Catalunya (Estado español)
- AMARANTE Setem - Vigo (Estado español)
- La Via Campesina Centro America
- IGLA (Grupo de Información sobre América Latina) (Austria)
- Solidaridad con Guatemala de Austria (Austria)
- Amigos de la Tierra España (Estado español)
- Platform Aarde Boer Consument (Holanda)
- CONFEDERACIÓN DE CONJUNTOS Y FRACCIONAMIENTOS HABITACIONALES DE INTERÉS SOCIAL EN EL ESTADO DE TLAXCALA (México)
- ATTAC Chile (Chile)
- Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña (El Salvador)
- Alianza Social Continental Capítulo Perú (Perú)
- Ongd AFRICANDO - Gran Canaria (Estado español)
- Amigos de la Tierra América Latina
- War on Want (Reino Unido)
- CITLALI (Nicaragua)
- Comisión Nacional de Enlace (CNE) (Costa Rica)
- Redsdcom (Red de solidaridad y desarrollo comunitario) (Nicaragua)
- Entrepobles/Entrepueblos/Entrepobos (Estado español)
- Area Paz y Antiglobalización de Ben Magec, Ecologistas en Acción (Estado español)