



STOP THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

DEFEND EMPLOYMENT, FOOD SOVEREIGNTY, PEASANT FARMING AND LIFE OF ALL TERRITORIES!

Citizen mobilization prevented a multilateral free-trade agreement of the World Trade Organization (WTO), in particular for agricultural products. In response, the European Union (EU) is going to negotiate bilateral free-trade agreements in all directions. They would like to drive agriculture and the food industry to the most unbridled heights of liberalism.

The EU state that these negotiations are necessary to tackle the crisis. According to their opinion, these agreements will increase GDP and employment, a thing that no serious study even in Brussels can confirm. Others agreements, as the "Elena" agreement with the USA and Mexico show the disastrous consequences in term of loss of jobs, democracy and damage to the environment.

America and one agreement with the ECOWAS (The Economic Community of West African States)¹ in total secrecy : the TAFTA/ TIIPP² with the USA, the CETA/ ACGS³ with Canada and the Economic Partnership Agreement with Western Africa.



The free trade and investment liberalization agreements with the USA and Canada will be the most important agreements ever signed. They will have a global impact and will set new standards, that are to the benefit of multinational companies. These companies will have tools at their disposal to shape all

the regulations, standards and public policies that specifically aim to increase their profits: the dispute settlement system and the regulatory cooperation council. So, countries, regions and communities will lose their power to protect citizens and their environment.

In order to allow European multinational companies to sell their services, cars and arms, agriculture will become a trade currency. These agreements will be prepared to include things that thus far have been protected, including the reform of the regulation prohibiting GMOs, the authorization of chemical treatment of animal carcasses (such as the use of lactic acid) and of the adoption of health rules tailored to the EU agro-food industry (for example the microchipping).

The agreement between the European Commission and Canada has already in principle been. It will set a precedent and will be used as a reference by the negotiations between the EU and the USA. We have to stop all of these agreements! They are not favorable for either American or European people or indeed for any other country in the world!

1 International regional organization, founded on 1975 comprising 15 West African countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivoriz Coast, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.

2 The free-trade agreement (FTA) USA-UE : "Transatlantic Free Trade Area (TAFTA)", "Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)"

3 The free-trade agreement (FTA) Canada-UE : "Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)"

WHICH CONSEQUENCES FOR THE AGRICULTURE?

DESTRUCTION OF PAID PEASANT EMPLOYMENT

With these agreements, the right to the competition overpasses the social right. Labor costs and the workforces remuneration are considered as an adjustment variable.

Peasant work produces goods and added value. The agriculture is a source of employment which has to be supported. Farmers take care of the territories, make the wheels of it and produce good quality food.

The pretext "agreements create employment" is wrong! On both sides of the Atlantic, a veritable market (lucrative) of slave labour, flexible and precarious is organized around the industrialization of farming. These free-trade agreements (FTAs) will only enhance the services provision role of multinational companies who do not hesitate to massively relocate workers to the countries where the workforce is cheaper, thereby destroying peasant employment.

ABOLITION OF CUSTOMS BARRIERS, CALLING INTO QUESTION THE ACCESS TO FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

The customs duties protect agriculture from the global competition. They are one of the tools to assure countries food sovereignty. They also make it possible to give priority to the trading partners on the basis of social and environmental criteria. FTAs are going to cancel customs duties.

THE STANDARDS, A TOOL AT THE SERVICE OF THE MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES

The USA, Canada and EU have different standards. Some effectively protect health, environment and consumers. Others are only a pretext to ensure the monopoly of industrial products and the ban on peasant or artisanal products. They are linked to the promoted model of production and consumption.

The agreements, under pressure from the lobby of multinational companies, will lead to a weakening of health, environment and consumers protective regulations and to a strengthening of the industrial standards, to meet the challenges of global competition. The companies will become the only ones who are able create "based on science" standards, financing and directing all the research work. For the agriculture this standard will be adapted to the large agricultural holdings and to the need of the agro-food industry and of the large-scale distribution. By lack of adequate resources, small peasant farmers will not be able to align themselves. The standards will therefore be a farmers eradication tool, at the same time as an empowered way of developing industrial agriculture, which are both environmentally and socially harmful.

The standards will be a protection tool for industrial monopolies rather than a protection tool for environment and citizens.



EXAMPLE

DIFFERENT STANDARDS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC

In terms of health risk management, generated by the agro-food industry, the USA and Canada have different policies. At leaving the abattoir, the USA and Canada perform the chemical decontamination of meat to "clean" it from germs. The EU implement the famous HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points principles) who is an analysis of the hotspots of risk by the agro-food industry itself. The USA and Canada allowed the use of antibiotics as well as hormones for animal growth promotion purposes, whereas in the EU this practice is not allowed. The USA and Canada also do not recognize the precautionary principle. In relation to GMOs, these two countries allow more than Europe does. In Europe fights against GMOs stand in GMOs ways. FTAs risk to compromise the gainings of the civil society, by creating more demanding GMOs regulations. These environmental and health standards of chemical products are also an important target for the multinational companies. For example, the thresholds for pesticides use, or the acceptability of residues are different depending on the country. So they will be necessarily downwards harmonized. For example the introduction of regulations on endocrine disrupters (chemical substances impacting development), at European level, have been met with opposition from the lobbies.



THE POWER OF MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES

The tools of domination of multinational corporations that appear in the agreements are:

- The Investor-State dispute settlement (ISDS) which allow all companies to claim financial compensation on behalf of regions, countries or territorial communities where a new law or rule might compromise current or future profits of the company in question from a WTO tribunal.
- The "Regulatory Cooperation Council", will not work in a open transparent manner and will have the right of oversight regarding emerging norms, as well as old ones before they are submitted to legislative procedure; this includes the obligation to take the viewpoint of the USA into account.

ENHANCE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

In terms of intellectual property rights, the systems are also different. In the USA, for example, the patent regulate the seed market, while in the EU and in Canada the catalogue⁴ is compulsory. FTAs by changing the access market rules, will act in the interest of seeds and chemical multinational companies.

The right of farmers to use their own seeds is jeopardized by these agreements in all the countries of the European Union. For example, in France, the agricultural exception to the French law on Counterfeiting is challenged. And in Brussels, the refusal by the European Parliament of ACTA (Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement), will be called into question.

END OF PUBLIC POLICIES, IN PARTICULAR AGRICULTURAL POLICIES

Due to the dispute settlement system mechanism, multinational companies could attack the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and all the public policies, which are going against their profits. The CAP agricultural aids will be attacked for unfair competition.

TAFTA and CETA will be above European, national and regional regulations. They will give guidance to public policies. A territorial community couldn't choose its local companies, its suppliers (for example to choose farmers for school canteens) anymore. The institutions will be afraid to legislate because of the reaction of the multinational companies. So we will be under the dictate of multinational companies.

⁴ To exchanging or marketing seeds and plants destined to a commercial exploitation, the varieties must be registered in the official species and varieties catalogue.

THREAT AGAINST DESIGNATIONS OF ORIGIN AND QUALITY LABELS

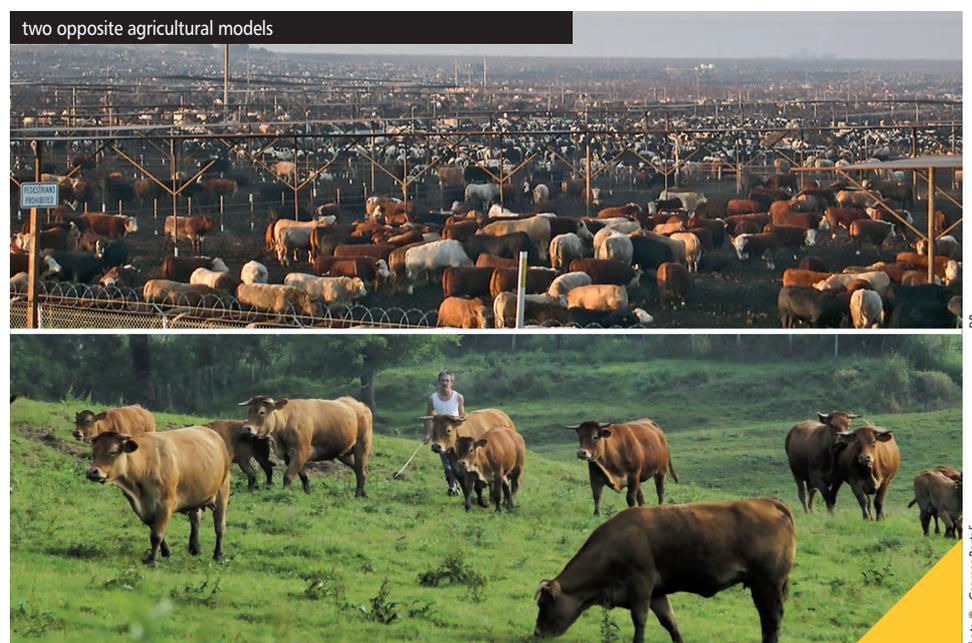
The EU has three systems to regulate agricultural products and quality food products: PDO (Protected Designation of Origin), IGP (Protected Geographical Indication) and TSG (Traditional Speciality Guaranteed).

In the FTAs these three systems are menaced because the USA and Canada do not recognize them. In the North American countries only the private label, owned by the company, is recognized and protected. For this reason the North American companies can afford to use terms like "champagne", "feta" or "parmesan".

DISRUPTION OF BRANCHES OF FARMING, FOR EXAMPLE THE BEEF INDUSTRY.

The meat sector, in particular the beef industry, will be extremely weakened by these agreements. Livestock farming models, health, social and environmental standards are very different on both sides of the Atlantic. Production costs in EU are far higher than costs in North America. The "high productivity" agricultural model, which is more advanced in the North American countries will expand very quickly in the EU, with the consequences that we all know: desertification of territories, loss of peasant employment, expansion of GMOs, etc.

The problem is not only agricultural. It represents a choice of different models of society: which agriculture and which food industry do we want?



FIGHT AGAINST THIS DESTRUCTIVE AGREEMENTS!

The model, promoted by these agreements, currently under negotiation, is a capitalistic, industrial and financiarized agriculture model. In view of the constant exchange between the USA, Canada and the EU, the only possibility is to rush further down into this agro-export model, which is harmful for the environment, employment and for the South countries, taking us further from the food sovereignty. For example, the mass arrival of GM grain and soya will strengthen the corn-soybean animal feed, at the expense of local prairies and proteins, to the benefit of factories of 1000 cows and more!

However, the European territory will never be able to be as competitive. There aren't available big spaces as in the USA or Canada, which support larger economies of scale. Rather, we have immense territorial diversity, which can offer a large and very well-qualified peasant workforce, able to provide for all local food needs.



On 24th September 2014 the Confédération Paysanne occupied the headquarters of Cargill, the leading global food industry.

Photo © - Mathieu Esinger

FTAs stand in the way of peasant agriculture. The American and European farmers will disappear faced by the generalized competitiveness injunction, and will leave the place to agri-managers.

That is why, in the USA, Canada and EU the currently protests still need to grow. We cannot, in any circumstances, let that such agreements will be ratified. No more than when we didn't accept the previous drafts of the same project, the MAI (Multilateral Agreement on Investment) and ACTA (Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement).

At all concerned areas, FTAs are negotiating, according to the interests and influence of some multinational companies. In addition, apart from these aspects, the elimination of peasant agriculture is the elimination of the autonomous feeding ability of populations – so concerted, selected and independent. We, farmers and citizens, cannot waive this capacity, which is a vital condition to exercise our collective freedoms, by submitting ourselves to the food guardianship of some cynical powers, like Monsanto.



Follow on ECVV website (<http://www.eurovia.org/>) the news on the European campaign «STOP to TTIP,» led by ECVV with its members organizations, and talk around you. Only a broad citizens mobilization can bring down these agreements!

