

Common ground

– European Coordination Via Campesina –



Newsletter – July 2014

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1. Working themes

PEASANTS RIGHTS

Green light by the Council of Human Rights

On the 27th of June, the Council of Human Rights voted largely in favour of the resolution, with 29 votes in favour, 13 abstentions - of which the majority were European states (a big win!) - and 5 votes against. The resolution mandates the ambassador-coordinator of Bolivia to continue the work leading to a declaration on the "rights of farmers and other people living in rural areas", based on the recommendations of the first working session and consultations that should be conducted between June and November 2014.

The green light is the result of several years of work by the LVC and some close allies (CETIM, FIAN) and a significant mobilisation of ECVC members in their country and in Geneva in June at the 26th session of the Council of Human Rights. A symbolic action was held at the Place des Nations on the 17th of June. The objective was to persuade European

governments, hitherto hostiles to a specific tool in the context of human rights, to adopt a favourable attitude to this important tool for peasants' defence.

For Bolivia (and the basic group), this work leading to a declaration of peasants' rights includes some consultations with States and NGOs and a working session in November.

It is now time for the ECVC and the LVC to contribute to discussion and to continue working with states to strengthen their knowledge of the problem.

LAND

On the 19th of June, DG ENV organised a conference entitled "**Land as a resource**", in which Maricarmen participated on behalf of the ECVC and the SOC.

The conference, organised in three parts: the issues at stake, national and regional experiences, and exploring possible EU answers, were mainly directed towards aspects of soil contamination, and solutions linked to urbanisation and land recycling, with examples and proposals of "good management".

Maricarmen took part in the 3rd session "possible EU solutions", and developed during her 10 minutes presentation on the work of the ECVC on land: grabbing issues, loss of peasantry, need to guarantee (with an EU directive) the right of access to land, especially for the youth. She defended the need to have guidelines in Europe, similar to those of the FAO.

AGRICULTURAL POLICIES AND SMALL FARMS: DG AGRI project

La Confédération Paysanne and its partners won the EU Commission (DG AGRI) project call. This new project will allow the "Envie de paysans!" campaign to continue in France, from May 2014 to April 2015, and to organise a European campaign in 5 countries with the following members: Belgium with ECVC office, Fugea and MAP; in Portugal with CNA; in Italy with ARI and in Spain with Ehne B.

The main objective is to present to the public the model of peasant family-farming in an agriculture relocalisation frame, as a response medium to the social, environmental and economical issues Europe is currently going through.

On the 29th of October 2014, we are going to organise the following activities in light of this project in Belgium:

- A seminar "Small farms and peasant family-farming in Europe: better integration of these actors of sustainable local innovation for future policies", at the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).
- The "Urban Farm", also in Brussels in place du Luxembourg (to be confirmed).

We will also coordinate work for a publication on small farms, CAP, Europe, which should be ready for the events on the 29th of October.

More information will be sent in the coming weeks. Note down this date in your agenda as, for members interested in these themes, it will be an opportunity to organize a meeting to plan for future activities.

Do not hesitate to contact us for more information!

RESEARCH

European Innovation and Research Partnership: some opportunities?

Led by DG Agri and DG Research, the EIP is an important device in the eyes of the European Commission, in order to promote research and innovation in the agricultural world by better linking farmers to research and other rural actors.

This includes:

- A steering group (High level steering board) where ECVC is represented and has developed a strategic plan in 2013
- A 'service point' in Brussels with persons contracted to facilitate the device, organising events, information.
- At the local scale, the directive provides "Operational Groups" with farmers and other stakeholders to address the specific problems they face. The OG creation and operation can be financed by a Rural Development measure (No. 35) if it is implemented by the region-state involved in the partnership contracts (being validated by the European Commission): **to see in the regions**
- Focus group: working groups of 20 people (researchers, experts, farmers...) on specific topics to review the situation and shed light on studies - many have occurred. The presence of farmers is important and ECVC can nominate participants (EX: Aira from Finland participated in a group on organic farming)
ECVC will propose a group on dynamics in peasant agriculture, in order to enhance our production methods: to be clarified - **what do you think?**
- Access to research programs in the frame of Horizon 2020: besides the work on innovation, a goal is to facilitate peasant's participation in research projects launched by the DG Research. **Maybe opportunities for ECVC members and our allies?**

TRADE

EU-US Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP/TAFTA)

One year ago, the European Commission began negotiating a bilateral trade agreement with the USA, the so-called TTIP EU-US Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (/TAFTA).

The European Commission will represent the EU at the negotiating table, as in trade policy, the Commission negotiates on behalf of the EU and its 28 Member States. The Commission will negotiate on the basis of guidelines agreed by the Council, where the governments of all EU Member States are represented. The Commission's Trade Department will take the lead.

The proposed EU-US Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership will strongly affect, generally speaking, social, labour and environmental rights on both sides of the Atlantic, and deepen global trade and investment liberalization.

For the **agricultural sector**, this trade deal will increase agro-corporate power, undermining local food systems. The agreement is not a product of a democratic process, but of

negotiations of lawyers, economists, civil servants, corporations and politicians. They have no democratic legitimacy. There is a large corporate dominance. The agenda is not public, the process is not transparent. With this trade deal more and more natural resources, goods and services will become privatised.

ECVC has put in place a specific working group on Trade (see the ECVC members' intranet for more details on its composition).

This working group works closely with a coalition of civil society organisations, coordinated by the network S2B. Together, we are preparing a European decentralised multi-sectoral day of action against TTIP, CETA and corporate free trade agenda on the 11th of October, and a European mobilisation day in December 2014.

ECVC will also prepare a leaflet for public distribution, that summarises ECVC key points and recommendations on TTIP.

For more information and contribution do not hesitate to contact us at marzia.rezzin@eurovia.org

YOUTH

In June, an international youth meeting was held, with the participation of young people from all continents. In behalf of Europe, Pablo from SOC (Spain) and Unai for the ICC were present.

As many people are new in this process, the political situation and these last years dynamics amongst youth were presented.

Concrete issues faced by the youth were discussed (as education, migration...), as well as the internal organization of the group (for instance, to see if it may be possible to have a youth space in LVC webpage).

SEEDS AND GMOs

The working group on seeds will meet at the end of July for three days of meetings.

The goal is to define a common position on European regulations currently being adopted and to develop a strategy on this legislative process.

Two issues are concerned: firstly, and in line with the mobilisation in January, the aim is to work on the **regulation on plant reproductive material**, as well as on the three associated regulations (plant health, animal health, controls). The meeting should also make it possible to resolve the political issues that exist within the group in relation to the approach to adopt in light of this regulation and, to implement the best strategy to defend peasants' rights against the seeds' industries.

In addition, the directive that permits the authorisation of the **placing on the market of genetically modified organisms in Europe (GMOs)** is also being reviewed at present, with the stated objective of allowing States to ban certain GMOs, but openly concerned about promoting the authorisation of transgenic (GMOs) in Europe. This poses a risk for the fight against GMOs because the possibilities to ban a GMO on national territory are limited and the current text grants enormous power to businesses, with whom States will have to negotiate.

Indeed, non-compliant Member States must ask the biotech companies to exclude them from their authorisation process and governments can for their part ban the transgenic GMO but that is only if the industry refuses the ban.

AGRO-ECOLOGY

The next Grundtvig meeting on agro-ecology will focus on the links between peasants and consumers (direct sales, local food systems, GSP+, etc...). It will take place in Galicia from 26 to 29 September. For further information or to participate in the meeting preparation, contact Benjamin.

2. Internal news	
<p>Calendar</p> <p>Important dates for this autumn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 26-29 September: 3rd European Agroecology meeting on short circuits – in Galicia (Spain) - October: FAO Rome events, Week of decentralised actions against TTIP, ‘Urban Farm’, ‘Forum for active rural communities’ (Galicia), FTA meeting - November: ICC meeting in Europe, CNA congress, Land meeting - December: FAO Land meeting in Brussels, mass demonstration in Brussels against TTIP 	<p>Next newsletter Foreseen for November 2014</p> <p>For access to the records of the Coordination Committees and other working documents, ask your ECVC member organisation for the code.</p> <p>Looking for interns in Brussels</p> <p>The office in Brussels is continuously looking for one or two intern(s). It can be an internship on our thematic axis as well as an interpretation-translation internship. Feel free to spread the word!</p>

3. Members news		
<p>Youth struggling for land in the heart of Europe – Paula Gioia jABL</p> <p>‘Land grabbing’ phenomena in recent years is not restricted to the global south. In the heart of Europe, young German farmers are also struggling to retain and regain access to farmland.</p> <p>In autumn 2012 a group of young farmers, college graduates, apprentices and</p>	<p>“Feeding the Future”: Land Workers’ Alliance Demonstration at DEFRA</p> <p>Smallholders and market gardeners tore themselves away from the spring demands to their land to protest outside DEFRA Head Office in London, on 17th April. They are unhappy about the way that DEFRA sidelines</p>	<p>The “1000 vaches”: a campaign by La Confederation Paysanne</p> <p>In France, the mobilisation against the project “1000 vaches” (1000 cows) is in full swing. In front of the imminent danger for peasants’ future represented by the 1000 vaches factory, and seeing the passivity of public powers, la Confederation Paysanne took</p>

<p>activists united in the Confederation of Young Farmers (BjL) and launched the campaign ‘Stop land grabbing in eastern Germany’. Our aim was to make a stand and demand our rights as young people who want to go into farming.</p> <p>At the same time, the 10 year old collective farm in Bienenwerder, where I live 45 km east of Berlin, began a big fight against investors and agribusinesses which tried to grab the land from under our feet. This is not an isolated case, with many other farmers also threatened.</p> <p>Our confederation, together with the local youth wing of La Via Campesina (jAbL), presented a position paper with our demands to the German government. We call for a moratorium on any further sale of government land. In order to create jobs, sustain livelihoods and contribute to food sovereignty, we demand support for young farmers. We really believe that access to land must be ensured to support small scale farming, rather than sold to investors who have no local connections or ideals regarding sustainable agriculture.</p> <p>Our land is being put up ‘for sale’. But as young German farmers, we keep fighting against this sell-out. Food sovereignty here and now!</p>	<p>small and family farms in favour of agribusiness, in the debate about UK food security.</p> <p>A magnificent display of produce brought along by protesters, including milk, vegetables, flour and a gigantic ham, illustrated the productivity of small farmers, while spokeswoman Jyoti Fernandes highlighted in a speech that given adequate support, local, ecological food could break out of its “luxury niche” and provide affordable food for everyone.</p> <p>The Land Workers' Alliance, who organised the protest, is a new organisation representing the interests of small and ecological food, fuel and fibre producers. A spokeswoman for the organisation said, “This is only the beginning. We were heartened that so many people came to London to support our demonstration and that the agricultural press seem to have sat up and taken notice. Now we hope to continue the dialogue to ensure that DEFRA create policies that enable a new generation of small, ecological producers to contribute to feeding the UK.”</p>	<p>responsibility.. Our actions are legitimate. We cannot let Michel Ramery complete his project which would open the door to an unrestrained industrialization of agriculture.</p> <p>On the 1st of July at the courthouse of Amiens, nine activists appeared for refusing DNA samples and incitement to damage at the factory. All this for a giant tag and some unscrewed bolts. The trial has been postponed until the 28th of October to give the defence time to prepare itself.</p> <p>The factory 1000 cows is the symbol of industrial agriculture: 9,000,000 litres of milk sold at 250 Euros a tonne, whilst breeders are barely coping with 350 Euros. Milk has become a by-product of manure that feeds a giant methaniser. A project whose profitability depends on subsidised energy production.</p> <p>The 1000 vaches struggle is an iconic fight to stop the industrialisation and financialisation of agriculture. It must not, however, conceal other projects in France, which are allowing farmers’ disappearance and the destruction of jobs, territories, food and the environment.</p>
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