

Press Release / English

press-release

Africa-Europe - What alternatives?

Europe - Africa Relations:

European and African CSOs and social movements will debate alternatives in Lisbon

European and African civil society organizations will meet in Lisbon on 8 to 9 December, in parallel with European Union / African Union Summit.

They will alert political leaders and public opinion of the two continents to the disasters caused by trade competition, economic exploitation of ecosystems, restrictive migration policies and contempt of the most fundamental economic and social rights.

The second European Union / African Union Summit will be held in Lisbon on 8 – December 2007.

In the words of the European Commission this Summit should sanction the transition from a "European strategy in Africa" towards a "Euro-African strategy" based on real partnership. On the program (although the final agenda has not yet been revealed): climate change and energy issues, governance and human rights, and migrations, mobility and employment. So far as Africa is concerned, the main priorities for discussion are agriculture and food sovereignty.

The issue of the Economic Partnership Agreements, initially swept under the carpet by the Portuguese Presidency which did not want such a sensitive question to endanger the success of "its" Summit, has recently become come to the fore and will, in fact, be a core stake of the debates. Given the contentious course of the negotiations, in particular the disintegration of the regional blocks, Lisbon could well be the theatre of disruptive discussions.

Words face to face with a cruel reality

EPAs directly threaten the survival of the majority of the African populations and are provoking an unprecedented opposition throughout the continent ; at the same time, the "fortress – Europe" does not unveil any alternative and intensifies its violation of fundamental rights.

Treated as a reservoir of raw materials and/or a market of new potential consumers, the African continent's wealth is coveted by international economic actors, its local markets are under attack by foreign exporters and its populations are relegated to the position of recipients of miserly international assistance which perpetuates their dependence.

Far from shouldering Europe's responsibility to develop real solidarity with Africa, the European Union's policies regarding Africa are all inspired by a strategy which directly threatens the economic, social, environmental and cultural rights of the African populations. Underwritten by the European transnational firms in perpetual search for new markets, the EU strategy in Africa weaves together aggressive trade agreements with facilities for exploitation of revenue for European companies and increasing restrictions on the movement of the people, to the detriment of ecosystems and equitable redistribution of local resources.

What can Europe propose to its African partners in alternative to the so-called "pro-development" trade agreements? How to formulate a migration policy which respects the international human rights conventions and provides meaningful support for development processes in Africa?

It is to communicate these concerns and propose responses to them that European and African international solidarity organizations, social movements NGOs, farmers' organizations and trade unions will gather together in Lisbon on 8 to 9 December.

THE ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

PORTUGAL: AJP/ ATLA/ATTAC/ Bacalhoeiro/ Cores do Globo/ FDLI/Fundo de Apoio Social de Cabo Verdianos em Portugal/Gaia/ [Khapaz](#)/Moinho da Juventude/ Panteras Rosa /Solidariedade Imigrante/ SOS-Racismo/ UMAR/ZDB

Europe : Seattle To Brussels Network/ActionAid International/Attac Europe and its national membership/ AITEC-IPAM/Cordaid/Ecologistas en accion/Terra Nuova/Friends of the Earth Europe/IATP, Migreurop network/Transnational Institute/War on Want/Via Campesina Europe/11.11.11/WIDE, World Development Movement/No Vox Network/Nova Terra/Survie France, CCFD, Secours Catholique-Caritas, Zimbabwe Watch.

AFRICA : African trade network/ACORD Kenya/Alternatives Niger/Seatini/Mouvement des Sans-Voix- Mali/ People Parliament/ROPPA/Eastern and Southern African Small Farmers Federation/National Smallholders Farmers Association of Malawi/CADTM Maroc/Plate-forme sous-régionale des organisations paysannes d'Afrique Centrale/Publish what you way Congo/Jubilee Zambia/Eastern African Farmers Federation.

PROGRAM

Friday 7th December

15h00 Press Conference

19h-22h00 Cultural events in various sites of Lisbon

Saturday 8th December

Venue: Fac. de Belas Artes - Chiado (College of Fine Arts - in Chiado)

09h00 Opening of the meeting: Welcome and plenary session

10h30-13h30 Discussions in parallel sessions

Theme 1- Ecology, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Food

Sovereignty

Theme 2 - Migrations

14h30–17h30 Discussions in parallel sessions

Theme 3 - Economic Development and Trade

Theme 4 - Human Rights

17h30 – 19h30 Self-organized workshops

Sunday, 9th December

Venue: Fac. de Belas Artes - Chiado (College of Fine Arts - in Chiado)

10h00 – 12h00 Joint Strategy Meeting: Campaigns and common struggles

12h00 – 13h00 Final Plenary and Final Joint Statement

Afternoon: Demonstration

Venue Address:

Faculdade de Belas Artes

Largo da Academia Nacional de Belas Artes - Lisbon

By underground, please take the blue or red line and exit in Baixa-Chiado

PRESS AND CONTACTS

Nuno Mendes: +351 962501351 / africa.europa.alternativas.press@gmail.com
(Portuguese, English and Spanish)

Amélie Canonne (AITEC) : +33 (0) 143712222 / amelie.aitec@reseau-ipam.org (French and English)

Alexandra Strickner (IATP/Attac-Austria): +43 13174014/ a.strickner@iatp.org (English, German, French and Italian)

More Info: <http://africa-europa-alternativas.blogspot.com>