



An appeal  
for coherent European  
policies that aid the  
fight against hunger  
and aid family-based  
sustainable agriculture  
in developing countries



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# Summary

*Promoting family-based, sustainable agriculture that respects the environment and the right of farmers to make a decent living from their labour, as well as the right of consumers to an adequate amount of nutritious food at an affordable price is a major challenge for the fair and sustainable development of poor countries, fighting hunger and poverty. This requires recognising the specificity of agriculture, and involves implementing agricultural policies and an acceptance of special status in trade agreements.*

**We call on the European Union (EU) to:**

- **make its policies**, particularly those that have a bearing on agriculture, international trade and cooperation, **coherent with its commitments** to the development of poor countries, the reduction of poverty and the fight against world hunger.

- **make food sovereignty a priority policy area** that must be integrated into the different European and international policies (CAP, external trade policy, cooperation and development policies ...) and to recognise **the right** of developing and European countries to food sovereignty, particularly in the context of the trade agreements that it concludes. This requires that concrete measures be taken with regard to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), external trade policy as well as cooperation and development policy.

# introduction

The defence of **family-based sustainable agriculture** constitutes a major challenge for the future of the 6 billion human beings that live on the planet. This agricultural model enables a maximum number of farmers in every region to make a decent living from their work, producing nutritious, good quality food on human-scale farms, without jeopardizing the natural resources of tomorrow. The type of agriculture we need must contribute, in partnership with citizens, to creating lively rural areas in a living environment that is appreciated by all, while respecting the right of consumers to an adequate and healthy diet at an affordable price. This model will be needed all the more by 2050, when there are 9 billion people on the planet.

Family farming, which is mostly peasant-based and sustainable in nature, accounts for 2.8 billion people, or 45 % of the world's population.<sup>1</sup> This type of agriculture offers numerous advantages, such as<sup>2</sup>:

- o These farms optimise the use of family labour and help slow down rural exodus and the uncontrolled growth of urban centres,
- o They often have very high productivity per hectare,
- o Focussed on producing agricultural products and food for human consumption, they contribute more effectively in the fight against hunger and poverty by sharing the wealth produced more fairly,
- o Their activities often tend to be more diversified (mixed-farming and livestock rearing) and family farms generally pay greater respect to the environment than the large farms that practice monoculture.

But pressure for increasing liberalisation of the global economy poses a threat to this type of agriculture. In rich and poor countries alike, increasing deregulation and lack of investment in this sector are leading to the disappearance of a growing number of sustainable, family-based farms – 600,000 farms a year according to Via Campesina.

This development is forcing millions of farmers to migrate to the cities and countries that are unable to offer decent work to all. Moreover, the absence of a system for the global regulation of agricultural markets makes them more vulnerable to speculation. This situation satisfies neither farmers nor consumers.

Liberalisation is largely responsible for the **current crisis**. Soaring prices for certain products (cereals, dairy products ...), in part due to speculation, has hit hardest the developing countries that, having abandoned their agriculture in the course of recent

decades, are over-dependent on imports to feed their populations. Hunger riots have already taken place in several major cities in Cameroon, Senegal and in Haiti ... By contrast, those countries that have supported their agriculture and which produce the staple foods that the population needs are generally less affected by the crisis. This is why, given the gravity of the situation, the FAO has made it a priority to "rapidly stimulate food production in the affected countries"<sup>3</sup>. This position reflects those put forward for many years by farmers' organisations, particularly in Africa. To achieve this, the countries of the South need to be able, like the EU, to strengthen their regional integration, protect their agriculture, introduce agricultural policies that enable them to progress towards food independence and to apply the principle of "regional preference". These policies should pay special attention to family farmers and their families, who are the first victims of hunger and poverty.

In the early 60s, in a bid to reduce their food deficit, European countries decided to introduce a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) based on support for European production and protection against imports from third countries. This policy made it possible for Europe to achieve **self-sufficiency** in the 70's. At a time when the EU is assessing the health of the CAP and starting to define its orientations for the period after 2013, France, which is holding the EU presidency in the second half of 2008, has reiterated that the primary objective of the CAP is "to ensure the independence and food security of the EU"<sup>4</sup>, adding that "strengthening Community preference" is an "indisputable/" objective<sup>5</sup>.

The EU ought to grant third countries the same rights that it has given itself<sup>6</sup>. The Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) negotiated between the EU and ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) countries are a perfect illustration of this situation. EPAs are intended to make the latter open the main sectors of their markets to European products, thus exposing the ACP's agricultural products and their emerging agroindustries to **competition from imported European foods**, which are often cheaper. This is all the more serious given that the EU has not definitively abandoned its export subsidies within the framework of the CAP.

Finally, the share of EU official development assistance allocated to agriculture has fallen and scarcely exceeded 3% in 2005<sup>7</sup>. Although, the development of the agriculture sector is given centre stage in European Commission speeches, the officially announced share of the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) budget devoted

<sup>1</sup> CIRAD /Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement): "l'agriculture familiale, un monde à construire". According to the FAO, of the 854 million victims of hunger, 80 % are peasants and their families.

<sup>2</sup> Coordination Sud: "Défendre les agricultures familiales: lesquelles, pourquoi?", Paris, December 2007 (<http://www.coordinationsud.org/spip.php?article5849> Examples cited included the case of Brazil.

<sup>3</sup> Press conference by Jacques Diouf, Director General of the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations), Rome, 17.12.2007

<sup>4</sup> The impact of the CAP in Europe is not the object of this document. However, we would point out a certain number of failings such as the worrying reduction in the number of farms, the unfair distribution of support...

<sup>5</sup> The French Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries: "Towards a new CAP: let us open the debate.", Paris, 2007

<sup>6</sup> The EU justifies EPAs with constraints imposed by the WTO. But who decides the rules of the WTO if not its members, among whom the EU plays a decisive role.

<sup>7</sup> DAC-OECD, DAC Peer Review 2007, p. 77

to agriculture still does not exceed 7%. The decision to allocate a billion Euro facility to alleviate the effects of rising prices are steps in the right direction. Nevertheless, the funds must be destined for developing farmer-based, sustainable agriculture and the procedures for allocating those funds defined in close partnership with farmers' organisations. More generally, the promises of EU aid must be kept and efforts continue to be made and increased in the coming years.

The EU must ensure greater coherence between its policies and those of its 27 members. The European Parliament, which is playing an increasing role in the decisions taken by the EU, has the means to promote greater coherence. This is why we are calling on European political groups as well as political parties at other levels to open a dialogue on these issues with the various actors to make clear commitments in view of elections in 2009 and to implement them.

**We call upon the EU to make its policies coherent, in general, and in particular**

those on agriculture, international trade and cooperation, with its commitments on the development of poor countries, to ensure everyone's basic needs in a fair and sustainable manner. Among these commitments, are:

- The international texts relating to human rights, including the International Protocol on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966. It should be remembered that international law recognises the primacy of human rights above all other legal norms.
- The Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the first of which aims to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015.
- The coherence of the different policies within the EU in support of development is a legal obligation for the European institutions<sup>8</sup>.

In the context of achieving the MDGs, The European Consensus on development, of 2005, jointly adopted by the Council, the Commission, the Parliament and the Member States, requires the EU to produce reports on "policy coherence for development" and sets out the political framework. This is a first step. However, as the 2007 report states, this work is only based on "the contributions made by the Commission and the Member States in response to a questionnaire".

**We call on the European Parliament to use all the means at its disposal to ensure**

**overall coherence** in European policy areas that have implications for development, taking into account the impact of these on local populations.

Among other things, each year the European Parliament will publish a report on European policy coherence from a development perspective that will include recommendations. This report will assess the European Parliament's initiatives in this

area and propose improvements. It will be written in concert with the actors concerned (parliamentarians from developing countries, civil society and farmers' organisations from rich and poor countries, and experts).

**We also call upon the EU and national governments to make food sovereignty a priority policy area for developed countries, as it is for developing ones.**

Food sovereignty must be integrated into the different European and international policies (CAP, external trade policy, cooperation and development policies ...). Food sovereignty is the right of peoples, their states or unions to determine their own agricultural and food policies in order to meet the needs of their people without harming third countries. It means being able to give priority to production for local consumption at affordable prices, without being prohibited from participating in international commercial trade. Food sovereignty is an indispensable tool for promoting farmer-based, sustainable agriculture.

# OUR PROPOSALS

<sup>8</sup> Article 177-178 of the Treaty establishing the EU

# EU Common Agricultural Policy and development



## We call for :

- The development and implementation of a **revised CAP based on the principle of food sovereignty, which supports farmer-based, sustainable agriculture that is fair to European countries<sup>9</sup> and in relation to third countries**. In concrete terms, this policy must include supply management and market regulation mechanisms to avoid excess production that lowers prices and / or destabilises markets. It must also favour the remuneration of farmers for the sale of their products at prices that take account of production and labour costs, while at the same time being affordable for consumers. To guarantee employment in rural areas, respect for high environmental and health standards, natural resources management, rural development, animal welfare,... direct aid must be maintained, as these costs are not currently being paid by the market.

<sup>9</sup> Specifically, given the 2-speed Europe, the new member states should enjoy equal treatment with the former EU-15.

- A definitive commitment to the **abolition of export subsidies** by 2013, as the EU proposed in 2005 at the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong;
- The establishment of a **policy for plant protein production for animal feed** in order to strengthen the EU's food independence and the establishment of instruments to prohibit imports of plant protein that have a destructive social and environmental impact in a number of developing countries;
- The right for both European countries and developing countries states to produce GMO-free;
- The **review of the policy objective that agrofuels should make up 10% of transport fuels** by 2020 in view of the fact that the EU will have to import a large part of its consumption needs from developing countries. In no case, should agro-fuels production be to the detriment of food self-sufficiency. It must also take place in sustainable conditions that respect the environment and social rights.

# EU trade policy and development



## We call for :

● Recognition of the **specificity of agricultural products in developing its trade policy**, particularly as agricultural products are:

- for feeding the world,
- dependent on land and climate characteristics.

As such their trade should be linked to the principle of the right to food sovereignty.

● Active participation by the EU in establishing the **global regulation of agricultural production and trade in the framework of a radically reformed WTO placed under the control of the United Nations**. It must include mechanisms to stabilise prices of basic foodstuffs (intervention stocks ...) and effective regulation of the international financial markets. We further call for control mechanisms to prevent speculative excesses that affect food security; excesses that led in particular to the recent riots. Regarding the free-trade agreements between developed and developing countries such as EPAs, the EU must reform Article XXIV of the GATT in order to enable the former to grant nonreciprocal trade benefits to the latter.

● The EU's respect for two main characteristics of EPAs whose aim is to consolidate the **regional integration** of these countries with a view to the fair and sustainable **development** of the ACP countries. Regional integration can not be reduced to integration through trade but must be based on processes of coming together in economic, social, political and institutional terms that have been defined with actors from civil society and under parliamentary control.

The opening of the markets of the ACP countries to European products should only take place in so far as the EU's various regional partner groups have on the one hand, in the eyes of their leaders, reached a sufficient degree of integration and development and, on the other, if the impact assessment studies conducted in collaboration with the countries and the civil society organisations concerned demonstrate the beneficial effects that opening the markets would have for the development of the country. Each agreement must also include clauses evaluation and periodic revision. We also demand the **revision of the interim EPAs that jeopardize the objectives of regional integration**.

● We demand that, when the next Commission is nominated at the end of 2009, **mandate for conducting the negotiations** on bilateral EPA agreements be given to the European commissioner responsible for development since that is officially their purpose. The commissioner's negotiating mandate must explicitly mention the priority given to food sovereignty, fair and sustainable development and regional integration over market opening.

● Restoring and improving procedures that guarantee the right to market **border protection in developing and developed countries**. This defence must enable local and regional production to be protected from the threat of cheap imports, and the 'social dumping' they cause.

● Consumers must be able, through **price transparency**, to favour the agricultural production chains that have the fairest conditions, in light of the social, economic and environmental sustainability of products.

# EU cooperation policy and development



## #3

### We call for

- Greater support from the EU and the Member States in establishing agricultural policies that favour the development of sustainable, farmer-based agriculture so that developing countries can move towards food self-sufficiency and sovereignty :
- ⦿ placing family-based agriculture at the center of cooperation frameworks, in order to create policies (trade, fiscal, research, rural development) that allow support and protection for local production. It is particularly important to improve the productivity of family-based farming in a sustainable manner, through an adequate environment and services (extension services, training, farm inputs, credit, insurance, rural infrastructure ...) in a strengthened partnership with research;
- ⦿ giving priority to the improvement of food production, particularly in Africa, where they have been too long neglected in favour of export crops, mainly to benefit businesses in rich countries;
- ⦿ accompanying the structuring and organisation of food production chains, whether at the local, national and subregional levels, with the aim of all the actors sharing fairly and there being a just distribution of value added;
- ⦿ facilitating marketing and access to local, national, regional and even global markets for agricultural products from sustainable, farmer-based agriculture;
- ⦿ in a non-discriminatory manner, supporting non-state actors (NSAs) and particularly the structuring of representative peasant organisations at local, national, subregional and continental levels to enhance the relevance of their commitment and their level of responsibilities in setting and implementing agricultural policies;
- ⦿ promoting a better awareness among consumers in developing countries about the origins of the products they consume. This transparency should also apply to the prices they pay so they know how much actually goes to the producers. It should enable consumers to make choices in favour of local production chains with the fairest conditions.
- We are therefore calling for an increase in the quality and the quantity of the EU official development aid (ODA) allocated to agriculture. Aid to agriculture must reach 15 %<sup>10</sup> of all EU ODA by the end of the next legislative period. It must be financed through additional resources. It is not a question of providing more food while reducing health care or education.
- The stakeholders and in particular the existing farmers' organisations, must play a leading role in drawing up country strategy documents, as well as in the implementation and evaluation of funded projects, particularly where these involve the European Development Fund and other financial instruments.

<sup>10</sup> In June 2008, Mr. Charles Michel, Belgian Minister of Cooperation, proposed that this share of EU aid reach 10% in 2010 and 15% in 2015. <http://www.charlesmichel.be/news/080603-Crisealimentaire.php>

## Signatories having participated in the appeal's elaboration

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## C A M P A I G N ALIMENTERRE

**A CAMPAIGN TO UNDERSTAND AND TO TAKE ACTION**  
ALIMENTERRE is an awareness raising and mobilization campaign appealing to the general public and European decision makers in order to promote food sovereignty and the right to sustainable family agriculture.



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