



AEFJN Lobbying Activities 2008-2009

1. EPAs

AEFJN is working on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between the EU and African countries, because these agreements pose a serious threat to the African capacity to develop. In its current form they force African states to open up their markets too soon and too much to imports from Europe. Cheap European goods will sweep away the African market, destroying the local agricultural sector, which is by and large the main source of income in African countries, and the capacity to grow of the industrial sector. The liberalization of services and investments rises great preoccupation in Africa.

Actions done by AEFJN towards EPAs that foster development:

- During the Portuguese Presidency, the Antennna from Portugal met the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to present AEFJN's concerns about the EPA negotiations.
- 2008, letter to the President of the EC Jose Manuel Barroso, reminding him of his promise at the Lisbon Summit that the contentious clauses will be opened up for re-negotiation.
- AEFJN prepared a Questionnaire for our African members on the possible impact of EPAs in Africa. 27 individuals and 9 groups numbering in total 83 persons from 10 African countries answered the Questionnaire. The data has been compiled, summarize and published. The answers reveal the deep concern that EPAs create in Africa. The compiled answers are being used as an instrument to lobbying the EU.
- AEFJN commissioned two studies to two African organizations with whom we collaborate (JCTR in Zambia and SEDELAN in Burkina Faso) on the impact of EPAs in the two respective countries. The studies have been published and hand over to the EC – DG Trade negotiators on EPAs and to some African Ambassadors.
- Meeting with the EC persons representing the EU in the EPA negotiations with the different African regions (ESA, SADC, Western Africa) to discuss on the impact of EPAs in development and to present AEFJN's EPAs impact studies.
- Meeting with African Civil Society to know our mutual concerns on the EPAs negotiations and to decide a common strategy towards the EU and the African countries.
- Meeting with African Ambassadors in Brussels to discuss the impact of EPAs in their countries.
- With other NGOs meeting the Trade delegation of the country holding the EU Presidency (Portugal, France, Czech, Sweden) to know their programme and their position on trade and present our concerns on EPAs.
- Participation in the European Commission's DG Trade Civil Society Dialogue events on EPAs. This is a forum where the EC give news on the on-going negotiations and we express our concerns regarding the current form of EPAs vis-à-vis the Commission.
- The Irish Antenna participated in a Round Table with Irish MPs to present our concerns on EPAs. The Italian Antenna (Fr. Alex Zanotelli) presented the problems of EPAs in a press conference on the Africa Synod.
- Meeting with the Italian ACP Working Group Counsellor in order to discuss EPAs.
- Signature of an Attac-prepared document *Sustainable solutions to the global crises*. Signature of the Seattle-to-Brussels-Network letter to the Swedish presidency asking for a change in the direction of the EU's trade policy.
- Participation in different events at the moment of the meeting of the Council of the EU. Participation at the Stop EPA days in March (with the involvement of the MEPs) and in September. The Antennae in the Netherlands, Spain and Germany participated by sending letters to their Trade Ministries and to their Permanent Representation to the EU to inform national governments about our concerns on EPAs.

- Participation in the 3-days Civil Society Fair event at the European Parliament 6-8th October and meetings with MEPs and advisors from the Green, the Socialist and Democrats, and the United Left - Nordic Green Left groups. The meetings were important in order to explore synergies with the political groups and fields of possible cooperation, once concrete trade issues, in particular EPAs, will be discussed in the European Parliament.

The success of the campaign on EPAs is shown by the refusal of several countries of the SADC and ESA negotiation formations to sign interim EPAs as well as the ongoing refusal by EAC and ECOWAS as a whole to sign EPAs. Whole EPAs that should have been signed by December 2007 are not yet signed.

2. Food Sovereignty

Agrofuels:

WHAT IS AT STAKE FOR AFRICA?

More than 1.5 million of hectares in Africa have been turned into biofuels crop by European investors in 2007 & 2008 for exportation, and 6 times more by other countries. This brings many problems for livelihood of inhabitants, displacement of people, loss of available water and of biodiversity and several social impacts. The new European Energy policy emphasizes these large-scale crops for EU consumption.

ACTIONS MADE (2007-2009):

Many letters to EU Envir. & Energy Ministers, to members of their Working Group – adapted to the evolution of the debate on the EU Renewable Energy Directive *We received answers from 6/12 countries.*

Dialogue with Environment committee in EP and with some members of the DG TREN in EC.

Press Releases in collaboration with Partners of Civil Society in UE.

Campaign in collaboration with Misereor and NAD-Berlin to inform and to get information on the impacts of investment in large-scale culture for agrofuel. *Result: ten written answers from Africa*

General Result: the Member states did not adopt a moratorium on biofuels. The Directive includes no satisfying social & environmental criteria, but it only states that the EC will monitor the impacts of Biofuels on food and wider development issues in developing countries. The EC launched a call for tenders for a part of this study.

I am preparing the study on the impacts of biofuels on the availability and price of food in 2 African countries.

Land grabbing: I met some members of EC, I participated to the EC consultation on ILUC (Indirect Land use Change) due to Biofuel production. *Result:* The dialogues between Civil society and the EC & the EP are going on.

Agro-business corporations threaten the right to food in Africa: The challenges are financial, agronomic, environmental and social.

AGRA: I informed some EU deputies and shared information with members of EU Commission and O. de Schutter (Spec Rapporteur to the UN on Rights to food). *Result:* refusal of 'AGRA' as a channel to give funds for development in one EP paper. *Observation:* AGRA divides people; some are interested to know the facts. Unfortunately, some EU deputies (AWEPA) announced an association with AGRA to support African parliamentarians in order to promote policies favorable for AGRA activities (October 2009).

Biochar and Carbon Market: press release with Partners of Civil Society in UE.

GMOs & Vatican: Letter to ask the presence of some critical voices (Scientifics & farmers) to the Study Week of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on "Transgenic Plants for Food Security in the Context

of Development”. Second letter to ask the report of this study week.
No answer.

Result:

Climate: Letter with practical requests to the Environment and Energy Ministers (to their advisor when known) 1 month before their “Informal meeting”¹.
No answer.

Result:

3. Access to Medicines

A. Seizure of shipments of generic medicines by the Dutch customs authorities

Since December 2008 to Mai 2009 a series of legal and good quality generic medicines shipments in transit from India to developing country (some to Africa) were temporarily seized by the Netherlands Customs. As these illegal acts could restrain developing countries’ access to essential medicines, AEFJN undertook some actions:

1. **Towards the Netherlands government** (the Netherlands Antenna contacted the government to protest for the seizure and ask to stop the illegal procedure).
2. **Towards the concerned European Institutions**
 - AEFJN Secretariat wrote to different Commissioners and MEPs involved in the procedure showing the illegality of the seizure and asking for clarification on the EU policy on patent rights for medicines in transit to developing country markets.
 - AEFJN with other European organizations concerned by the seizure met the European Commission (EC) on Customs.

As a result an investigation on the seizures was open and the EC promised to stop the seizure of medicines that are “legal” in the country of destination. The medicines have been sent back to the country of origin.

B. Anti Counterfeit trade Agreement (ACTA)

A group of rich nations among them the EU are secretly negotiating ACTA to fight the global trade of counterfeit goods and pirated copyright. Actually ACTA aims at enforcing Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) without caring for the quality of medicines. This will negatively affect the access to good and cheap generic medicines in Africa.

ACTA tends to intentionally assimilate “generic medicines” with “counterfeit goods”, which is not just. AEFJN wrote to the EC on Trade, Customs and Health showing the difference between both and asking not to assimilate them.

AEFJN with other organizations met with the EC on Customs to discuss the impact of ACTA on legal generic medicines. An action is also being taken with other organizations to consider ACTA illegal.

C. Access to medicines and EU Trade Agreements

Many trade agreements of the EU with developing countries (among them EPAs) have clauses enforcing IPRs that will have a negative impact on health systems and access to medicines. While EU Development policy supports development of health systems and access to medicines, EU Trade policies impacts negatively on these systems.

AEFJN met with a group of MEPs, the EC on coherence and the EC on Development to discuss the negative impact of Free Trade Agreements on health and show the lack of coherence between the different EU policies.

D. Participation at the making of the EU Communication on Global Health

The EC-Development-Health is making a “Communication on global health”. AEFJN is participating at the internal dialogue with the DG-DEVE to input on the main challenges in global health and universal free access to health in Africa, and to insist on coherence in the different EU policies (development, trade, migration). AEFJN has been key to enlarge the participation of other Health organizations to these dialogues.

The result is a Communication with greater coherence between the different EU policies related to health (at least in the draft EU paper).

E. Charter to improve the quality of Medicines

AEFJN together with other Health organizations working in developing countries have made a Charter on Quality Medicines accompanied by a Technical check-list for pharmaceutical products, a kind of “users’ guide”. The aim is

¹ All the members of the ministries, some experts and advisors meet on the “informal meeting”; this is the place where they decide the leanings that will be concluded during the official meeting that will follow.

to provide organizations buying medicines with the necessary tools to check the “quality of medicines” they buy.

AEFJN has sent the Charter to 170 Health organizations in Africa, among them the Ecumenical, Catholic and National Distribution Centres for Medicines. 9 organizations have signed it to AEFJN and 35 in total.

4. Control of Small Arms

A. Legally binding EU Code of Conduct

In 1998 the EU adopted a not legally binding Code of Conduct (CoC) on arms. AEFJN with other organizations has been lobbying the EU member states to strengthen it and to transform it into a legally-binding Common Position.

AEFJN undertook a series of actions towards the adoption of the EU legally-binding Common Position and a stronger control on arms exports:

- In 2008 the Antennae in the EU member states wrote to their Ministers encouraging them to ensure the adoption of the *EU Common Position*.
- The Portuguese and French Antennae lobbied their governments on this issue during their Presidency.
- Meeting with MEPs interested on a greater control of arms transfer to push for the adoption of the Common position.
- AEFJN Antennae sent letters to their governments on the tenth anniversary of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports asking them to strengthen its regulation on arms control and to adopt the Common Position.
- Participation at the editing and launching of the Book “Good Conduct? Ten Years of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports” at the EP. AEFJN signed the EU-NGO statement asking member states to use the EU transfer control system to prevent violations of human rights or international humanitarian law, to prevent terrorist abuses, and to support peace and security and sustainable development.
- AEFJN with other NGOs met with COARM (EU Council working group on Conventional arms exports) during the French presidency at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to discuss the adoption of the *EU Common Position on the Control of Exports of Military Technology and Equipment*.

Finally the Council of the EU adopted a legally-binding Common Position in December 2008, under the French presidency that had opposed it till that moment.

Actually the Antennae in the different member states are considering how to adapt the national legislation to the Common Position and how to strengthen its implementation and reach.

NEWS FROM AEFJN – FORUM FOR ACTION

During the last term of 2008, a « questionnaire » was sent to every person receiving the NEWS from AEFJN and the FORUM for ACTION. It was sent by email in both languages, English and French. We have more than 3,000 persons to whom this questionnaire was sent.

The NEWS are sent monthly to more than 3,000 readers and the FORUM for ACTION is sent 3 times per year to more than 1,500 members.

The NEWS is just a double sheet with brief information about Africa and the EU and links to the various websites. The FORUM is made of articles relating to our Plan of Action and the various topics we focus on. It covers 8 pages.

It was a way to evaluate how the publications were received, to know if the articles and information sent were useful or not, if the « receivers » found them easy to understand, if they were communicated to other people and if they were duplicated or not, if they were used for informing the local communities, the civil society, the members of the various Churches, etc.

We received a good number of answers, sometimes from individuals, sometimes, from groups, and it showed that both publications are useful and present a source of information for people who have little access to information showing what the « keys » for many economic situations can be. It seems mostly useful in Africa where the access to information appears to be less easy than in the EU for example.

It was good to realise that our members in Africa appreciate the information sent and consider that it is a way to know « more » that what the official media say ; it has sometimes be used to animate meetings and gatherings, either inside the congregations, or with other groups.

People insist, in general, to keep the information short and clear for the NEWS and appreciate depth for the longer articles of the FORUM.

As long as we were able to use the AEFJN website, it was not only sent by email but also put on the site. Problems with our website has limited these publication recently. We hope to resume soon with these means of communication.