
OIDHACO, Enlazando Alternativas, Asociación Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promoción al Desarrollo (ALOP), Grupo Sur, Alianza Social Continental, la Red Colombiana de Acción Contra el Libre Comercio (RECALCA) y CNCD-11.11.11

PRESS RELEASE Brussels, September 29, 2011

European and Latin American organisations oppose the FTA between the EU – Colombia and Peru

More than 500 organisations call upon the European Council to declare the FTA between the EU - Colombia and Peru as a mixed agreement

Out of respect for democracy, a debate on this agreement must be guaranteed in the national parliaments of the 27 countries of the EU

- Legal opinions indicate that the multiparty agreement between the EU-Colombia and Peru is not the exclusive competence of the EU, but requires ratification in the Member States to include provisions on respect for human rights and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction
- Member States should demand the possibility to hold a democratic debate within each country in order to address the high rates of systematic human rights violations and the situation of armed conflict in Colombia.
- The FTAs will exacerbate existing conflicts and social inequalities in these countries and aggravate the human rights situation.
- More than 500 organisations note that European companies who invest in Colombia, in territories that have been taken from peasant farmers, indigenous people and afrodescendent communities via serious human rights violations may become complicit in these atrocities

Brussels, September 29, 2011. The European Council has commenced the process necessary to approve the trade agreement between the EU-Colombia and Peru. In light of parliamentary questions to Commissioner **Karel De Gucht** regarding the grave human rights situation in Colombia, Latin American and European networks, grouped in **OIDHACO**, the bi-regional European-Latin American and Caribbean network **Enlazando Alternativas, Asociación Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promoción al Desarrollo (ALOP), Grupo Sur, Hemispheric Social Alliance**, la **Red Colombiana de Acción contra el Libre Comercio (RECALCA)** and **CNCD-11.11.11**, express their deep concern about the possible adoption of the Agreement.

These organizations are calling upon the **European Council** to define the nature of the agreement as **mixed**, given the fact that it contains two provisions that do not enter within the sphere of common commercial policy. According to Article 2 of the Treaty, the **parties agree cooperation on disarmament and nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction**. "The EU has does not have jurisdiction in this area. It must be assumed that this Treaty is a mixed agreement, which must be agreed by both the EU and its Member States", says **Lourdes Castro**, representative of **Grupo Sur**, "as has been decided in the case of Partnership Agreement between the EU and Central America".

For **Brid Brennan** from the **Enlazando Alternativas** Network, the question is related to the democratic nature of the debate. "We think it is essential that the European Council considers that this agreement is mixed, and must be ratified by national parliaments, thereby allowing for an open democratic debate" with the participation of civil society. "Given the very specific situation of these two Andean countries, it is inconceivable that an agreement that will have a major impact on the human rights situation, is considered only *commercial*," says **Gérard Karlshausen** of **CNCD-11.11.11** and member of **Concord**. For social organisations it would be a *serious mistake* if the decision on the agreement does not include a truly democratic process.

In recent years various Colombian, Peruvian and European organisations have warned the EU of dire consequences in these two countries if the FTAs are approved. "The EU has not taken Colombian civil society into account", says **OIDHACO** spokesperson, **Vincent Vallies**. "For example, indigenous peoples in Colombia have stated in Parliament that the agreement would contribute to the extinction of at least 35 people who are at imminent risk of disappearing".

“In the case of Colombia, the EU can not sign agreements with a country in the midst of armed conflict, in which, in the first half of 2011 alone, 29 human rights defenders have been killed, representing an alarming 126% increase in attacks against defenders compared to the same period in 2010”, says **Laura Rangel** of the ***Alianza Social Continental***. “Violence against women is a serious problem and Colombia is the world's most dangerous country for trade unionists”, **Rangel** states.

Meanwhile, **Gustavo Hernandez** of ***ALOP***, states that “Over 500 European and Latin American organisations representing civil society, have asked the EU not to sign or approve these agreements. While Europe is facing an economic crisis, Colombia and Peru have a permanent social crisis with millions of people living in poverty and misery, coupled with the serious deterioration of human rights.”

For all these reasons, more than 500 organisations from Latin American and European Networks call on each of the member countries of the EU to demand the possibility of democratic scrutiny of the agreement within their countries.

OIDHACO, Enlazando Alternativas, Asociación Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promoción al Desarrollo (ALOP), Grupo Sur, Alianza Social Continental, la Red Colombiana de Acción Contra el Libre Comercio (RECALCA) y CNCD-11.11.11
