

**Donnons un sens à l'Europe:
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Get Europe to make sense:
fair & responsible

La coordination nationale des ONG de solidarité internationale
se mobilise pour la Présidence française de l'Union européenne

World Messages to the European Union

The members of Mesa de Articulacion (Latin America), REPAOC (Western and Central Africa), REPONGAC (Central Africa), PIANGO (Pacific), the National Platforms Coalition of Asia (South and South-East Asia), the SADC Council of NGOs (Southern Africa) and CONCORD¹ (Europe) met in Paris on 30th October in order to challenge the European Union to engage in a mutually equitable partnership with the rest of the World.

For years, the South has been fighting against unequal distribution of wealth and is trying to tackle lasting crisis. More recently, the rise in agricultural prices on world markets has led to a major food crisis. The increasing number of natural disasters reminds us of the fragility of our ecosystem. The rise and the volatility of oil prices is creating a global energy crisis. In addition to these food and energy crises, in the last few months the world has been experiencing the most serious financial crisis since 1929. Decisions taken to solve these crises can increment inequality dramatically, or on the contrary, be an opportunity to revert a course that generated more exclusion.

People living in developed countries are worried about their jobs, their purchasing power and more generally the economic and social consequences to come. Emerging country economies, which are integrated into an international financial system led by the United States, are also starting to feel the effects of this crisis. People living in developing countries notice a decrease in development assistance, due to the financial difficulties in the world. These decreases could have tragic consequences in a context of great precariousness, while the vast majority of people living in poverty bear no responsibility in this crisis. It is necessary to overcome social policies operating a charity-based model in order to build a universal social security system.

The need for democratic regulation can be observed all over the world.

Europe is at the heart of the turmoil. The European lifestyle weighs on global natural resources. Many social benefits, that are the results of long-fought fights, are under threat in the European Union and in the rest of the world. Despite some very clear improvements, European positions in international fora, are too often taking a step backwards with regards to issues such as food sovereignty, the promotion of human rights or environmental sustainability. Rather than questioning itself, the European Union is building fences in order to protect a development model difficult to apply to the rest of the world.

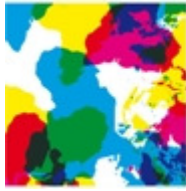
The regional coalitions of NGOs meeting in Paris thus urge the European Union to ensure a democratic and transparent global governance system. The regional coalitions are calling on European decision makers to defend positions that contribute to fair and sustainable development on a global scale and to a world based on justice and solidarity.

Global governance

A growing number of developing countries now openly question the international political, economic and financial architecture, which is perceived as not very democratic.

Indeed, the influence of States within these international financial institutions can be measured by their economic power. In these imbalanced governance bodies, the European Union asserts its short term economic, commercial, energy and cultural interests, without promoting the setting up of a fair global governance system.

¹ More information on the regional coalitions of NGOs available at: <http://www.ong-ngo.org>



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Furthermore, the regional coalitions of NGOs wish to remind Europeans of their historical responsibility. Many developing countries were exploited to contribute to European economic growth and to the European Union's rise in power at international level, and this was often to the detriment of their sustainable development.

Faced with this observation, the regional coalitions of NGOs ask the European Union to promote in the World, the essential values on which its integration has been based for more than 50 years: human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and respect of human rights. They call on the European Union to be more coherent and responsible at the international level, by fighting for a **complete reshaping of the international institutions, which should pave the way to a democratic regulation of globalisation.** This reform should subsequently **increase the influence of the poorest countries in the various international fora and allow for an interaction between governments and citizens' associations.**

Such a renewed governance system must be based on control and transparency of public administration; deepening of decentralised and regional based processes; extension of participation mechanisms and strengthening of civil society.

Rebalancing votes in international institutions is not sufficient... One should also refuse the hierarchy of norms and rights, between the commercial rights on the one hand, and the social, economic, environmental and cultural rights on the other.

The discussions on the fight against climate change or on social norms at the WTO illustrate the ambiguity of the European Union position today. Europe is concerned with the environmental and social consequences of free-market globalisation and condemns its effects. Yet it is reluctant to question the primacy of commercial objectives over social, environmental or cultural priorities. The regional coalitions of NGOs urge the European Union to **promote the setting up of strict social, environmental and cultural guidelines which can impact on the behaviour of economic actors.**

Beyond the required rebalancing of international bodies, the regional coalitions of NGOs call on the European Union to take strong positions that show solidarity and responsibility at the international level for the regulation of agricultural markets, the fight against climate change, financing for development, the promotion of human rights and access to basic social services.

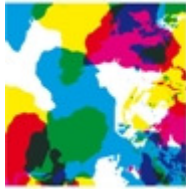
Trade and agriculture

The unconditional promotion of European economic interests in trade and agriculture presents undeniable risks for the food sovereignty of developing country populations as well as for people-centred regional integration processes.

The regional coalitions of NGOs condemn this attitude and ask the European Union to **respect developing countries' national priorities, both in international negotiations at the WTO and in bilateral partnership agreements.**

The regional coalitions of NGOs urge the European Union **to be more coherent in its international negotiations, by advocating for trade agreements promoting the development of burgeoning agricultural and industrial production, so that it is protected from unfair competition with products imported from other regions of the world.**

The European Union must acknowledge third countries the same rights it grants itself, while respecting existing regional integration processes. Based on its own experience, the EU should support existing or growing regional integration processes.



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Financing for development

As the largest provider of Official Development Assistance (ODA), the Union and its 27 Member States have a specific responsibility in the discussions on aid and financing for development. The regional coalitions of NGOs nevertheless point out that aid is too often used as a tool serving the diplomatic, commercial or cultural interests of European countries, to the detriment of the fight against poverty and inequalities in the poorest countries.

The regional coalitions of NGOs call on European states to **adopt binding ODA timetables in order to respect their quantitative commitments in order to allocate at least 0,7 % of GDP to ODA by 2015 for the old member states and 0,33% for the new member states**. The European Union must offer developing countries quality aid that relies on real ownership by the latter. In each country, the EU should interact with governments, parliaments and civil society. It should also support interactions between these actors when conditions prevail.

Moreover regional coalitions of NGOs call on the European Union to **promote the establishment of a financial system that guarantees the progressive and differentiated taxation of capital income**. This renewed system should not encourage exorbitant benefits by means of speculations.

While Official Development Assistance will not be able to respond to the growing inequalities at the world level, the regional coalitions of NGOs ask the European Union to be a proposal-making force in the setting up of other solidarity transfers. The regional coalitions of NGOs invite the European Union to **pilot the introduction of a currency transaction tax in the euro zone**. Regional coalitions of NGOs also call for the setting up of a **mechanism to support the fight against climate change in developing countries, funded by at least half of the income generated by the auctioning of all of the EU CO2 emission rights**.

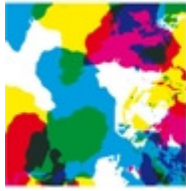
In addition, the EU should promote the abolition of all illegitimate debts.

Basic social services

Education, basic health care and access to drinking water are fundamental rights. Yet, European development cooperation is not sufficiently focused on these prerequisites for human development. Recent trends in development cooperation programmes show that aid directed towards these basic social sectors is shifting towards other sectors such as the fight against illegal immigration, the promotion of European business interests, and the fight against terrorism.

The regional coalitions of NGOs urge the European Union to **establish firm, predictable and long-term commitments to meet these essential needs**, with special attention to HIV/Aids. Responses to these needs must remain at the heart of development cooperation agreements with developing countries. They also call on the European Union to **contribute to the resolution of the food crisis by facilitating the setting up of regional agriculture development funds**.

Furthermore, regional coalitions of NGOs call on the European Union to **find the human and financial resources required to meeting its commitment to promote gender equality policies at all levels, from policy making to implementation**.



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Human rights

Whilst the European Union grew, with a strong concern for the promotion of human rights and the respect for individual and collective freedoms, these commitments should not be forgotten at the expense of a security and utilitarian vision.

The regional coalitions of NGOs condemn the European Union's recent tendency to define development cooperation policies promoting a mix between migration and development, to the detriment of other sectors, especially the provision of basic social services. They call on the European Union to **adopt a long-term vision on migration that fully recognises peoples' rights to migrate without restrictions.**

Furthermore, the regional coalitions of NGOs invite the European Union to **reinforce the policy dialogue with governmental gender equality structures and with women's rights advocates so that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are at the heart of all development and cooperation policies.**

The European Union should also pay attention to the rights of people with disability, children, indigenous people and youth.

In addition the regional coalitions of NGOs call on the EU to **become more active in promoting and supporting the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in order to reach global sustainable development.**

These coalitions believe that the EU should promote **the protection of Human Rights defenders in all contexts, if it is to play a significant role in the promotion of Human Rights globally.**

Climate change

Rich countries are the main emitters of greenhouse gases, but developing countries will be the most severely affected by climate change. This is a fundamental injustice. The regional coalitions of NGOs demand a fair agreement for the post-2012 climate change regime. This deal should respect the principle of differentiated responsibility. Regional coalitions of NGOs are asking the European Union to **reduce carbon gas emissions by at least 30% by 2020 and by least 80% by 2050 (both compared to 1990 levels) through domestic measures.** In addition the EU has to support efforts of mitigation and adaption to climate change in Southern countries through **additional funds and easy transfers of adapted technologies.**

Conclusion

Finally, regional coalitions of NGOs are urging the European Union to put the reshaping of the international institutions and the promotion of a fair global governance in which all non state actors should be able to take part, at the heart of its external relations policies. They call on the European Union to question its commercial, agricultural, environmental and economic policies, so that they contribute to the sustainable development of developing countries and to the fight against inequality.

Faced with the food, social and ecological emergencies, regional coalitions of NGOs call on the European Union to take fair and responsible positions. This would contribute to the construction of a fairer world.