

ETUC Press Release

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To: Veerle Solia

Unions condemn MEPs support for Colombia-Peru Free Trade Agreement



Brussels, 27/11/2012

As MEPs in the EP's international trade committee today endorse the EU's FTA with Colombia and Peru, the European Trade Union Confederation and International Trade Union Confederation repeat their opposition to a trade deal which has not adequately addressed the continuing violence and harassment of trade unionists and human rights defenders, and lack of measures to ensure compliance with international labour rights. At the request of the EP's committee both governments have presented Roadmaps on human rights and environmental protection, without any consultation with local trade union confederations.

In Colombia, one of the most dangerous countries in the world for trade unionists, CUT-CGT-CTC have not been invited to discuss the proposal. Participation has also been lacking in Peru. The text refers to a "National Agreement" (Acuerdo Nacional) in which many trade unions like CUT and CATP and civil society organisations were not involved, while it also mentions the existence of an ECOSOC that has never been set up. In general, the two roadmaps do not address essential concerns and concrete and binding measures regarding :

- freedom of association and collective bargaining, including for temporary workers;
- an effective labour inspection system;
- the implementation ILO obligations in terms of social dialogue;
- an end to impunity for violence against trade unionists in Colombia, and measures to bring solutions to the social conflicts, particularly with indigenous communities as in Peru;
- the protection of the environment in full consultation with the trade unions and remedies to the damage caused to indigenous communities;
- The need for binding and measurable commitments agreed upon with the social partners.

"The international trade union movement is united in this call for a vote against the FTA. To do otherwise would disregard the appalling human rights record in Colombia and continued labour violations in Peru and would damage the EU's reputation as a leading force in the promotion of human rights and basic freedoms", states a joint letter from trade unions in Europe and Colombia/Peru.

Joint letter: <http://www.etuc.org/a/10412>

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