



## How to change the world? Support peasant agriculture!

**Peasants have the alternative to the globalised food system this April 17**

Today, the International Day of Peasant Struggle 2020, the vulnerability of our current globalised food system has never been more evident to citizens and policy makers alike. In all corners of the globe, the Covid-19 crisis is having serious practical, social, sanitary and economic impacts. Along with health services and other front-line sectors, local food systems and supply chains have proven to be key in ensuring resilience and protecting society from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Peasant farmers, seasonal and migrant workers and other small-scale food producers make these possible. In this difficult and worrying context, they are still supplying their local communities with healthy, fresh food.

However, the ability to play this role, both immediately and in the future, is heavily dependent on the willingness of decision makers to implement measures to support and protect small-scale farming. That is why, in a [letter to the EU Institutions](#) and various other [online initiatives](#), ECVC members and allies are showing that peasant farmers and land workers are putting themselves at risk to feed the population, whilst at the same time fighting an ongoing struggle to protect their rights and wellbeing.

The [open letter](#), drafted as part of the Nyéléni Food Sovereignty Movement in Europe and Central Asia and co-signed by more than 40 organizations of food producers, academics and Civil Society, highlights that if current decisions on agricultural and food policy are not corrected, the European Institutions will be putting the food sovereignty and security of populations at risk. Agriculture and food are part of WTO negotiations and Free Trade Agreements and the CAP is currently adapted to these neoliberal agreements. All of these are destroying thousands of small and medium-scale farms which guarantee food security. Therefore, in order to support and protect peasant farmers, ECVC and its allies demand the resolution of the inconsistencies and contradictions within EU policy, including ending FTAs.

The EU must implement responsible and coherent policies: for example, the Green Deal and the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies promise to build the path to sustainable agriculture, but will only be credible and possible with fundamental changes in how agriculture is legislated. This includes a total reform of the CAP which facilitates local agricultural markets and guarantees small-scale farmers receive a stable and decent income. Agricultural, labour, financial and social policies must also guarantee proper salaries and working conditions for rural workers. The implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP) should be considered and prioritised in the reform of all these policies. Citizens' needs and rights should no longer suffer at the hands of profit-driven priorities. In this way, peasants will be able to fulfil their potential and help to tackle some of the world's most worrying problems.

ECVC also uses the International Day of Peasant Struggle to build and strengthen alliances, in order to mobilise and raise awareness among the wider society. For too long, industrial agriculture has used

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its wealth, power and dominance to control public policy and decision making behind the scenes, to the detriment of the health and well-being of citizens and the planet. For this reason, despite being confined to their homes, ECVC member organisations and allies have organised webinars, online campaigns, publications and more, in order to give visibility to the importance of peasants for the European continent and for the world. Many of these can be found online under the hashtags #StayHomeButNotSilent #QuedateEnCasaNoEnSilencio #RestezChezVousMaisPasEnSilence and #JeSoutiensLesPaysanNes.



In this way, peasants are doing more than just feeding the population. They are also working to give citizens back control of what is on their plate, at the same time as asking for the help and support of their local communities to work towards a fairer, healthier and better food system. Citizen engagement in demanding fresh, healthy, local food supply chains is key to make policy makers listen. Now more than ever, it is clear that in order to provoke real change, society needs peasant farmers and peasant farmers need society.

*The International Day of Peasant Struggle is celebrated on April 17, to commemorate the massacre of the landless peasants in 1996 in Eldorado dos Carajás, Brazil, while struggling for comprehensive agrarian reform. This is a tragic example of the countless struggles of peasants around the world who fight every day to continue to feed the planet.*

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