



WTO negotiations:
In the face of the food crisis, public stocks are legitimate and necessary
The EU must stop attacking the food sovereignty of the countries of the
Global South

From 12 to 15 June, the WTO ministerial meeting will be held in Geneva. In the context of multiple simultaneous crises (covid-19, climate crisis, war in Ukraine, debt...) that lead to numerous food crises, ECVC considers that the negotiation position of the European Union is unacceptable.

A large number of Southern countries defend their right to maintain public policies of public food stockholdings, market regulation and support to their local agriculture¹. States have a responsibility to ensure the stability of food supply for their population. These policies are legitimate and necessary, they are the basis for food sovereignty.

However, the European Union, together with the United States and other agro-exporting countries, is constantly using the WTO to attack the food sovereignty of the South. The EU claims that these public policies create trade distortions. But should the countries of the South let their populations starve to death in order to comply with free trade rules set up by and for the interests of multinational companies from rich countries?

At a time when the price of cereals on international markets is reaching record highs, it is clear that the strategy of making countries' food security dependent on international trade is a failure. However, the EU continues to press through the WTO to increase market access for third countries and to denounce their public support for agriculture. It is even threatening countries in serious difficulty, such as India and Egypt, with litigation before the Dispute Settlement Body if they do not abandon their policies in favour of public food stockholdings. For Morgan Ody, a peasant farmer member of ECVC's Coordination Committee, "these positions are outrageous and in no way represent the demands of European farmers or of society as a whole".

According to ECVC, instead of criticizing the countries of the South, the European Union should take inspiration from them to deeply reform the Common Agricultural Policy, encourage public stockholdings in all member countries and regulate the agricultural markets in order to ensure stable and fair prices for both producers and consumers. In Europe too, in the face of the difficulties linked to the climatic and geopolitical crises, we need strong public policies supporting relocalised and agroecological production, based on a large number of peasant farmers.

WTO out of agriculture!
Food Sovereignty Now!

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¹ As discussed at a seminar on food security organised by the WTO on 26 April.

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