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Dairy farmers in Europe and Latin America disappear but agribusinesses stand to make big

Press release from Via Campesina

La Via Campesina International with representatives from Europe and Latin America are meeting in Madrid from the 14th to 18th of May to affirm their united opposition to the trade agreements which threaten small and medium sized producers from both continents.

The EU is holding a summit in Madrid with Latin American leaders where it hopes to close the aggressive agreements during the Spanish presidency of the EU.

These agreements have no benefit whatsoever to farmers and citizens on either side of the Atlantic.

The EU is attempting to impose 4,500 tonnes of milk powder and 2,000 tons of cheese at low prices on the markets of Central America, against the interests of milk producers in the region.

Colombian Agriculture Minister Andres Fernandez also admitted last Thursday that the controversial agreement between the EU and Columbia would adversely affect more than 400,000 farming communities across Columbia – above all the dairy sector.

In the last years, as opposed to adapting the production of milk to the European Union's internal consumption, the European Commission and council have decided to increase milk quotas in each country with the objective of increasing exports of milk products.

This has caused a drop in the price of milk in Europe and the bankrupting of small and medium sized producers.

The policy of export subsidies stimulates the absurd policy of imposing European exports. It is a threat to Food Sovereignty – the farmers, men and women of La Via Campesina give priority to feeding our populations and communities.

In these terms the only beneficiaries of these agreements are the industries and transnationals involved in distribution and transformation and exporters – not the farmers of Latin America or the European Union.

The delegation of Via Campesina in Madrid reaffirm that the defense of sustainable peasant agriculture is common both to Europe and Latin America, and that these free trade agreements destroy people's food sovereignty.

To this end, we demand that the member states of the European Union and the governments participating in the summit that they do not sign any free trade agreement which goes against the interests of their populations!

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