

## **“Road Map” for the EU - Colombia and Peru FTA, insufficient for the NGOs**

**Brussels, 13 June 2012.** Today, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of June, it was put forth in the plenary of the European Parliament (EP) the resolution to ask Colombia and Peru to define a “Road Map” to guarantee the protection of labor rights, the environment, and human rights in the ratification process of the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union, Colombia, and Peru.

This resolution is the direct consequence of a controversial situation that came to surface during key debates in the European Parliament regarding the ratification of this Treaty. However, civil society organizations like ALOP, Grupo Sur and Oidhaco voiced their dissatisfaction with the terms of this resolution that already, among other things, lacks the binding mechanisms that guarantee sustainable development in relation with the FTA.

For the aforementioned reasons, the “Road Map” does not respond to the concerns raised by European, Colombian, and Peruvian civil society, and it makes the same mistakes that were established with the US – Colombia FTA because it does not establish measurable and verifiable commitments to improve the situation in regard to human rights, labor rights, and protection of the environment before it is considered for ratification by the EP.

In the same line, the Director of the Department of Judicial and Legislative Affairs of the Central Union of Workers (CUT) in Colombia, Hernán Trujillo, expressed yesterday at a press conference in the European Parliament in Strasbourg that in Colombia violations against freedom of association continue to be committed. “So far this year seven trade unionists have been murdered, and there have been increased threats against union leaders. We do not agree that labor rights are derived from the FTA. This, by contrast, shows the Colombian government’s lack of political will to move in this direction.” Trujillo recalls that the conclusions and recommendations of the High Level Mission of the ILO, which visited Colombia in February 2011, have yet to be fulfilled and, even today, basic legislation like the Statute of Labor have yet to be passed.

This last May the US – Colombia FTA entered into force, but for Hernán Trujillo, the “Road Map” previously defined with the United States has not brought any improvement. On the contrary, “We are sure that the impacts of this agreement will worsen the situation.”

For MEP Jürgen Klute of the European United Left, the man who organized the press conference prior to the adoption in the plenary of the “Road Map,” “This bill does not comply with the minimum conditions for an effective contribution to the improvement on human rights, environmental protection, and labor conditions.” Klute insists that these mechanisms should be applied and their impact evaluated before the Parliament makes the decision as to whether or not they will ratify the treaty.

Catherine Grèze of the Greens has stated that “The Road Map does not ask for a responsible attitude from European businesses, nor does it involve European institutions in the preparation of the document. Therefore, it leaves free the hands of the governments of Colombia and Peru.” The European Parliamentarian said during the press conference that the Greens, like the European United Left group, will vote against the weak “Road Map” proposed from the European Parliament.

For ALOP, Grupo Sur, and Oidhaco, with this decision the European Parliament has lost an opportunity to play an important role in improving the situation in Colombia and Peru by taking advantage of the discussion of this agreement. Instead, Parliament has turned its back on the numerous requests and concerns expressed and supported by various civil society organizations in Latin America and Europe, as affirmed by Stefan Gran of the German DGB trade union, “while the ‘Road Map’ is not integrated with the treaty itself, this does not mean that it is not binding, and commitments are worthless.” Gran recalls that in the case of the current agreement, the General System of Preferences, the limitations of the European Parliament are revealed as they failed to implement the binding clauses of the GSP, while equally demonstrating their unwillingness to do so.

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