



On Land Grabs

Background

With rising commodity prices and concerns over climate change, land has become increasingly valuable. Across the globe a new round of enclosure has resulted. Indigenous people and small farmers are often removed from land that they either own privately or via customary communal right have access to.

Seized land often benefits corporations, pension funds and multinationals which produce on large-scale agrofuels and other agricultural commodities for export instead of food for the local population.

There is long history of commons being enclosed and taken from commoners both within Europe and as a result of European colonialism across the world. Millions of native Americans, Asians, and Africans were dispossessed of their lands and resources. **Land grabbing has been** justified by notions such as the 'tragedy of the commons' and ignorance of alternative systems of property rights. The work of the late Professor Elinor Ostrom, who was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize in economics, for her research into common pool property, has shown that common pool property can be managed sustainably and fairly.

The European Green Party **should** oppose such land grabs, ~~**often for corporations and pension funds**~~. Land grabs are a serious threat to **local food security**, food sovereignty and **global food justice** and increase inequality. **EGP should declare that land can not be treated according to the Free Movement of Capital principle. In case of land-market free market mechanisms should always be overruled by the principles of sustainability and social justice.**

The European Green Party Council in Madrid,

Notes that there is a long history of environmental degradation and social injustice fuelled by large scale land seizures.

Affirms its support for indigenous peoples, peasants and their social movement allies in opposing land seizures, **securing land rights and struggling for land reforms.**

Emphasises that customary land rights include collective ownership and access rights which provide environmentally sustainable and equitable forms of ownership.

Furthermore we note that trade agreements, that do not acknowledge the variety of such property rights, can act to dispose communities from land. We oppose institutional support for land seizures both from the European Union and other bodies.

In addition, we oppose efforts at conservation or commercial land development that exclude the participation of local people.



40 **Cites as an example the Varela National Park and the Boloma Bijagós**
41 **Archipelago, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in the state Guinea-Bissau in West**
42 **Africa, where the Diola people and the unique ecosystem are at risk from**
43 **threatened exploitation of the local mineral wealth, including oil extraction**
44 **and uranium mining, by commercial interests.**
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46 **The European Green Party Council in Madrid proposes the following**
47 **specific measures,**

- 48 1. The European Union and European countries should adhere to the Voluntary
49 Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests,
50 adopted in May 2012 by the 128 countries of the UN Committee on World Food
51 Security, **and to the United Nations International convention on economic**
52 **and social rights that calls for protection from forced eviction regardless**
53 **of person's land tenure status - whether it is formal or informal. States**
54 **have to eliminate discrimination related to informal tenure and to**
55 **prevent, prohibit and eliminate discriminatory practices.**
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57 2. The European Union must oppose the sourcing of biofuels from land, which has been
58 seized from local people, as is the case in countries such as Colombia and Indonesia.
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60 3. The European Union should activate the 2004 EU Land Policy Guidelines, which at
61 present it largely ignores.
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63 4. The European Union trade policy should provide concrete guidelines to help member
64 states and traders to avoid activities which lead to the dispossession of developing
65 country communities of their farm or collectively held lands, and upon both of which
66 their livelihoods depend.
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68 5. The European Union should set up a registry of all EU public and private actors
69 involved in large-scale land acquisitions abroad to promote transparency and
70 progressive policy change.
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72 **6. The EU Commission should temporarily suspend trade preferences on**
73 **agricultural products in cases where human rights abuses are identified in**
74 **the framework of land concessions.**
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76 In addition we call on the newly elected EGP delegates to the Global Greens Coordination to
77 propose a global initiative by Green politicians and campaigners on this subject.
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79 REF

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81 I.The European Union and Global Land Grabs

82 http://www.tni.org/sites/www.tni.org/files/download/european_union_and_the_global_land_grab-a5.pdf
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