



On Land Grabs

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Background

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. This was 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.

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.

The European Green Party should oppose such land grabs, often for corporations and pension funds. Land grabs are a serious threat to food sovereignty and increase inequality.

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.

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.

The European Green Party Council in Madrid proposes the following specific measures,



Draft resolution to be voted on

- 36 1. The European Union and European countries should adhere to the Voluntary
37 Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests,
38 adopted in May 2012 by the 128 countries of the UN Committee on World Food
39 Security.
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41 2. The European Union must oppose the sourcing of biofuels from land, which has been
42 seized from local people, as is the case in countries such as Colombia and Indonesia.
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44 3. The European Union should activate the 2004 EU Land Policy Guidelines, which at
45 present it largely ignores.
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47 4. The European Union trade policy should provide concrete guidelines to help member
48 states and traders to avoid activities which lead to the dispossession of developing
49 country communities of their farm or collectively held lands, and upon both of which
50 their livelihoods depend.
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52 5. The European Union should set up a registry of all EU public and private actors
53 involved in large-scale land acquisitions abroad to promote transparency and
54 progressive policy change.

55 In addition we call on the newly elected EGP delegates to the Global Greens Coordination to
56 propose a global initiative by Green politicians and campaigners on this subject.
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59 REF

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61 I.The European Union and Global Land Grabs
62 http://www.tni.org/sites/www.tni.org/files/download/european_union_and_the_global_land_grab-a5.pdf
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