



**Seattle to Brussels
Network**

Stop the EU's Corporate trade agenda
The Seattle to Brussels Network is part of Our World Is Not For Sale
www.s2bnetwork.org

NEWS PEG: *Tuesday 9th November 2010, the EU Commission launched the Communication “Trade, Growth and World Affairs. Trade Policy as a core component of the EU's 2020 strategy”¹.*

After the failure of the “Global Europe Strategy” , the new EU's 2020 trade strategy will reinforce the policies responsible for the economic, social and environmental crises

Today the European Commission launched its new trade policy as a core component of the EU's 2020 strategy, which will replace the 2006 Trade Strategy ‘Global Europe – competing in the world’ but has nothing new to add. “The policy proposals embedded in the EU's 2020 strategy show that the EU has not changed course in response to the crises and is still in complete denial of the fact that liberalisation of trade and investment, and deregulation of financial services in particular have contributed greatly to the crises”, says Bruno Ciccaglione, Coordinator of the **Seattle to Brussels Network (S2B)**.

S2B, representing more than 70 trade activist groups, civil society organisations and networks from all over Europe, has repeatedly exposed how the corporate-driven trade and investment strategy of the EU (the Global Europe strategy) undermined the European social model, exacerbated inequality and exploitation and deprived countries and communities of the opportunity to realise social, cultural and political human rights. It prevented them from regulating their economies in the interest of development, the environment and social justice.

Only EU corporations have benefited from the current model, at the expense of people and the environment. So, it is clear that the competitiveness agenda of the EU promoted in the new Trade Policy of the EU 2020 strategy will not only fail to deliver on the targets set in the Growth and Jobs strategy, but will further deepen the effects of the economic, social and environmental crisis in Europe and the Global South.

Instead, the EC should promote trade and investment policies that are coherent with the overall EU external policy under the Lisbon Treaty, Art. 208 TFEU, which defines the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and poverty reduction as over-arching foreign policy goals for the whole Union.

The “Trade, Growth and World Affairs” Strategy is presented as an important element of the EU's response to the global crises. The EC argues that further liberalization of trade and investment is needed to face the economic crisis. A cornerstone of the EU 2020 strategy, and the motto of the new trade policy, is the strengthening of EU's competitiveness (at home and abroad). At home, strengthening competitiveness could be translated as: further deregulation and labour market flexibility, promotion of public-private partnerships (PPPs), privatisation of services provision, dismantling of social protection and the removal or relaxation of business regulations under the concept of “better” or

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/trade-growth-and-jobs/>

“smart” regulation². Abroad, it means increased access to the global markets’ vital natural resources and to step up the efforts to enhance the already favourable environment for European companies abroad.

An Urgent U-turn in EU trade and investment policy is needed

European trade and investment policy has become dominated by a narrow set of interests. The EU needs to critically examine the developments over the past decade in the area of trade and investment policy. Now is the time to re-think the trade and investment model of the EU and promote policies that foster co-operation, solidarity and sustainable development and which are based on mutual support and public need, rather than competition and accumulation of profit.

The functioning of European trade and investment policy is not just a technical question reserved for experts. It is a political question that concerns all citizens. Europe’s trade and investment policy should therefore be opened up to public scrutiny and be based on democratic structures that facilitate meaningful citizens’ participation.

An alternative European trade and investment policy should be integral part of an alternative European economic and social model.

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² http://ec.europa.eu/governance/better_regulation/index_en.htm