

Speak out on Trade Justice

Stop Europe's unfair trade deals



About this pack

In June 2009, there will be elections to the European Parliament taking place across all 27 EU member states. This is a key opportunity to put our opposition to Europe's unfair trade deals on the political agenda and to help bring about a fairer approach to Europe's trade with poor countries. This guide will help you to lobby your candidates for the European Parliament about Europe's unfair trade deals, and ask them to speak out on trade justice during their term representing you in Brussels.

The global financial crisis has made lobbying and speaking out on trade justice even more important as it has demonstrated to people in rich countries what those in poor countries have known for years: the current international economic system doesn't work. Unfair trade deals are part of the problem, and Europe's policies risk making things worse, and impoverishing more people in developing countries. We need you to take action and speak to your political representative to ensure that this doesn't continue.

Comhlámh would like to thank the Trade Justice Movement (<http://www.tjm.org.uk/>) for their generosity in sharing the text of their own Lobby Pack with us. The text of this booklet is an adapted version of their text.

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**Speak out on
Trade Justice**



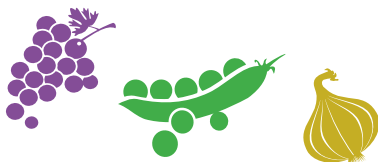
About Comhlámh

Comhlámh is a dynamic, independent membership organisation working together with development workers, volunteers and activists. We are committed to advocating for a just and equitable world, setting standards and promoting good practice.

Ours is the belief that people acting in solidarity can change the structures of global injustice and poverty. Through awareness raising, research, education and training we empower individuals to take effective action to address global inequality.

Comhlámh's mission is to challenge our society on the root causes of global poverty and inequality and empower people to demand equity in global relations.

As part of our global justice work, Comhlámh and its members and supporters have worked on trade justice issues for many years. We work with others across Ireland, Europe and the world, engaging in public education, campaigning, advocacy, lobbying and policy work, to help achieve just and sustainable global trade policies and practices.



Introduction to Europe's unfair trade deals



Trade could make a big difference in the lives of the world's poorest people. Trade can generate jobs, grow economies and provide a sustainable way to lift millions out of poverty. But the European Union is currently negotiating trade deals with countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America which will secure big profits for European companies at the expense of the poor and the environment.

These trade deals will particularly harm the poorest and most vulnerable people in developing countries: destroying jobs, small-scale industries and the livelihoods of small farmers, as well as increasing environmental exploitation and human rights abuses.

Comhlámh is part of an EU-wide network of civil society organisations, which includes development, environment, human rights, women and farmers organisations, trade unions, social movements as well as research institutes. This network acts in solidarity with trade justice campaigners all over the world, and is calling for a stop to the EU's unfair trade deals. It aims to challenge the corporate-driven EU trade and investment agenda and promote alternative progressive proposals.

OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

2009 presents key moments in which campaigners can make a real impact:

June 2009

All 27 member states will be going to the polls to elect their Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in early June (in Ireland the date is **5th June**). It is a great opportunity for us to highlight our opposition to Europe's unfair trade deals. People across Europe will be lobbying their MEPs and calling on them to

Speak out and take action for trade justice.

Autumn 2009

A new European Commission will be appointed providing an important opportunity for the EU to review its trade policy and adopt a new approach. Most importantly, of course, a new Trade Commissioner will be appointed, giving the chance for a new direction.

SO WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

Financial Crisis

The financial crisis has created a space for people to talk about global economic issues, and made us all realise that economic and financial decisions and policies affect our daily lives. Here at home we've seen the negative impacts of economic decisions which favour the wealthy few. But the financial crisis will hit the world's poorest people the hardest. Now, more than ever, it's important to question trade rules which are biased in favour of big business at the expense of the world's poor.

A Global Campaign

It's not just campaigners in Ireland who are unhappy with Europe's unfair trade deals. There is growing resistance around the world. Development and environment campaigners, human rights activists, trade unions and organisations of small farmers from across Africa, Asia and Latin America are all urging their governments to halt negotiations and rethink trade deals with the EU. We are in solidarity with those across the globe who are speaking out against these trade deals and standing up for trade justice.

Here in Europe, campaigning organisations across the continent are all joining in this Europe-wide campaign. Together we have a good chance of stopping Europe's unfair trade deals and convincing the European Commission and our national governments that we need a new approach to Europe's trade with the world.

We Need You!

We can't bring this change about by ourselves; we need you to get active and speak out. You can get involved by contacting your local candidates for the European parliamentary elections, either by letter, email or face-to-face meeting, and urging them to support a rethink of Europe's trade strategy to make trade work in the interests of people and the environment.

People power works and MEPs are eager to meet and discuss issues with their constituents, especially at election time. You can let them know that your vote is dependent on them taking action in favour of a just trading system. You can also take part in an e-action to Jose Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Union, and to Baroness Ashton, the current EU Trade Commissioner (see <http://www.comhlahm.org/campaigns.html>)

Take Action!



We need your help in convincing the Irish candidates for the European Parliament to support a full-scale rethink of Europe's trade policy. There are number of different ways that you can help us to do this.

IF YOU HAVE 30 MINUTES: WRITE TO YOUR MEP CANDIDATES!

Write to one or more of your MEP candidates and ask them to sign the enclosed pledge in support of a review of Europe's trade strategy. (A template letter for you to use is downloadable from <http://www.comhlahm.org/campaigns.html>)

IF YOU HAVE AN HOUR: TALK TO YOUR MEP CANDIDATES!

Make an appointment to go and visit one or more of your MEP candidates. Tell them why you think the EU's current trade strategy is wrong and ask them to sign the enclosed pledge.

IF YOU HAVE LONGER: MEET YOUR MEP CANDIDATES!

Your MEP candidate may be holding a public meeting in your locality. Go along, link up with other concerned citizens, and raise the issue of trade in the meeting. Or you could organise a joint meeting with one or more of your MEP candidates to explain this issue and ask them to support the pledge. For advice on how to find other people in your area who are interested in getting involved in the campaign give us a call on 01 4783490.

WHAT ARE WE CALLING FOR?

Comhlámh, as part of an EU-wide network, is calling for the European Commission to:

- Stop unfair EU trade deals with Africa, Asia and Latin America
- Commit before the end of 2009 to rethink EU trade policy so that it prioritises development, environmental sustainability and human rights
- Open up European trade policy to enable better democratic accountability and scrutiny by parliamentarians and civil society

WHAT SHOULD I ASK MY MEP CANDIDATES TO DO?

To make it easier, we have designed a pledge for you to ask your MEP candidates to sign. This pledge sets out what the candidates can do to support a rethink of Europe's trade strategy if they get elected to the European Parliament in the June 2009 elections and commits them to doing so. Once your MEP candidates have signed the pledge, please send it back to Comhlámh at the address on page 13, so we can keep a record of which MEP candidates are supporting the campaign and can remind them of their promise in the future. Alternatively you can email Fleachta at fleachta@comhlamh.org. If you want to speak to someone in person, please call us on 01 4783490.



ACTION TIMELINE – WHAT YOU NEED TO DO WHEN!

We need to try and reach as many MEP candidates as possible before the European Parliamentary elections on 5 June 2009.

MARCH - JUNE 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write to your MEP candidates OR• Link up with other activists in your area and write to your MEP candidates to arrange a meeting• Visit your MEP candidates• Arrange meetings with more MEP candidates if you have time• Let us know how your meeting went
JUNE 2009 ONWARDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep in touch with us and with your MEP. Make sure to let your MEP know that you will be watching with interest to see if they keep their word• Write to them now and then at key moments during the life of the parliament when trade is being discussed

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

Comhlámh, and the EU-wide alliance, will use the information and pledges gathered to put pressure on elected MEPs to call for a rethink of European trade policies when the new parliament is in place later in 2009. And remember, this is just the beginning of the discussion, we will need your help to make sure they keep their promises in the years to come, by closely watching and reacting to the EU's trade policy during the life of the next parliament. Check the Comhlámh website for updates - <http://www.comhlamh.org/campaigns.html>, You could also think of joining our Trade Justice Group to stay active on this issue.

Lobbying Your European Parliamentary candidates



MEP CANDIDATES – KEY FACTS

- Each candidate who is successfully elected will become a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) – the European version of a TD.
- Most MEP candidates are members of an Irish political party, and also of an EU-level political group. Some other candidates are not affiliated to a political party, and run as ‘independent’ candidates.
- Ireland is divided into 4 constituencies; Dublin, East, South and North West. There are currently 13 Irish MEP seats, but this will be reduced to 12 in the coming election, so each constituency will have 3 MEPs representing it in the European parliament.
- All Irish and EU citizens living in Ireland get to vote in the European elections, with voting taking place in a similar manner to the process in national elections, using the single transferable vote system.
- If elected as an MEP, individuals will participate in debates and vote on EU policies and laws, and will be likely to serve on at least one committee of the European Parliament.
- MEPs gather their own information and can make up their own minds about key European policy issues. They listen to people who lobby them and can be persuaded by good arguments. Because there is often quite a geographical distance between them and their constituency for much of the time, MEPs are eager to hear from their constituents.

For more information on the European Parliament and on Irish MEPs, see <http://www.europarl.ie>

WHICH MEP CANDIDATES SHOULD I TARGET?

As MEPs represent a regional area, you can lobby any or all of the candidates running in your constituency.

To see who your current MEPs are you can check the following website and click on the 'your MEPs' icon <http://www.europarl.europa.eu>. As there are only three to four sitting MEPs in each constituency, it's quite possible to speak to them all.

But you may want to go further also, as some of the sitting MEPs may not be re-elected. The final list of candidates will not be available until 11 May, but watch the papers or give us a call (or check our website) and we'll give you the latest info and contact details we have for candidates in your constituency. You can also check <http://www.micandidate.ie/> and <http://www.europarl.ie/> for up to date information. You could easily write to them all, and meet with the ones you identify as key.

CHECK IF YOUR MEP CANDIDATE HAS BEEN LOBBIED

You can get in touch with us if you're wondering if your MEP candidate has already been lobbied by another campaigner. However, it's no harm for candidates to hear from many people, even if they've already signed the pledge, as it reinforces our message that people care about, and are concerned by, these trade deals, and can firm their resolve to be proactive on this issue on behalf of their constituents.

Do get in contact if you would like us to help to put you in touch with other activists in your area who are interested in joining forces to target one or more MEP candidates together.

Please send an email to fleachta@comhlamh.org with details of the MEP candidate(s) you are planning to meet and which region you live in. We will then email you back with advice on which candidates in your area have not yet signed the pledge.



Top tips on lobbying your MEP candidate



1. SETTING UP A MEETING

MEP candidates will be busy on the campaign trail in the run up to the European Parliamentary elections and so it is advisable to set up a meeting well in advance. To organise the meeting, it is best to start by writing a letter or sending an email explaining what you are concerned about and requesting a meeting. You can use the template letter which is downloadable from the Comhlámh website at <http://www.comhlamh.org/campaigns.html>. Wait 3-4 work days for them to respond, and if they don't, then follow-up with a telephone call. This is important as they may not contact you but are more likely to agree to meet if you stay in touch.

Also, remember that your MEP may come to you! MEP candidates often do door-to-door canvassing, which is a real opportunity for you to meet them in the comfort of your own home. So be prepared for when a candidate comes knocking and have your questions ready!

2. WHAT TO SAY DURING THE MEETING

- Explain why you are concerned about the current direction of EU trade policy (see pages 14 to 21 for more pointers on this) and the problems you have with the current system. If you are holding the meeting with other activists before going in plan who will say what and in what order.
- Explain that you are supporting the European-wide campaign for a review of EU trade policy to make it work better for people and the environment, and that concerned citizens across Europe are asking their MEPs to speak out for trade justice in the new European parliament.
- Ask the MEP candidate if they will support a rethink of European trade policy if they get elected as an MEP, and if they say yes, ask them to sign the pledge as a public commitment to this.
- If they say yes – thank them, get the pledge signed, and ask them whether

they would like you to do any follow-up media work to publicise their support for the campaign. Don't forget to tell your MEP candidate that we will follow up with them if they are elected, and that you would like to stay in touch with them for the duration of the parliament.

- If they say no – thank them for their time, say you hope they might reconsider, and say that you would be happy to meet again at a later date to discuss the issues further. Try to identify their specific reasons for not signing.
- Be polite but don't be scared! It's just a conversation and you may know more about this topic than they do!

FURTHER ADVICE ON LOBBYING YOUR MEP

- Don't forget we will be holding workshops around the country to help you understand the issue and practice speaking to your MEP. And you can always call us to have a chat about it on 01 4783490.
- Friends of the Earth Wales have produced an online resource which contains good advice on how to lobby your MEP. You can read it online at: http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/how_tos/cyw_69_lobby_mep.pdf

3. AFTER THE MEETING:

- A. If your MEP has signed the pledge, please post it to Comhlámh.
- B. Send an email to fleachta@comhlamh.org or write to us to let us know how it went and whether your MEP candidate signed the pledge so that we can keep our records up to date.
- C. It is a good idea to send a follow-up letter or email thanking the candidate for the meeting and briefly summarising what you discussed and what the outcome was. Please remind them of the commitments that they made to take action in the European Parliament if elected.
- D. You may want to do some local media work to publicise the outcome of the meeting (see below).

GETTING LOCAL MEDIA COVERAGE

You can use local media coverage to help publicise the fact that your MEP candidate has signed the pledge, or that they haven't. Once you have had your meeting with the candidate, you could issue a press release or write a letter to the local paper outlining the issue and your MEP candidate's position on it. A template press release which you can adapt to use locally can be downloaded

from the Comhlámh website. You could also adapt this into a letter to the editor to send to your local paper.

REMEMBER – YOU REPRESENT MANY OTHERS!

You are part of an EU-wide alliance of organisations and individuals acting in solidarity with people from across the globe who are concerned about these deals. Trade justice campaigners from across Africa, Asia and Latin America are all urging their governments to halt negotiations and rethink trade deals with the EU. We in Europe stand in solidarity with those worldwide who are speaking out against these EU trade deals and calling for trade justice.

Background Info: Europe's unfair trade deals



For many years, the European Union negotiated trade deals through the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the international organisation responsible for setting the rules of trade between countries. However, in recent years developing countries have successfully resisted the worst aspects of international trade deals proposed by rich countries like the EU and the US, and refused to agree to deals which will negatively affect their economies.

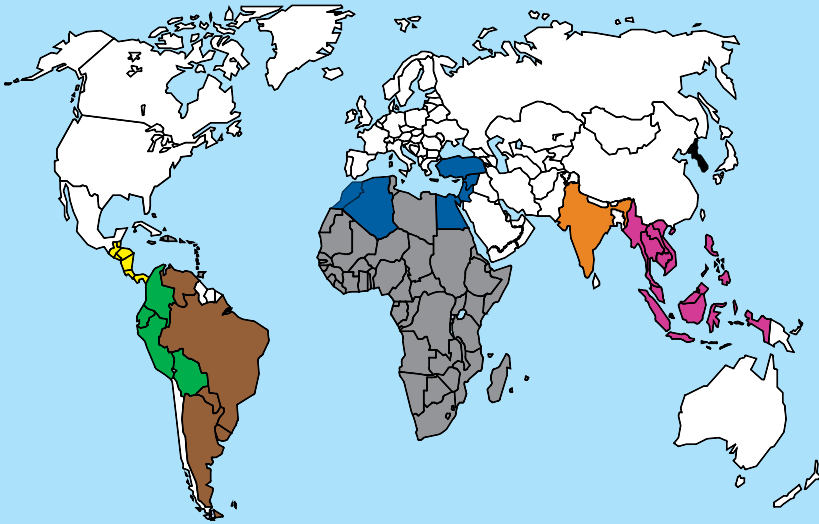
Unable to get what they want through the WTO, the EU is now trying to secure trade deals directly with countries or regions. Since 2002, the EU has been negotiating free trade agreements with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. These so-called 'Economic Partnership Agreements' (EPAs) ostensibly have development and regional integration as their central aim, but ACP countries and campaigners have identified many problems with the negotiation process and with the deals themselves. As a result, Comhlámh and other organisations in Ireland have been voicing their concern about and

opposition to these deals for many years. Meanwhile, in 2006, the EU set out its “Global Europe” trade strategy, which is aggressive in its approach and looks for serious concessions, beyond those being discussed at WTO level, from developing countries. The strategy identifies 34 countries for trade deals that will benefit European corporations at the expense of some of the world’s poorest people.

THE GLOBAL EUROPE AGENDA

The countries targeted for trade deals with the EU are highlighted in the map below. In total, these countries are home to 922 million people who live on less than US\$2 per day.

THE EU IS NEGOTIATING TRADE DEALS WITH:



- 1 Central America (6 countries)
- 2 Association of South East Asian States (ASEAN) (7 countries)
- 3 Community of Andean Nations (4 countries)
- 4 Korea (1 country)
- 5 India (1 country)
- 6 Mediterranean (10 countries)
- 7 Mercosur (5 countries)
- 8 In addition, the EU is also pushing trade deals (called Economic Partnership Agreements – EPAs) with Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (76 countries with 750 million people, including 39 Least Developed Countries)

WHY ARE THESE EU TRADE DEALS UNFAIR?

These trade deals are heavily influenced by the interests of European corporations, who want access to new markets and resources to maximise their profits. However, the deals could have disastrous impacts on jobs, livelihoods, human rights and the environment in the developing countries that sign up. The deals will 'lock in' a series of policies that will prevent these countries from providing for basic needs, reducing poverty, and developing their economy in a way that is sustainable and protects the environment.

There are many worrying aspects of these trade deals, but four big areas of concern are explained below.

A. DESTROYING JOBS AND LOCAL INDUSTRIES

Many of the countries that the EU is now targeting for trade deals are still developing and need to be able to protect their emerging industries from overseas competition until they are big enough to compete with the well-established industries of rich Western countries. Historically, rich countries, including Ireland, also protected their emerging industries while they were developing, using taxes and regulation.

The Problem

- The EU wants to sell its manufactured and agricultural goods to developing countries rather than giving them the chance to develop the capacity to make some of these goods themselves and reap the benefits that come from this, like more jobs which help to lift people out of poverty.
- The EU is pushing developing countries to reduce import taxes (tariffs) on these European goods.
- This denies developing countries a key tool that western countries used themselves when they were developing.
- Reducing tariffs will:
 - Make imported goods cheaper than local goods
 - Harm local industries and cause job losses in developing countries
 - Destroy the livelihoods of small-scale farmers
 - Reduce government revenue used to provide basic services like health, water and education.



For Example:

Imports of tomato puree, produced by subsidised European farmers, into Ghana have squeezed out local production as the market share of domestic tomatoes shrunk from 92 to 57 per cent between 1998 and 2004.

B. EXPLOITING NATURAL RESOURCES

Many countries that are rich in resources like minerals, forests, oil and other raw materials, or who produce a lot of food for export, use policies such as taxes or export restrictions to control how much of these commodities can be exported overseas. This is so that they can control the rate at which their resources are exploited, develop capacities for local processing, and ensure that they have enough to use domestically before exporting the rest overseas.

The Problem

- The EU wants to increase its access to cheap supplies of raw materials for big European corporations, and this means pushing developing countries to remove restrictions on the export of raw materials.
- Taking away export restrictions will deny countries a key tool they use to:
 - Protect their environment and make sure their natural resources aren't overexploited
 - Ensure they have enough food and raw materials to use locally
 - Encourage local industries to process these materials, thereby creating jobs and reducing poverty at home

For Example:

Many countries with over-exploited resources like Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia and the Philippines have introduced export controls as a means of limiting the harvest of their forest products and protecting their forests.

C. CONTRIBUTING TO THE FOOD CRISIS

It is now widely recognised that the reduction of tariffs on food imports has been one of the key drivers of the destruction of small-scale local food production in poor countries. It has made these countries reliant on imported food and food produced by agribusinesses, thus making these countries highly

vulnerable to global food price hikes such as those of spring / summer 2008 which led to widespread food shortages and rioting from Cameroon to Haiti. Tackling global food insecurity means allowing the world's poorest countries to use higher tariffs on food imports to avoid crippling competition from highly subsidised industrialised imports from regions like Europe. This is the only way that poor countries will be able to protect and develop their agricultural industries and secure sustainable food supplies for local consumption.

The Problem

- The EU wants to further increase access to markets overseas for highly subsidised European agricultural goods, helping to make more money for big industrialised European farmers by stealing market share from poor small-scale farmers in the global south.
- Taking away the ability of poor countries to impose tariffs on food imports to protect their local food production will:
 - Increase the vulnerability of these countries to fluctuations in global food prices, and hence the likelihood of food shortages
 - Increase global reliance on unsustainable, industrially produced food stuffs
 - Destroy the livelihoods of small-scale farmers, exacerbating poverty and increasing pressure on natural resources in poor countries.

For Example:

During the food price hikes and widespread food crises in summer 2008, Ugandans were paying roughly the same price for rice that they always had. This was because over previous years the Ugandan government had restricted rice imports from abroad, making local production the priority and supporting investment in domestic production and processing, ensuring a secure and affordable supply of rice for Ugandans irrespective of what was happening in global markets.

D. MORE RIGHTS FOR BIG COMPANIES, FEWER RIGHTS FOR PEOPLE

Most countries use laws and regulations to manage how big multinational companies operate in their countries. Such rules may apply to big foreign companies either extracting raw materials, manufacturing consumer goods, or

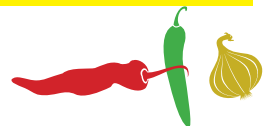
providing services – including essential services like energy, transport and water. In addition, developing countries may choose to limit the participation of foreign companies in selected sectors – such as retail or banking. Developing countries may sometimes also reserve the right to exclude foreign companies from government procurement contracts in order to ensure that spending is directed to domestic firms, which is especially important in times of recession.

Together, these domestic policies on investment, services and procurement benefit developing countries by:

- Ensuring the activities of foreign companies benefit local people and the local economy by providing jobs and helping build up local industries.
- Preventing foreign corporations from abusing the environment and human rights.
- Preventing foreign investors from crowding out domestic firms.

The Problem

- The EU wants to reduce the restrictions faced by big European companies operating in developing countries that are the targets of trade deals.
- Liberalisation of rules on investment, services and government procurement will mean that European multinationals have more rights to operate freely in developing countries, but with minimal obligations and hence very few benefits for local people. In some cases such liberalisation may give foreign investors further scope to operate in ways that they could not get away with in Europe. For example by paying poverty wages, polluting the local water supply, or displacing people from their homes.
- EU proposals for investment liberalisation also include provisions on the free transfer of funds – making it easier for investors to bring their profits back home, draining resources and increasing financial instability for the host country.
- These and other provisions for financial services liberalisation would severely limit developing countries’ abilities to put in place regulations to minimise the effect of a financial crisis on their economy.



For Example:

The EU is insisting that India open up its markets to the EU's major retail corporations, with supermarkets leading the charge. The government of India has so far said it will not liberalise this sector – but if it is pressured into doing so, the entry of European multinationals, such as Tesco, or the French supermarket giant Carrefour, could squeeze out millions of poor people who currently work in small shops or as street sellers and have almost no alternative livelihood options.

The four issues outlined above are some of the key concerns which trade justice campaigners worldwide have highlighted about the EU's trade policy. Other areas of concern include:

- problems with the negotiating process including the fact that it doesn't take into account differing levels of economic development or different negotiating capacities
- the EU's insistence in global trade negotiations, such as at the WTO, that developing countries agree to open their markets and liberalise their economies more than they want to
- the EU's continued insistence on the free trade model despite the current financial crisis which has called into question that very economic system

See the Questions and Answers section for more detail on some of these issues.



**Speak out on
Trade Justice**

What is the solution?

There is a better and a fairer way! A fair and just trading system could benefit the many, in the European Union and worldwide, rather than the few. It is essential that the European Union takes a new approach to trade, one that prioritises development, environmental sustainability and human rights across the world. As an institution, the EU is accountable to the governments of its member states, who are in turn accountable to us, the people of Europe. With the European Parliamentary elections in June 2009, and the appointment of a new European Commission, including a new Trade Commissioner, in Autumn 2009, we have a unique opportunity to turn European trade policy around.

A global campaign is already underway, involving civil society groups in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as well as across Europe, to stop the deals unfolding under the destructive 'Global Europe' trade strategy, and secure a full-scale rethink of EU trade policy. Comhlámh, alongside campaigners around the world, are calling for the European Commission to:

- Stop unfair EU trade deals with Africa, Asia and Latin America
- Commit before the end of 2009 to rethink EU trade policy so that it prioritises development, environmental sustainability and human rights
- Open up European trade policy to enable better democratic accountability and scrutiny by parliamentarians and civil society



Glossary



There are a lot of terms used in discussions about EU rules and policies and trade in general. Don't be put off by these. Here are some explanations of some of the terms used in this pack:

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (EC)

The European Commission (EC) is the 'executive arm' of the European Union. It is responsible for developing policy, proposing legislation, implementing decisions, and the general day-to-day running of the European Union.

The EC is divided up into 'Directorate Generals' (DGs) such as environment, trade, justice, transport etc. These are a bit like government departments and each is headed up by a Commissioner, just as our government departments are each headed by a Minister. 38,000 senior civil servants from across Europe also work within the European Commission.

The government of each member state appoints a Commissioner and the President of the European Commission decides which DG to assign to each commissioner. Ireland's Commissioner is currently Charlie McCreevy.



	<p>The term of this Commission is nearly up and a new Commission is due to take over in November 2009. Existing Commissioners can be re-nominated by their national governments, and serve more than one term. As no-one working in the Commission is directly elected by the people of Europe, it has been the subject of some criticism for being an institution which wields tremendous power but lacks democratic accountability.</p>
<p>TRADE COMMISSIONER</p>	<p>The head of the Directorate General for Trade. At the moment the Trade Commissioner post is held by Britain. The former Trade Commissioner, Peter Mandelson, was the architect and driving force behind the EU's 'Global Europe' trade agenda. However, in October 2008 he returned to the UK Government and was replaced by Baroness Catherine Ashton, who now has overall responsibility for the EU's trade policy. It is unclear whether Baroness Ashton will retain responsibility for trade or be put forward as the British nominee for the new Commission which will be appointed in Autumn 2009.</p>
<p>EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT</p>	<p>The European Parliament is made up of directly elected representatives from the European member states, known as Members of the European Parliament (MEPs).</p> <p>Each Irish MEP represents a constituency and each constituency will have 3 MEPs.</p> <p>The Parliament shares decision-making power with the European Council, which is made up of Ministers from each EU member state.</p>

<p>WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION (WTO)</p>	<p>The international organisation which supervises international trade. Its main responsibility is to negotiate and implement new trade agreements at the international level, and to police adherence to existing rules by countries who are members.</p>
<p>FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (FTA)</p>	<p>Another term for trade deals which can be negotiated between countries (bilateral) or regionally. They can cover a range of trade issues (for example, tariffs on goods) and trade-related issues (for example, investment, services, intellectual property and competition).</p>

- For more info on the European Union and how it works see http://europa.eu/index_en.htm
- For more info on trade and a comprehensive glossary of trade-related terms see <http://www.wdm.org.uk/campaigns/trade/indepth/glossary.htm>



Questions and answers



Here are some suggested answers to questions you may get asked by your MEP candidate:

WHY ARE WE TARGETING EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES WHEN IT IS THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION WHICH SETS THE EU'S TRADE POLICY?

We have an important opportunity to influence the direction of European trade policy when the new European Commission is appointed in late Autumn 2009. It is true, and of concern, that MEPs do not have the power to set trade policy, or to influence the appointment of EU Commissioners. However they do play an important role in scrutinising prospective Commissioners. So in late 2009 when the new European Commission is proposed, MEPs who are successfully elected in June will be able to put pressure on the proposed new European Trade Commissioner to implement a review of EU trade policy. MEPs also have an important role scrutinising trade deals which the EU is negotiating. Where a proposed trade deal will have major knock on effects for the EU or its policies, there is an expectation that it will be presented to the European Parliament for assent. MEPs are

our direct and democratic route to influencing EU trade policy, and have a responsibility to represent the concerns of their constituents in the parliament. Moreover, the European Parliament is the only EU institution directly elected by citizens and is therefore a crucial element in having European policy reflect people's concerns, as well as providing democratic oversight and control on the exercise of power.

WHY ARE YOU TARGETING WORK AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL RATHER THAN AT NATIONAL LEVEL?

We do both! It is not an either or situation. We work at all levels and have often, with your help, targeted Irish TDs and Ministers. But this is a key moment at EU level, and we must also engage with our parliamentary representatives in Europe. Moreover, as a member of the European Union, most of our trade negotiations with other countries are conducted as a bloc through the EU's Directorate-General on Trade, or 'DG Trade'. DG Trade develops trade strategies and

undertakes trade negotiations on behalf of the entire EU. Ireland is just one of 27 countries within the EU and obviously cannot unilaterally determine trade policy. To tackle Europe's trade agenda, action needs to take place within all member states and in Brussels too.

WHY ARE YOU AGAINST TRADE, SURELY IT IS THE ONLY WAY TO BRING DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY TO POOR COUNTRIES?

We are not against trade and we are certainly not campaigning for the EU to stop trading. Trade is the way that goods and products are distributed around the world. It is an important way of overcoming local, regional and national scarcity, and can also generate jobs and support livelihoods. Trade can play an important role in alleviating poverty, improving peoples' quality of life and in facilitating political stability. Trade is also of much more value to poor countries monetarily than the amount given in aid.

However, trade is a means to an end rather than an end in itself, and in order to achieve the objectives of helping to reduce poverty, increase development, and protect the environment, it needs to be regulated by governments. Trade rules must take into account the power imbalances in the world, and make sure that the system isn't exploited by big powerful companies at the

expense of poor, vulnerable people and the environment. If the trade system is to benefit all on a long-term basis, governments have to take into account its positive and negative outcomes when designing trade policy.

THE EUROPEAN UNION PLACES A HIGH PRIORITY ON ACHIEVING DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES, WHY ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT ITS TRADE POLICY?

We are concerned about the Global Europe trade strategy because it conflicts directly with the European Union's wider commitments to sustainable development and poverty alleviation globally. The EU's 2006 Sustainable Development strategy asserts that 'sustainable development' – development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs – is an overarching objective of the European Union. Furthermore, the EU is a key actor on the international stage and the largest donor of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the world. Yet the Global Europe strategy and the trade deals that are part of it, including EPA deals, are likely to undermine the ability of developing country governments to protect and to develop their economies, reduce poverty and protect the environment. The EU's trade policy may also



have many negative environmental consequences domestically also, and we have seen the business lobby successfully argue for the watering down of EU commitments on climate change, among other environmental regulations. It is because of this contradiction between EU trade policy and the EU's wider commitments on development and environment that we are calling for EU trade strategy to be reviewed.

IF THESE TRADE DEALS ARE STOPPED, WILL IT HARM EUROPE'S COMPETITIVENESS AND DAMAGE JOBS AND INDUSTRIES HERE?

One of the stated aims of the Global Europe strategy is to maintain and even boost jobs in Europe. The European Commission believes that unless it locks in access to new markets for its companies now, it will lose out to growing economies like China and India. However, job creation in Europe is far from assured - the Commission accepts that trade liberalisation and globalisation causes "large-scale redundancies" and a "decline [in] employment terms and conditions" in the EU. Any gains that may occur would likely be in highly efficient industries i.e. ones that get the most productivity out of the least staff, and would not outbalance the job losses. Furthermore such a policy would make little difference in Ireland because the Irish economy has already been liberalised so much that companies are able both to move

jobs offshore and to transfer their entire operations overseas to take advantage of cheap labour, as we have seen in recent times. Therefore, increasing access for European goods to developing countries would primarily benefit the profits of big European multinationals, not workers nor wider European society.

IF THESE DEALS ARE SO BAD, WHY ARE COUNTRIES NEGOTIATING WITH THE EU?

Through negotiating at a bilateral rather than a global WTO level (where developing countries are standing firmly together), the EU can weaken developing countries' resolve to resist trade deals which would be bad for them, by slowly picking countries or regions off one by one, and playing them against each other.

Some developing country governments, including Bolivia, Ecuador, Nigeria and Senegal have taken a strong stand against signing unfair trade deals with the EU. Elsewhere, negotiations are underway but are plagued by big disputes between the EU and the developing country governments involved, as is the case in many of the long-running negotiations for the EPA agreements.

Elsewhere, while some countries' governments such as India's have expressed a general desire for a trade deal with the EU, and others like Korea are close to finalising a

comprehensive agreement, there is still strong domestic opposition to the deals by farmers' groups, human rights and environmental campaigners, and other civil society groups within those countries. In some cases these groups have expressed their frustration at the lack of transparency in the negotiating process and at not being consulted by their governments.

Some governments are persuaded that parts of their own economy will benefit from a deal eg. richer consumers who will be able to access imported goods or services, or big local companies might benefit from new access to European markets. However, evidence shows that even if these benefits do materialise for the better-off consumer or for the owners of local firms, the results do not trickle down to the very poor, and indeed such deals can jeopardise existing jobs and livelihoods, while exasperating efforts to reduce poverty, improve jobs and workers' rights, and protect the environment.

WHAT ARE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS? ARE THEY THE SAME THING AS THESE NEW TRADE DEALS?

The EU is also negotiating separate trade deals with 76 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) region, including 39 'Least Developed Countries'. The EU claims that these other trade deals, called Economic

Partnership Agreements (EPAs), are aimed at helping the 76 partner countries to develop and integrate regionally. However, since the negotiations on EPAs started in 2002, it has become clear that in spite of the ostensible development aim, the EU's approach to the negotiations is driven by the same aggressive approach as its Global Europe strategy – to access markets and raw materials for the benefit of European corporations.

The EPA negotiations are ongoing and have been very controversial, with some ACP governments expressing dissatisfaction with the negotiation process. A large number of ACP countries refused to sign up by the initial deadline of 31 December 2007, though some felt compelled to sign due to threats from the European Commission of suspension of their access to EU markets. Campaigners in ACP countries are deeply concerned about the potential negative impact the EPAs could have on lives, livelihoods and the ability of governments in these countries to decide their countries' economic futures. They continue to demand that the deals be stopped and urge their governments not to sign, and MEPs not to give their assent in the European Parliament to these deals.

WHAT ABOUT THE WORLD TRADE TALKS AT THE WTO?

The WTO trade negotiations have

been pretty much stuck since December 2005. Developing countries are insisting on a deal which tackles US and European agricultural subsidies. However European and US negotiators are demanding that developing countries significantly open their markets to industrial products and services from European companies, in return for modest subsidy reform. Developing countries have made clear their opposition to these unjust deals, and the talks are currently in a stalemate. It is for this reason that Europe, along with other rich economies like the US, Japan and Australia, have begun adopting a divide and conquer approach. They are negotiating bilateral trade deals with developing countries, to try to secure deals with individual and small groups of countries which they have not been able to achieve in the WTO.

It is being argued by some world leaders at the moment that a deal at WTO level is an important response and even solution to the current financial crisis. However trade justice campaigners are dubious that the model of free unregulated trade and movement of capital which caused the problem in the first place can solve the current global economic difficulties. But, even if a deal is struck at the WTO in the future, the negotiations on bilateral deals will continue and Europe will push for further and faster access to developing country markets and raw materials. These bilateral deals

are specifically designed to push developing countries to go beyond what they have signed up to in the WTO.



WON'T THESE DEALS MAKE GOODS CHEAPER FOR CONSUMERS HERE IN IRELAND?

In both Europe and developing countries, one of the benefits touted for these deals is cheaper goods for consumers. Undoubtedly, some goods will, on the face of it, be cheaper after these deals. However, we also need to take into account the wider negative impacts of the deals and policies that underlie them both in developing countries and here in the EU. As previously outlined, the deals are likely to lead to job losses, increased poverty, and increased environmental exploitation, especially in developing countries. So the goods we get here will only be artificially cheaper, with the extra price being paid by poor farmers, workers and communities.

OF COURSE WE WANT EUROPEAN BUSINESSES TO BENEFIT FROM THE TRADE DEALS, WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH BIG BUSINESS HAVING INFLUENCE OVER THE TRADE NEGOTIATIONS?

No-one is saying that businesses should not be allowed to have a say on European trade policy, the problem is how much power big European businesses have over the deals, compared to other interest groups

in both Europe and the developing countries with whom we are negotiating the trade deals.

There are estimated to be between 15,000 and 20,000 lobbyists in Brussels, with more than 70 per cent of these representing corporate interests. Corporate lobbying expenditure in Brussels is estimated to be between €750 million and €1 billion each year and is the subject of growing controversy. Lobbyists are not subject to a mandatory register and it can be extremely difficult to find out what lobby meetings have been held, with whom and on what issues. The 'revolving door' phenomenon is also common where industry lobbyists take jobs with the Commission and vice versa, increasing the likelihood of conflicts of interest.

Big business lobbyists have clearly managed to exert a lot of influence over the EU's Global Europe trade strategy – the whole of the strategy is geared towards increasing the benefits for big European businesses (often to the detriment of smaller European businesses and enterprises) from international trade. In contrast, the concerns of civil society groups in developing countries and Europe, including development, human rights and environmental campaigners, farmers groups, trade unions, and even small businesses are rarely even paid lip service, let alone properly addressed.

AREN'T OTHER COUNTRIES ALSO PUSHING FOR TRADE DEALS?

While Europe is busy negotiating bilateral (country to country) trade deals, other countries are doing likewise. The US has especially focussed on deals with Latin America although there has been significant resistance to this approach from civil society and trade unions. In fact, the US Congress has become increasingly sceptical about the value of these deals for American workers and it remains to be seen whether the new US administration will pursue more of them in the near future.

In any case, the fact that other countries may be pushing for bilateral trade deals that could undermine development does not provide an excuse for the EU to do the same. As with other policy areas such as climate change and foreign affairs, it is important for the European Union to take a lead on demonstrating internationally that a progressive, just and sustainable approach is valid and workable.



IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE GLOBAL EUROPE TRADE STRATEGY WHAT DO YOU WANT INSTEAD?

There is an alternative and we believe a sustainable and just trade system is possible. Campaigners around the world are calling for improvements to the way global trade is negotiated and managed so that:

- 1.** Developing countries are free to define trade policies for themselves which work in the interests of their people and the environment. They are not pressured into opening their markets or exploiting their natural resources for foreign trade.
- 2.** Rich industrialised countries roll back their destructive trade policies and implement policies which put the interests of people and the environment first.
- 3.** Trade policies don't undermine the protection of core labour, environmental and human rights standards.
- 4.** Trade rules are negotiated, created and enforced in a transparent and democratic manner. The one-size fits all approach of liberalisation is dropped in favour of a more

responsive trading system, which takes account of the differing levels of economic development of the countries involved.

- 5.** European trade policies do not undermine cooperation and trade amongst developing countries, something which the UN says could benefit southern countries more than trade with the north.

Thus we are campaigning for a rethink of EU trade policy. We would like to see Europe adopt a trade policy based on the principles of trade justice set out above. This would be a policy which privileges principles of development, gender, social and environmental justice and human rights within the EU and in its trading partners, and puts the interests of the many, rather than the few, first.

**Speak out on
Trade Justice**



Lobbying Checklist

WHAT CAN I DO?

Please contact one or more of your local candidates for the European Parliamentary elections before 5 June 2009 and urge them to sign our pledge to support a full-scale rethink of Europe's trade if they get elected in June 2009. Ideally meet with them and discuss your concerns around EU trade policy and your vision of trade justice.

WHAT ARE WE CALLING FOR?

Comhlámh, as part of an EU-wide alliance, is calling for the European Commission to

- Stop unfair EU trade deals with Africa, Asia and Latin America
- Commit before the end of 2009 to rethink EU trade policy so that it prioritises development, environmental sustainability and human rights
- Open up European trade policy to enable better democratic accountability and scrutiny by parliamentarians and civil society

WHERE DO I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

For more information on the campaign, and for advice on which of your local MEP candidates you should focus your lobbying activities on, please email fleachta@comhlamh.org. Please also email this address when you've contacted your MEP candidate to let us know how it went.

WHERE DO I SEND THE SIGNED PLEDGE?

Please post the signed pledge card to:

Comhlámh
2nd Floor, Ballast House
Aston Quay
Dublin 2



Additional information & resources



THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE:

1. MEP candidate pledge (included in this pack)
2. Template letter to MEP candidate (downloadable from <http://www.comhlamh.org/campaigns.html>)
3. Template press release (downloadable from <http://www.comhlamh.org/campaigns.html>)
- 4 E-Actions (see our website)
- 5 List of MEP candidates (see our website)

LISTED BELOW ARE SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION TO HELP YOU TAKE ACTION:

More Website Information to help you Campaign:

- **Comhlámh:** <http://www.comhlamh.org/campaigns.html/campaigns.html>
- **Oxfam:** <http://www.oxfamireland.org/whatwedo/campaigns%2Dadvocacy/make%2Dtrade%2Dfair/>
- **Trócaire:** <http://www.trocaire.org/en/whatwedo/tradeandmarkets>
- **Christian Aid:** <http://www.christianaid.ie/whatwedo/issues/trade.aspx>
- **Friends of the Earth:** www.foe.co.uk/community/campaigns/corporates_trade_index.html
- **World Development Movement:** www.wdm.org.uk/trade
- **Trade Justice Movement:** www.tjm.org.uk

- **War on Want:** www.waronwant.org/campaigns

Information on the Global Europe campaign in the EU

- **Global Europe Watch:** www.globaleuropewatch.org
- **Seattle to Brussels Network:** www.s2bnetwork.org

Information on the Global Europe strategy

- **European Commission Communication:** 'Global Europe: Competing in the World' http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/sectoral/competitiveness/global_europe_en.htm

More about worldwide opposition to unfair trade deals

- www.bilaterals.org
- www.fightingftas.org

Advice on lobbying your MEP

- **Friends of the Earth** – How to lobby your MEP (this document has a British perspective but the general advice is still useful)
www.foe.co.uk/resource/how_tos/cyw_69_lobby_mep.pdf

More information on the EU and how it works

- **Gateway of the European Union:** http://europa.eu/index_en.htm
- **About the EU Elections 2009:** <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2009/default.htm?language=EN>
- **European Parliament Office in Ireland:** <http://www.europarl.ie/>





COMPLETED TRADE DEALS

(Chile, Mexico, South Africa)



TRADE DEALS REACHING COMPLETION

Economic Partnership Agreements (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific)



NEW ROUND OF TRADE DEALS

(Central America, Andean Community, Mercosur, Mediterranean, India, Korea, ASEAN)



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