

% a t t a c i n e u r o p e :

Resistance & Alternatives for another world!

A t t a c is an international organization and network in the global justice movement. We resist neoliberal globalization and work towards social, environmental and democratic alternatives in the globalization process. We stand for the regulation of financial markets, closure of tax havens, introduction of global taxes to finance global public goods, cancellation of developing countries' debt, fair trade rules and limits to free trade and unregulated capital flows.

A t t a c i s a c t i v e in 40 countries and about 1.000 local groups. Hundreds of member organisations support the Attac network. The „Association pour une taxation des transactions financières pour l'aide aux citoyens et citoyennes“ (Attac - „Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens“) was founded in France in 1998.



Picture: vandbit.de

W h a t d o e s „ n e o l i b e r a l g l o b a l i z a t i o n “ m e a n ?

This concept implies complete opening of all national markets with almost no restrictions with regard to social, democratic and ecological control and regulations. All these widen the notion of „freedom“.

T h e q u e s t i o n i s : F r e e d o m f o r w h o m ?

The proponents of neoliberal globalization promise that unlimited opening of the markets will have a positive effect on the world economy. They believe that the more sectors of economy would be deregulated and privatized the more people would be better-off. They refer to education, health care, water supply and many other things. But the question still remains: Are they right?

A n d i f n o t : W h a t a r e t h e e f f e c t s ?

The wordy promises from these proponents have remained just that. They have not come true and have not been carried out. The gap between the rich and the poor within national societies and between the North and the South on the global level continues to increase. More and more people are living in poverty while the incomes of transnational corporations are constantly growing. In the meantime the neoliberal globalization is speeding up and extending the overexploitation of nature. International financial markets are the engines of this development. Every day bankers and finance managers convert billions of Euros on the financial markets resulting in a harmful influence on the social processes.

This is the reason why Attac is asking:

W h e r e i s d e m o c r a c y ?

The WTO (World Trade Organization), the IMF (International Monetary Fund), the World Bank and also the EU have set economic rules with little democratic legitimacy. Most international negotiations are carried out behind closed doors to keep them secret from ordinary and disenfranchised individuals. As a result, the interests of common people were seriously affected by the scale and the ramifications of agreements made in international institutions.

W h a t d o e s A t t a c w a n t ?

„People und nature before Profit!“ is the most important slogan of the alter-globalist movement. Attac believes that the list of primary political and economic goals should include improvement of living conditions, development of democracy and self-determination, effective protection of nature. Attac stands for an ecological, solidary and peaceful economic world order. The enormous wealth generated by the planet must be fairly distributed between its entire people!

W h a t d o e s A t t a c d o ?

Attac organizes programs of public education in order to help understanding neoliberal globalisation and to trigger citizens' initiatives. We want to give everyone the opportunity to form their own opinion of complex economic issues and to join the Attac movement. With the support of our ‚expert teams‘ we work out analytical materials and proposals which offer alternatives to neoliberal globalization. We see ourselves as part of an international solidarity from below. We encourage people to take part in campaigns - internationally and locally - to make people aware and to make their protests more visible. Attac campaigns contributed to the halt of WTO negotiations, stopped many privatisation projects, helped to win the referendum against the EU constitution in France 2005, helped to introduce a first step toward international taxation („air ticket tax“), stopped aggressive trade demands on developing countries and helped to cancel illegitimate Norwegian public debt in Norway.

W e a r e m a n y - w e a r e n o t e n o u g h !

Attac is looking for activists and supporters. We believe that only a powerful movement can influence social development. Although every participant can decide him- or herself how this support should look like. The doors of all our 1.000 local groups all over the world are open. Attac also pays for campaign expenses within the confines of its budget. We are very happy to invite new members to our network. We appreciate every contribution to our struggle for justice.

A t t a c s t a n d s f o r a l t e r n a t i v e s :

- ✂ The democratic control of financial markets through tough limitations of capital flows and regulations such as general tax financial transactions (known as the Tobin Tax).
- ✂ Closing down of tax havens.
- ✂ The democratic control and restrictions for the activities of transnational corporations.
- ✂ Cancellation of public debt of developing countries.
- ✂ More effective taxation on financial incomes and big property.
- ✂ A world trade order which advocates for the interests of the developing countries and socially discriminated groups of population, respects the priority of nature protection.
- ✂ A democratic and social Europe which takes care of people's needs and solidarity with other parts of the world. The European Attac's agreed on the "10 principles for a democratic EU treaty" (next page).
- ✂ A democratic reform of public service system and the level of social protection that allows everyone the right to enjoy all social human rights such as health, education, care, housing. We stand against the privatization of public services.
- ✂ A social and environment-friendly agriculture including the idea of food sovereignty and a halt on subsidised agricultural exports.
- ✂ Civil and peaceful conflict settlement as well as non-violence in our own actions.

It is simply a question of taking back, together, the future of our world!

Attac's Ten Principles for a Democratic Treaty Towards a new legal foundation of the European Union

THE EUROPEAN ATTACS

deem the present form of the European Union a serious obstacle to democratic achievements, fundamental rights, social security, gender justice, and environmental sustainability. It suffers from a lack of democracy, legitimacy, and transparency, and is governed by a set of treaties which force neoliberal policies on member states and the whole world.

This is the reason why the European Attac network considers the future of Europe as a central issue in its activities. In 2005, the European Attacs started a common process of reflexion and debate about European issues. This declaration inscribes itself in this dynamic.

Since the Non, Nee and No in France, the Netherlands and Ireland it is clear that not only the proposed

Treaties but also the present European Union lack popular legitimacy, and are widely regarded as undemocratic and antisocial. The Lisbon Treaty (LT) is not a rupture with the previous texts of the EU but compiles and develops previous norms and treaties. The political content of the LT is identical with the Constitutional Treaty (CT).

At present, European governments are trying to force Ireland to accept the LT despite the negative result of referenda in three member states. The European Attacs reject any attempts to put pressure on the people of Ireland to vote again. This Treaty is dead: we will accept no tricks or promises to bring it back to life.

In this situation, it is vital for democracy that social and political movements respond by demanding concrete alternatives for European construction and that these proposals are taken into account. The European Attacs demand that any new Treaty and its establishment shall be based on ten principles, concerning the process to establish the Treaty (part I), its institutional content (part II) and its principles for European policies (part III).

PART ONE: CONCERNING THE PROCESS

1. START A DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Any new Treaty shall be elaborated and adopted democratically. The European Attacs oppose any attempt to revive the LT, and propose the following:

- A new and democratic Assembly, directly elected by the citizens of all European member states, shall be mandated to elaborate, with the effective participation of national parliaments, a proposal for a new Treaty.
- This Assembly shall be based on gender parity (unlike the convention for the CT with only 16% women), represent all sectors of society and also be intergenerational.
- Any new Treaty must be legitimated by referendum in all member states. The result of the vote should be calculated country per country.
- During the ratification campaigns, the European institutions and the member states shall establish rules that ensure public deliberation, independent of predominant economic interests e.g. in the media sector and with enough time for intensive debate.

PART TWO: ELEMENTS FOR AN INSTITUTIONAL TREATY

2. IMPROVE DEMOCRACY:

Any new Treaty must be built on the best existing democratic principles. The present EU is not built on a clear separation of powers and suffers from a

deep democratic deficit. The European parliament can neither initiate laws nor establish a budget, nor does it have a vote in a series of policies despite being the only democratically elected entity at the EU level; whereas the Commission, which is not elected, is the only institution that can propose laws. At the same time, we witness a degradation of democratic life in the member states. The European Attacs demand the following:

- The principles of any new Treaty shall be: human dignity, rule of law, representative and participatory democracy, economic and social justice, social security and inclusion, solidarity, gender equality and gender democracy, sustainability, and commitment to peace.
- Clear separation of the executive, legislative and judicial powers. The monopoly of the Commission to propose laws must end. The legislative initiative must be open to all EU institutions and citizens.
- The European Parliament must get the right to propose and co-adopt legislation for all EU policies and also the exclusive right to elect and dismiss the EU Commission and its separate members.
- We demand the strengthening of national parliaments both at the European and at the national levels: the national parliaments must gain an effective role in European and national legislation.
- The text of a Treaty shall provide a clear description of the competence of the EU, and an equally clear statement on the limits of that competence with regard to national states and local authorities. The European Court of Justice must not given space to act as a de facto legislator.
- The European Central Bank (ECB) must be submitted to democratic control. The main purposes of its monetary policy shall be economic justice, full employment and social security for all European citizens. Moreover, the Eurogroup must assume its responsibility, authorized by the present Treaties, in defining exchange rate policy.

3. INSTALL TRANSPARENCY

At present, citizens encounter difficulties in exercising their right to obtain information. Discussions of the Council and the Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper) are frequently closed to the public. Lobbying is a pervasive phenomenon that undermines democracy. We demand:

- All meetings, committees and working groups of the Council and the Permanent Representatives must be open to the public.
- Access to information for all European citizens must be guaranteed.
- Clear limitations to lobbying must figure in the Treaty as well as mandatory registration and disclosure of interests and financing for all lobbyists, members of the European Parliament, members of the European Commission and members of committees.
- A new Treaty must be short, self-explanatory, and understandable by the common people.
- All languages must be considered equal. All official documents of the EU must be available in all official languages of the EU.

4. DEVELOP PARTICIPATION AND DIRECT DEMOCRACY

A new institutional Treaty must include the fundamental right to direct participation of citizens in public affairs. It should offer understandable, usable and far reaching forms of direct democracy, for instance it might propose the following rights:

- A certain share of the total population in a certain number of member states can propose a law that is debated and voted on in the European Parliament.

- A certain share of the total population in a certain number of member states can demand that the European Parliament organize a referendum in all member states, and the result of the popular consultation must be binding.
- Limitations can be placed on the influence of corporate interest on EU institutions and decision-making through transparency and limitations of privileged access.
- Mandatory consultation of social movements and NGOs is instated for all EU legislation, on the same basis as consultation of other interest groups.
- The first referendum in all member states of the EU should be the one on the new Treaty.

PART THREE: PRINCIPLES FOR EUROPEAN POLICIES

5. IMPROVE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Any new Treaty must be established on the basis of or as an improvement to the most progressive fundamental rights already existing in international treaties¹, especially the International Bill of Human Rights, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR), the Turin version of the European Social Charter and the European Code of Social Security. Guaranteeing fundamental rights in the Treaty is a necessary step. However, in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, anchored in the LT, important basic rights are missing, some are watered down in their wording, strongly limited by the explications in the final act, or cannot be claimed in court. For these reasons, they cannot be called fundamental rights. The European Attacs demand:

- Fundamental rights as listed in the ECHR, in the European Social Charter and the European Code of Social Security must be enforceable through national or European courts.
- The EU must accede to the ECHR so that its institutions are also subject to the European Court of Human Rights.
- It must be explicitly clarified that these fundamental rights as well as the principles of the Treaty take priority over all other EU primary and secondary law.
- Fundamental rights must not be restricted by national or EU law or by the personal interpretation of a Convention's Presidency.
- Any new Treaty shall stress that every person must be guaranteed equal access to social and labour rights, regardless of the country of origin.
- European citizenship must be given to all residents in Europe.
- The aforementioned rights must also be respected in the external policies of the EU (e.g. security policy, migration policy, environmental policy, trade policy).

6. PROTECT AND IMPROVE DEMOCRATIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Democratic achievements, social, civil and worker's rights, and rules for the environment and public health are under severe pressure from provisions in earlier treaties, especially the principles of competition and liberalization. Any new Treaty must not endanger these conquests and give people in Europe, parliaments and governments a tool to further develop these democratic achievements on a cooperative basis. The European Attacs demand the following:

- The right to collective bargaining, the right to strike; the core labour standards of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) must be elevated to the status of enforceable fundamental rights.
- Each member state must be allowed to adopt

and sustain more ambitious rules in areas such as social protection, labour standards, environment, protection of special groups.

- The European Union shall consider itself as a co-operative (and not competitive) union whose goal is constantly to improve environmental, social and labour standards in order to fulfil the constitutional principles of social security and sustainability. Rules to counteract fiscal and social dumping must be established.
- It must be stated that property rights carry obligations and the use of property rights must always simultaneously serve public welfare.
- Economic democracy and participation must be improved at all levels.

7. OFFER SPACE FOR AN ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC ORDER

Any new Treaty must respect the aforementioned fundamental values and democratic principles.

It must offer space for implementing alternative policies instead of fixing one specific economic model like the LT and former treaties did, repeatedly stipulating an "open market economy with free and undistorted competition"². This has no place either in any EU treaty which have a de-facto constitutional character. Whatever economic model and regulation is chosen, must be left to a democratic policy-making process. The European Attacs demand:

- A Treaty must not fix a specific economic model and must allow alternative choices at all levels.
- "Free" competition must not be a universal principle of the EU. The definition of areas where "free" competition is allowed and of those where it does not apply (e.g. supply of potable water, education, health, agriculture) must be decided by democratic processes on national and EU level. In no case should such definitions be constitutionalized.
- European law, e.g. competition law, must not undermine the right of member states to define, organize and finance public goods, e.g. water supply, health care, education, or public transport. To the contrary, it must be a crucial aim of the European construction to provide and improve public goods at all levels.

8. DEFINE GOALS INSTEAD OF MEANS

A true, vibrant democracy determines the means by which to achieve the respective objectives of its constituting treaties. Stipulating the concrete policies in the treaty itself is inappropriate. Examples:

- The objectives of a transport policy should be "sustainable mobility" and "equal access to mobility for all", and not the construction of trans-European networks³, including highways, motorways and high-speed railways.
- The objectives of an agricultural policy should be "sustainable agriculture", the maintenance of smallholder farming as well as the "production of healthy and sufficient food", not the "increase of productivity", "rationalization" or "the best possible utilization of productive factors, especially of labour"⁴.
- The "priority aim" of the European Central Bank (ECB) should not be "stability of prices"⁵, but economic justice, full employment and welfare for all.
- The ecological sustainability principle must be prior to market freedoms and the logic of profit. It must guide the energy, transport, and agricultural policy.

9. RACE TO THE TOP IN SOCIAL RIGHTS AND TAXATION

In a region like the EU with economies deeply integrated through decades of liberalisation (of trade, finance and investment), member states are presently engaging in a race to the bottom in vital areas like taxation and social policy. To counter this, it is important that countermeasures can be taken at the EU-level, and that a race to the top is facilitated by specific provisions authorized by a new Treaty. The European Attacs propose:

- Measures to combat tax evasion and tax competition must be facilitated. Ambitious minimum standards should be agreed on the EU-level particularly as regards taxation of corporate and capital income.
- The flawed social policy of the EU must be replaced by a transparent, enforceable set of ambitious social minimum standards and rights.

These regulations must take into account the differences of economic capabilities, e.g. through "corridors", which means setting higher standards for richer member states and lower standards for poorer member states. Such rules must be implemented in such a way that they do

not preclude higher standards in any member state. If several member states wish to implement, for example, a comprehensive social policy or adopt a set of higher labour standards than can be agreed in the EU as a whole, the former can decide to sign an agreement of cooperation on the issues in question.

10. ESTABLISH OBLIGATION TO PEACE AND SOLIDARITY

Concerning the question of security, the aim shall be „peace“ (in the broadest sense) and not the build-up of weapons at the international level. The LT states: "Member States shall undertake progressively to improve their military capabilities."⁶ The creation of a "defence agency" would have among others the task of "developing armaments". Any new Treaty should clearly define a strong political ambition of Europe: the EU must be a key actor for the definition of a new international and multilateral order dedicated to the building of peace and to the denouncement of war and militarization as means of settling international disputes. In particular, we denounce the neoconservative concept of "pre-emptive military missions". The European Attacs demand:

- Absolute respect of the International Law, especially the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Non-Proliferation Treaty, including its obligation to disarmament. Nevertheless, the EU must promote a democratic reform of the UN.
- Promotion of worldwide disarmament, beginning at home.
- The independence of the EU from NATO must be asserted.
- Major investments in the build up of institutions working and researching on peaceful conflict resolution in all member states as well as at the EU level.
- Mandatory principle of gender balance in policy making and among participants in any foreign policy activity of the European Union.

These principles were elaborated by some 15 European Attac organizations. Many differences were overcome and others were treated in a way that does not block further progress. Although the principles can doubtless be improved upon and others added – we urge alternative policies to the fortress Europe, to the criminalization of migrants, to unfair trade rules, debt and poverty and we demand to intensify the cooperation with poor countries on an equal basis – we believe that they provide a good starting point in the attempt to create a progressive and popular response to the attempts by governments of member states to revive the LT or to force the EU down in the same track as before. We believe that the response by majorities in Ireland, France and the Netherlands should rule out both options. Besides being a common platform and a tool for common action of the signatory organisations, this statement is intended to open debate with other progressive forces on Europe. Only the largest and broadest coalition of forces can succeed in setting a different agenda for Europe instead of the one envisioned in the LT. Attac works for participatory democracy, for democratic institutions, and for cooperation in Europe and globally. It is within such a framework that our agenda for economic and social justice, gender equality and environmental sustainability can be promoted in Europe as well as globally.

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