



Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network
Réseau Afrique Europe Foi et Justice

ECHOES from AEFJN

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REFLECTION

Laudato Si' - A year on

No church document of recent decades has been as well received as Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si' – On Care for our Common Home". His remarkable synthesis of scientific evidence, social analyses, theological reflection and spiritual vision has inspired countless people, especially those beyond the boundaries of the Catholic church. In response, a number of profound initiatives have been started by Christian groups, civil society organisations, the scientific community and various economic and political actors. While the list is long and the varieties of responses are really encouraging in some regions of the world, its impact is yet to be visibly felt on the continent of Africa. [Read more](#)

FROM THE AEFJN DESK

Trade Liberalisation and Non-Trade Barriers

Since the financial crisis of 2007, the economies of the European Union (EU) have suffered stagnation in production growth. Confronted with stagnation in domestic consumption, exports do not seem to be helping the EU to emerge from the economic crisis either. Thus, the euro area net exports are expected to remain a drag on growth in 2016 before turning neutral in 2017. The EU promotes Free Trade Agreements emphasizing the benefits of reducing tariffs in international trade to boost economies. However, international trade is not only conditioned by tariffs barriers. The Free Trade Agreements are submitted to many other complex Non-tariffs barriers (NTBs) that restrict imports and exports according to national and regional regulations. Non-Tariffs Barriers are a jigsaw of measures related to direct or indirect economic policies. Although the NTBs are not only tax measures, they increase the final cost of goods and services. [Read more](#)

Vulture Funds are Encircling Africa

In this edition of the Echoes, we are addressing the issue of financial pillaging, especially **vulture funds**. Africa is suffering from the flight of capital caused in various ways, such as illicit trade flows caused by corporate practices. There is for example, transfer pricing, tax evasion and repatriation of profits in which tax havens often play a central role. In addition to this financial hemorrhage, vulture funds also play their part in the pillaging of Africa's treasures. [Read more](#)

ALSO IN THE NEWS

COP22: Africa could be the world's food store...

Before COP22 in Marrakech, about thirty African countries had united to defend the adaptation of their agriculture to climate change and to place the African continent at the heart of the negotiations. This ambition is supported by the AAA (Adaptation of African Agriculture) initiative. A disturbing observation from the president of the African negotiators, Seyni Nafo, shocks us: "While it is responsible for only 4% of the global emissions of greenhouse gases, the continent is the main victim of global warming. Two-thirds of arable land will be lost by 2025, even if the rise in temperature is limited to 2 degrees ". Agriculture is a key sector of the African economy. It accounts for between 25% and 35% of direct employment, generates 70% of revenues and accounts for one quarter of the total GDP. [Read more](#)

ADVOCACY

Ghana interim Economic Partnership Agreement and the European Parliament

The International Trade Committee of European Parliament (INTA) voted on the Ghana interim Economic Partnership Agreement (iEPA) on 11th November 2016. The outcome of the vote was as follows: 27 in favour, 9 against and 1 abstention. This means that the GREENS, GUE, 5Star and at least 2 S&D voted against. The Ghana interim Economic Partnership Agreement may soon go into application so that Ghana's trade preferences will no longer be based on Cotonou or MAR 1528 but on the iEPA itself. This does not mean that Ghana will start implementing the agreement soon. [Read more](#)

VOICES FROM THE NETWORK

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Rome November 2016

The Annual General Meeting of AEFJN was held last 11th November 2016 at the Generalate of the White Fathers in Rome. A large group of AEFJN contact persons gathered for the presentations of the Annual Reports and relevant issues regarding the life of the network. The event started with a welcome for those attending and an opening prayer led by Fr. Arlindo Pinto. Fr. Jose Ignacio Garcia, Social Apostolate Coordinator of the Jesuits in Europe, spoke about "Turning to the South: our way of procedure". He described our advocacy work and how we have to understand it at different levels: research and understanding of the reality in Africa, the relevance of communication, how to facilitate the mobilization of people interested in our work, the specific task of advocacy work and how to strengthen our network through the networking. [Read more](#)

AEFJN-UK Antenna Meeting in November 2016

A large group of the AEFJN-UK Antennae met 2nd - 3rd November 2016 at Wistaston Hall, Crewe. On the first day, the opening prayer was followed by a brief session explaining the vision and mission of AEFJN as a unique organisation in the Catholic Church which focuses on the economic issues affecting relations between Africa and the European Union and its member states. In small groups, members discussed their hopes and concerns about the future of the UK Antenna, the steps they might take to work together more effectively and how to share the organising of the antenna. The rest of the meeting was dedicated to presentations/ conversations on the antenna's three focus issues: Trade, Climate Change and Land Grabbing. [Read more](#)

VIDEOS

[Action for Food sovereignty and climate justice](#)

[Stop dumping death in Africa! Stop your toxic trade!](#)

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