



Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network

Réseau Afrique Europe Foi et Justice

ECHOES from AEFJN

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REFLECTION

Looking at the Other Side of the Story in 2017

There is a human tendency to look for solutions to problems in a manner that draws attention but never solves the problems. It is a deliberate scheme to deny the truth. Truth unsettles us because it challenges our illusions, the falsely-founded privileges we cling to and the mental constructs that serve our selfish ends. Unfortunately, the shadows of repressed truth never sleep. Can Africa tell her story? Yes, of course! But that is made very difficult by the current economic configurations of the world and the ingrained but selfish desire of 'powerful nations' and conglomerates to perpetuate the status quo. How would a man under the rubble of fallen house get up to fight the men who designed and built the house with substandard material in order to make more profit? It is not so much the story of the man under the rubble of a fallen house as that of the man who compromised the standards. [Read more](#)

FROM THE AEFJN DESK

VIDEO: The Impacts of Large Scale Farming in Tanzania

Land grabbing has become a recurring phenomenon in Africa but the situation in Tanzania is a disaster; from the northern part of the country where about 40,000 of the Maasai tribe were said to have been evicted from their ancestral land so that the Dubai Royal family can hunt, to the south where the SAGCOT program (Southern Agricultural Corridors of Tanzania) of G8/NEW Alliance has driven thousands of families into penury. In December 2015, the AEFJN Secretariat took a fact-finding mission to Tanzania. Some of the journeys took as long as 17 hours but it gave the staff good first-hand experience of the disaster of land grabbing in Tanzania. This documentary studies just the tip of the iceberg of land grabbing in Africa. [Read more](#)

[To see the VIDEO](#)

1701 Particularities of the ECOWAS–EU Economic Partnership Agreement

The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the West African region and the European Union (EU) has its legal framework in Cotonou Agreement (2000) to make it compatible with the guidelines given by the World Trade Organization (WTO). The WTO sought to standardize trade agreements at the global level and called for the repeal of any kind of unilateral preferences. At first glance, what may seem entirely logical, however, ignores the reality of developing countries, the abuse of power by economic powers, and a hidden agenda of Western countries to preserve their control over such countries by maintaining structures of dependence. In the case of the West African region (ECOWAS) these circumstances have been a constant over the last few years and the EU has pressured West Africa to accept these agreements, underestimating the warnings from experts from both continents that it will destroy the emerging industry in West Africa that will not be able to compete with European products. [Read more](#)

VOICES FROM THE NETWORK

Endocrine Disruptors

After several years of dithering and tension, the European Commission has just published a definition of endocrine disruptors which should make it possible to strengthen the protection against these many substances – the best known is Bisphenol A used in baby bottles – that are used daily but which have, or are suspected of having, harmful effects for humans. These products replace human hormones, causing damage especially to embryos and infants. The proposal of the European Commission has yet to be approved by the 28 countries and will be debated in the European Parliament. Many groups - including a majority of European parliamentarians - feel that the Commission, under the influence of lobbies, is ignoring the precautionary principle. [Read more](#)

France Antenna – Representatives' forum

On 24 November, the French antenna organized a seminar for the Representatives' Forum. The central theme was land grabbing in relation to the objectives of sustainable development. Participants spent all day developing strategies and possible avenues of action for religious interested in this theme. The session was moderated by Daniel Verger, Head of Advocacy France Europe at Secours Catholique / Caritas France. During the workshop, Mathieu Vandt Faché, a researcher for the Antenna of Cameroon, addressed the issue of land governance in Cameroon. Then, Gino Brunswijck of the international secretariat spoke about policies and business activities at the international level that put pressure on African land. [Read more](#)

VIDEOS

Against tax evasion in Malawi

[See the video](#)