



PRESS RELEASE

Solidarity with peasants in struggle

No to the European Union–MERCOSUR agreement! No to the unjust slaughter of herds in France!

Geneva, 9 January 2026

CETIM expresses its firm solidarity with peasants' organizations and communities mobilized across Europe against the European Union–MERCOSUR agreement. On Friday, 9 January 2026, the agreement in question was formally adopted by a majority of European Union member states, despite massive opposition from peasants, civil society, and numerous social and academic actors.

We recall that this treaty, promoted in particular by transnational business circles, aims to create a free trade area between the two regions. By liberalizing trade barriers (including the removal of customs duties), the agreement will promote European exports of goods (cars, chemical products, wines, cheese, etc.), while in return facilitating the import into Europe of large quantities of food products from South America (soy, sugar, meat, etc.).

This agreement would intensify unfair competition between agribusiness, peasants, and other small-scale food producers. Such competition, it must be recalled, is based on social, environmental, and sanitary dumping. It would deal a blow to European peasants as well as those in South America, by reinforcing an agro-industrial system serving transnational corporations and big financial capital. This represents a direct attack on people's food sovereignty.

The fact that the European Council is considering applying this agreement without ratification by the European Parliament clearly demonstrates the profoundly undemocratic nature of this process. Such a maneuver constitutes a denial of democracy and a confiscation of public debate on choices that shape the future of the people, and in particular of rural workers and communities.

CETIM expresses its solidarity with its partners from the Confédération paysanne, a member organization of La Via Campesina in France, engaged in an existential struggle. At a time when peasants' anger is growing against predatory free trade measures, the lack of concrete responses from the French government to the sanitary demands put forward by the Confédération paysanne is unacceptable. The continuation of the policy of unjust slaughter of herds affected by LSD¹, without generalized access to vaccination, constitutes a form of social, economic, and human violence against the affected livestock peasants. This authoritarian and productivist management of sanitary crises once again sacrifices peasants for the benefit of agribusiness.

In this regard, CETIM also strongly denounces the repression exercised against the peasants movement. The arrest of two spokespersons of the Confédération paysanne France during the mobilizations on Friday, 9 January 2026, constitutes a serious violation of trade union freedoms, the right to association, and the right to demonstrate (the two have meanwhile been released).

¹ It is a highly contagious viral disease affecting cattle. Lumpy Skin Disease is classified as a regulated disease. Health authorities often resort to drastic control measures, including the total culling of herds as soon as a case is detected, movement restrictions, all without systematic recourse to vaccination, despite the fact that a vaccine is available.

We salute the determination of all peasant organizations and communities in struggle. We support the call to intensify mobilizations, in France and across Europe, to demand:

- the immediate end to the unjust slaughter of herds and universal access to vaccination;
- an end to all forms of criminalization of peasants' struggles;
- the rejection of the European Union–MERCOSUR agreement by national parliaments;
- genuine regulation of agricultural markets, fair remuneration, and recognition of the meaning of the peasant profession, in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas.

The struggle for peasant agriculture is a struggle for social justice, dignity, and the right of people to decide their own agricultural and food systems. CETIM will remain fully committed alongside those who resist agribusiness and destructive free trade.

Solidarity with the Confédération paysanne–France and with peasants in struggle for food sovereignty in Europe and around the world !

Contact: Raffaele Morgantini, CETIM Representative to the UN, raffaele@cetim.ch

[Read here the statement of the European Coordination of La Via Campesina](#)