



Latin America Solidarity Centre

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The Latin America Week Conference 2008 expresses its solidarity with the people in Europe, Latin America and the rest of the world in their defence of the right to water against attempts to turn it into a commodity, to be traded for profit.

In affirming that water is a human right, fundamental for all forms of life, and should be so considered by all countries and supra-national institutions, we defend the need for it to remain in public hands; the urgency for sound public policies to be put in place to guarantee a vital minimum amount of water, free of charge, to every human being in the world; and the right of people to participate actively at community and local level, in management of this common good.

We particularly want to express our opposition to a new trade agreement being negotiated in the form of an “Association Agreement” between the EU and the Andean Community (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru) which is posing a serious threat both to the right to water and to the struggle of people in Latin America and Europe to secure this right, for it promotes privatisations of basic services, including water. We oppose any free trade agreements which violate the rights of the peoples and environment. The impact that this agreement could have both for Andean and European peoples will be deep and long term.

In the face of the forthcoming negotiations in Quito (April 2008) and the EU-Latin America summit in Lima (May 2008) we denounce the lack of information, consultation, transparency, and the likely attempts to criminalize social movements, in spite of the democratic clause which already are in place.

At the end of this conference, we call the Irish public opinion and its organised expressions to take a stand on this agreement and demand a broad debate on its consequences and motivations, and to campaign against the most worrying aspects of it, such as privatisation of water.

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