

ALTER SUMMIT

Newsletter Alter Summit 2 - February 2014

<thank you for forwarding>

A different Europe is possible : a social, ecological, feminist, peaceful and democratic Europe. We commit ourselves to creating it.

EDITO

The AlterSummit has decided to centre its work in 2014 around three key themes:

1. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership or TTIP [the EU-USA trade agreement seeking to integrate the two economies].
2. The Troika and the European Union's Politics of Austerity
3. The Rise of the Far Right

Why these three issues when so many others demand immediate attention from all our member organisations? You may be asking "Where are the environment and climate change; social and labour rights; huge inequalities, including those between men and women, mass unemployment?"

Choice in this case does not mean neglecting the other issues brought out and agreed upon in the [Manifesto](#). We believe that the three are interlinked, reinforce each other, and in large measure include the other crucial AlterSummit goals. Specially, labor and social rights are in the heart of these 3 struggles.

For example:

- > Austerity doesn't hurt everyone: these policies favour the very rich who have gained in numbers, wealth and power since 2007, fueling inequality and resentment. The politicians of 'left' and right govern on behalf of the 1 percent.
- > Austerity cripples social budgets and government spending, inducing mass unemployment, especially for young people. Social rights are under permanent assault from big capital; in most European countries, working people are unable to counter the threat.
- > Faced with unresponsive politics and surging inequalities, people despair and join the far right. They blame their neighbours rather than the real culprits. It was the same mechanism in the 1930s and we know where that led.
- > The TTIP seeks to reduce standards; to freeze and downgrade measures in favour of the environment, public health or consumers, to challenge and reduce the rights of labour irreversibly. It introduces private tribunals allowing investors to challenge States in all areas and attacks democracy. Whole sectors, such as small European farmers risk being wiped out.

We must forge unity among all our members against these anti-human policies that are destroying our future.

Susan George

BREAKING NEWS

BRUSSELS : Blockade of the European district on 19 December 2013



Many Belgian organizations which are part of the network set up - within the framework of an Alliance with farmers' organizations: [D19-20](#) - a road blockade of the European District on the first day of the December summit. Thousands of people blocked the road junctions giving access to the European quarter for 7 hours, to protest against the policy of austerity and the secret negotiations between the US and the EU (TTIP).

[Reporting and analysis](#)

1. Against TTIP

An important European meeting was held on 12 and 13 December about TTIP : Information site of the network [Seattle to Brussels](#)

In Canada: [petition](#) and [actions](#) against the ratification of the free trade agreement between Canada and the EU:

The ETUC publishes a warning about the [dangers of TTIP](#) in the field of health and for [public services in general](#).

Belgian organizations published an [appeal](#) against TTIP, signed by thousands of citizens.

[Position of Attac France](#)

2 appeals in **German** to sign:

- [Geschenke für Monsanto, BASF & Co](#)

- [TTIP: Freihandelsabkommen zwischen USA und EU stoppen!](#)

[Position of Verdi](#) (German union): arguments against TTIP, "Angriffe gegen Löhne, Soziales, Umwelt"

[Numerous texts in German](#) about TTIP and CETA : and also via this [link](#)

As a reminder: an [alternative proposal](#) for the EU mandate for commercial negotiations.

Negotiations on a [free trade agreement between the EU and Mercosur](#)

TTIP: on 29 January, the EU and the United States announced that the fourth round of negotiations for the Transatlantic trade and investment partnership (TTIP) would take place in Brussels on Monday 10 March or on Friday 14 March. Furthermore, Barack Obama will visit Brussels on 26 March within the context of the TTIP negotiations; actions will be defined.

Alter Summit will organize a public conference and an action day against TTIP in Brussels, on March 12 or 13, in cooperation with S2B.

2. Austerity/ Troika

[ETUC declaration](#) against the troika taking control : the ETUC demands major amendments to the existing programs and mechanisms to guarantee that the austerity and deregulation policy of the troika cannot be repeated in the future.

[ETUC action day on 4 April](#)- the date and the details will be confirmed by 6 February!

Action week throughout Europe in May (15-25 May): several networks are preparing actions for that week. The austerity/ troika seminar in Amsterdam, the European Blockupy coordination... We will define our calls to action at the assembly of 13 and 14 March. The different actions will be discussed during the Alter Summit solidarity meeting with Greece/ actions in the south of Europe: Friday 14 and Saturday 15 February. Info: info@altersummit.eu

EAPN publishes an [important study](#) on the consequences of the policy of the troika in several countries: a detailed study of 60 pages, examining the political effects of the troika in several countries and sectors, with a conclusion of 7 key messages about the threat posed by the troika for our societies and our democracies.

The [Troika Party project](#) developed during the seminar in Amsterdam will be launched at the end of January and will last until the European elections. This project will elaborate on 5 points: debt, competitiveness, TTIP, democracy and municipalities. How to participate? Follow the debates on Twitter @TRKparty and @TheTroikaParty or write to the.troika.party@gmail.com, specifying the way you want to be involved (content distribution, content creation, visual design ...)

BLOCKUPY

Multiple organizations of the network attended the first European coordination meeting proposed by Blockupy on 25 January in Frankfurt. The possibility to work towards joint actions was discussed, especially the action week of mid-May, with the proposal of having an open day on 15 May and two main days on Friday 16 May and Saturday 17 May. The cooperation with Blockupy (in particular concerning the European Central Bank's official opening in late 2014) remains a topic of discussion.

GREECE- Open letter to the President of the European Parliament

On the eve of the Greek Presidency of the EU, multiple organizations joined the *Initiative de solidarité avec la Grèce qui résiste* in signing a letter to Mr. Schulz, President of the EP, in which the political and social degradation in Greece is denounced and Parliament is asked to investigate this situation: [solidarity-greece](#)

This [letter](#) (4 different language versions) to President Schulz was published on 21 January; it was quoted by many parliamentarians in the LIBE Committee. It is important that other organizations keep signing it : contact ermal.bubullima@gmail.com

GREECE - Industri-ALL Europa Petition for shipyards

The European Federation of Unions Industri-ALL starts a solidarity [petition](#): the Greek shipyard unions struggle to maintain industrial jobs but, instead of supporting them, the Greek authorities attacked the unions' and workers' rights and criminalized their leaders. Twelve unionists, including the President of the Greek union of the metalworking industry POEM, were charged on the basis of false criminal allegations.

AMSTERDAM- last strategic meeting in October 2013

The strategic meeting of the European social movements, which took place in Amsterdam last October, was a consequence of the economic governance assembly organized by the Alter Summit in Athens. See [video](#).

PORTUGAL

Health care workers whose status is precarious went on strike twice to protest against their "false self-employed" status and against the dismissal of 100 colleagues. See their [press release](#) (in English) Messages of solidarity and contact data can be sent to: comunicadoress24@gmail.com

GERMANY- Negotiations

Success of the negotiations of the [Verdi](#) union concerning [collective labour agreements in the commercial sector](#) - collective labour agreements in the commercial sector, [strikes at Amazon](#) to obtain a collective contract.

TURKEY- Harassment of unionists

EPSU asks to write letters of support for union members harassed by the government: examples of letters are available here [EPSU](#)

3. The fight against the rise of the extreme right

Hungarian organizations have issued an invitation to a seminar on the rise of the extreme right in Europe on 3 April in Budapest:
Info follows

Joint union [campaign](#) against extreme right in France

Faced with the rise of the extreme right and its ideas, unions need to be on the offensive. In France, the CGT, the FSU and Solidaires decided together with the student organisations to launch a joint campaign against the extreme right. The first meeting will take place on 29 January, from 7.30 p.m. at the CGT in Montreuil.

4. Thematic networks

- Accommodation

FRANCE: [DAL](#) calls for action "ANTI MIPIM" on 29 January in Paris

- Health

The European Network for the Right to Health organizes [a European day of study and public action](#) in Brussels on 7 February

- Commons - Water

The [European Citizens' Initiative](#) will be meeting with the European Parliament during a public hearing on 17 February in the afternoon. It is the first time that a European Citizens Organization will confront members of the European Parliament. The European Commission will express its opinion on the initiative on the eve of World Water Day (22 March 2014). In the context of the privatisation of water in Ireland, in Spain and in Greece, we want the AS and its members to be aware of the need to raise the issue of public goods and their renationalisation in view of the forthcoming European elections. Within the context of the run-up to the elections, actions in this respect will be taken on 22 March.

5. Conferences

Conference Euro PEN <<another road for Europe>> in the European Parliament on March 19 afternoon at the European Parliament.

Conferences by the [économistes atterrés](#) in Paris on 31 January, 4 and 5 February.

28 March: [Conference on the debt](#) in London organized by Jubilee UK. [ICAN meeting](#): one day before and one day after on debt auditing initiatives. A particular effort has been made to invite representatives from Eastern Europe. Contact: [www.cadtm.org](#)

10 April: [Conference on the debt](#) in Brussels, organized on the initiative of PGE and Transform.

[Université des Attac d'Europe](#) in Paris from 19 to 23 August.

6. Network news

BUDGET

The Coordination Committee has approved a "prudent" budget for 2014 : This budget is primarily based on the contributions of our organizations' members ; a letter has been mailed to all our members on 22 January.

SECRETARY

The budget allows to re-hire a secretary working part-time (in connection with the health network) : a selection committee AlterSummit - Health Network interviewed 4 excellent applicants and appointed Sebastian Franco (sebastian@altersummit.eu), who will be responsible for communication as from the month of March.

MEMBER

A new member: the [CGSP ALR Bxl](#) : this is the local public service union for the Brussels region. This union actively contributed to the success of the blockade of the European District in Brussels on 19 December.

WAY OF WORKING

Attac Bxl launched a proposal for reflection on the way of working of the AlterSummit network : you will find it [here](#) : organisations that are interested can contact franco.carminati@skynet.be

MEETINGS

In addition to the actions of members and closely related networks, the next meetings scheduled are the following:

Friday 31 January : Coordination Committee. On the agenda : Which actions following the appeal of the ETUC of 4 April? Define your proposals for the upcoming actions of mid-May (see above). Communication tools.

Friday 7 February : Health Network study day. (see above)

Mid-February in Athens : work meeting about actions and solidarity with Greece : registration and info info@altersummit.eu

Thursday 13 and Friday 14 March, in Brussels, assembly of all network member organizations

7. Publications

[Troika watch](#) : Internet website and newsletter that illustrate various austerity measures taken in different European countries.

The Irish "[success story](#)" is a scam, champagne for the banks !

Various :

Some websites relating to the social struggles: [europe-solidaire](#), [labournet Germany](#)

[lsw-München](#): Brochure about Europe at a crossroads, texts and diagrams.

[The Alter Summit](#) : What is it?

The AlterSummit is a network of organizations, unions and social movements from all over Europe who want to join forces in order to oppose a Europe controlled by the troika and austerity measures, a racist Europe, xenophobic nationalism and patriarchy, a Europe of debt, multinationals and banks, and in order to build a true democracy.

[Our actions in 2013](#)

Altersummit is a recent movement, founded in 2012.

In 2013, we expanded the number of member organizations ([Who are we?](#)), clarified our [way of working](#) and, above all, brought more than 1000 leaders and activists from over 20 European countries together in Athens for [the first summit of the people of Europe](#). The main outcome of this summit is [the Athens Manifesto](#); furthermore multiple thematic assemblies reflected on their [fight strategy](#) on the occasion of the summit.

Our campaigns in 2014

At the end of October, a network assembly formulated our [goals](#) for 2014. In particular the organizations agreed to concentrate on [3 targets](#) which pose the biggest threats to our social and democratic rights. For each of these targets, a strategic reflection is underway, on the basis of a first proposal which you can find here:

- against the Transatlantic Treaty (TTIP)
- against the European austerity and the troika dictatorship
- against the rise of the extreme right and fascism

After the JSC meeting in Romania, the issues on social and union rights were also given high priority.

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INFORM US!

This letter will be distributed on a monthly basis. In future editions we would like to provide information on the movements and actions taking place all over Europe, and in particular announce your organization's actions. Please send us the links and the information to info@altersummit.eu