



**NGO-EU Netwerk
Werkgroep
Europese
voorzitterschappen
2004**

AT YOUR SERVICE: The Global Sell-Out of Public Services

Debate cycle ‘The Netherlands in Europe, Europe in the World’

Date: 23 November

Time: 10.00 – 22.00 hrs.

Location: Felix Meritis, Keizersgracht 324, Amsterdam

Organised by TNI, Wemos and Wise on behalf of the GATS-Platform

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voorzitterschappen 2004

Programme

Morning session: Introducing the Issues

Impacts of Services Liberalisation and Privatisation
in Water, Energy and Health Care: Depriving People of Basic Human Rights

Three case studies

On water: Carla Montemayor, Bantay Tubig, Philippines

Bantay Tubig is a citizen's coalition for adequate accessible and affordable water in the Philippines. Organised in April 2002 in response to the worsening water crisis in the country, Bantay Tubig started as a collaborative effort among civil society organisations. It monitors price increases, regulatory processes and the performance of water companies in Metro Manila.

On energy: Raul Montenegro, Argentina

Montenegro is an ecological scientist and activist. For his successful campaigns on a wide range of environmental issues – including the fight against the dumping of nuclear and other toxic waste and for ecologically sound water management - he has received the 2004 Right Livelihood Honorary Award. The jury of this ‘Alternative Nobel Prize’ honours Montenegro “for his outstanding and wide-ranging work with local communities and indigenous peoples to protect the environment and conserve natural resources in Latin America and elsewhere”.

On health care: John Kinuthia from Consumers Information Network, Kenya

Consumers Information Network of Kenya is an independent national consumers organisation founded and registered in Kenya in 1994 with a

Cordaid

COS Nederland

ECDPM

Euforic

HIVOS

ICCO

NCDO

NIZA

Novib

Plan Nederland

SID

SIM

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mission of empowering consumers through education, promotion and advocacy of basic consumer rights. The main objective is to protect consumer rights and promote consumer responsibility. Owing to the diverse nature of consumer issues, CIN works mainly in the areas of health, trade, food and environment.

- **GATS:
A Threat to Development and National
Sovereignty**

Clare Joy of the British World Development Movement on the global, corporate-driven services liberalisation agenda; the looming irreversibility of privatisation experiments through a permanent lock-in under the GATS agreement and the erosion of governments' policy-making freedom, pro-poor politics and universal accessibility in essential public services.

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch

Afternoon session: Alternatives

14.00 – 15.30

- **Alternative Ownership and Finance:
Experiences from the North and from the South**

Attracting private capital is propagated by international financial institutions and neo-liberal governments alike as the best way to raise the necessary funding to boost failing public services. But the introduction of profit-making principles conflicts with social targets, such as universal accessibility and affordability. Are there effective, democratic and equitable alternatives to privatisation? Can innovative participatory policies, social control and community management models offer the instruments to re-establish social targets and reclaim our essential public services?

Introducing the Dutch perspective

- Energy: representative of the energy sector Netherlands
- Healthcare: representative of the health sector in the Netherlands
- Water: representative of public water utility in the Netherlands



Discussion with the representatives from the South and the audience

15.30 – 16.00 Coffee Break

16.00 – 17.30

- **Reclaiming Public Services: The Need for Political Action**

People everywhere are waking up to the threats of liberalisation. All over the world campaigns are being staged to raise awareness on the big sell-out taking place. Grassroots political movements against further privatisation and commercialisation are gaining momentum. At a time when even leading economists are starting to question the universal benefits of free trade...the time for action is now!

Introducing their campaigns

Representative of Attac-France on the French GATS-Free Zone Campaign

Attac France has been successfully targeting local authorities to publicly voice their concerns about GATS by declaring themselves a GATS-Free Zone.

Auke Blaauwbroek, Dutch trade union federation FNV

The FNV is currently engaged in building an (inter)national campaign against the EU Services Directive

Alberto Villareal, Redes Amigos de la Tierra, Uruguay

Redes is conducting a campaign to outlaw water privatisation and enshrine the right to water in the constitution by means of a popular referendum

Discussion

17.30

- **Public Services in People's Hands**

In his wrap-up speech Corporate Europe Observatory's Olivier Hoedeman will chart possible ways forward, underlining the need to replace the corporate agenda with a social one to effect progressive change and build on alternatives to neo-liberalism



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Evening Debate (to be confirmed)

GATS and a coherent European Policy towards the South

Although GATS professes to be an instrument of development, free trade policies and instruments frequently seem to compound poverty issues in the South. Are neo-liberal free market economics part of the solution or part of the problem?

Susan George, Associate Director of Transnational Institute and Vice-President of Attac France

Dutch Minister of Economic Affairs, Laurens-Jan Brinkhorst (to be confirmed)

Or Development Commissioner Mr. Michel (to be confirmed)



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Registration form

Name:

Organisation:

Email address:

Will attend the November 23 Day Programme

Evening Debate

Will have lunch at Felix Meritis (E 7,50) yes

no

You will be informed in due course whether the Evening Debate will push through or not.

Please send this form to: pietje.vervest@tni.org