

# transform!

european network for alternative thinking  
and political dialogue

## United NATIONS Conference “Rio+20”:

### Towards Another Model of Society – For Commons Built by the Peoples

Following the elections in Greece and in France hope in Europe is rising. This is also reflected in the rhetorics even of leaders of some countries which are regarded as corps countries.

The solution, it is said, would consist less in imposing austerity plans, but rather in a revival of the stimulus of growth – but what is that?

If it is a stimulus to ensure private investment by public authorities, it will accentuate the dismantling of social rights and lead us straight into the wall. For a credible recovery in Europe, a new deal must be based on principles such as those advocated by “Les Économistes atterrés” (the “Dismayed Economists”), disarming financial markets, the intervention of the European Central Bank to prevent speculation, a renegotiation of rates and liabilities, an end to fiscal competition and reforming the banking system in favour of public banks.

But these measures will remain ineffective if we fail to integrate the social and ecological issues at the same time. Should we not demand that the stimulus of the economy puts in question our society with its modes of consumption and production?

Should not the social and ecological conversion be at the core of European reorientation?

In the negotiations leading up to Rio plus 20, rather than an approach in

favour of the rights of indigenous peoples, European Union delegates and partners are promoting the inclusion in the capital cycle of biological processes which in various forms ensure the great ecological cycles and the reproduction of life. The preservation of biodiversity, the purification of water, the pollination of plants, the protection of forests, the regulation of the climate and carbon storage etc. are all perceived as services of the ecosystem which have to be integrated in the markets, with a price being assigned to them to make them last ... and to make them profitable. To the commodification of nature, already old, comes its financialization. While the financial and economic crises are devastating, extending the influence of finance on the essentials of life is criminal.

Both at European and global levels, we need to put the human in the foreground. *The Peoples’ Summit for Social and Ecological Justice, against the Commodification of Life and in Defense of Common Goods* is held alongside the summit Rio plus 20 and will be an important chance to gain another perspective, another alternative to running the world today that challenges the human at its core.

We do not want their so-called “green economy” that they wish to impose on us in Europe through Rio plus 20, where the proposed solution is the

commodification of the entire world by land and resource grabbing to be better able to speculate on the raw materials and to crush even more the populations.

*transform!* will attend the Summit of the Peoples at the Rio plus 20 and the International Day on June 20. We will reaffirm the priority of the human in the ecological revolution long overdue and we take a stand against the commodification of nature, to build a society of solidarity based on the common good, built and organized by the peoples.



By Chantal Delmas, “Espaces Marx”

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## Against “Green Economy” - For Social and Environmental Justice

From 20-22 June the United Nations Conference on sustainable development will be held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). This “Rio+20 Conference”, for which 116 heads of state and political leaders have announced their participation so far, will certainly not assess the shattering result of two decades of worldwide ecological and social degradation. Favoured by the expansion of neo-liberalism and the logics of finances being applied to all sectors of activity and life, the latter has become considerably accentuated, thus further accelerating the explosion of social inequalities.

Whereas “Rio+20” aspires to promote the notion of “green economy”, the summit actually aims to transform the ecological crisis into a “green” growth opportunity for multinational companies. We are therefore facing a new era in terms of commodifying and financializing nature and life. The aim of its promoters is to fully integrate nature into the cycle of capital accumulation, to open up new spheres of profit inside the realm of capitalism by

means of subjugating the totality of life cycles to the rule of the market, and to the illusion of unlimited growth. Carbon trading, agro-fuels, bio-piracy, etc. are the keywords in this context. Far from solving the multiple crises the world is currently facing, “green economy” does not seek to solve the structural causes of inequality and poverty, nor climate change, nor the destruction of biodiversity, nor the water crisis or the health consequences related to environmental degradation. On the contrary, these will be further aggravated.

In the light of this new offensive, alter-globalization movements, social movements and citizens as well as progressive forces of the entire world will meet in Rio from 15- 23 June and hold an alternative “Peoples’ Summit for Social and Environmental Justice in Defense of the Commons” (See website: <http://rio20.net/>).

These movements will revoke the notion of “green economy” as a way out of the crisis of capitalism and further

demonstrate that its first victims will be the peoples and the planet. These forces, which consider the social question to be inextricably linked with the consideration of the environmental question, will present alternative propositions which argue for a democratic re-appropriation of what is at stake in development and the promotion of commons, energy moderation, and a society built on social and environmental justice.



By *Christophe Ventura*, association “*Mémoire des luttes*”

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## The Project of a Transformative Universal Social Protection System

The project of a transformative universal social protection system aims at breaking the wall of neo-liberalism behind which poverty reduction policies are hidden. Poverty reduction does not lead to social justice and does not put an end to impoverishment processes. Transformative universal social protection systems aim to encompass social insurances, social assistance, public services, labour law and insurances against climate change. They take into account material and immaterial needs, individual and collective rights. It requires different development policies and will consist of con-

tributive and non-contributive systems. Most of all, it aims to preserve life in general and social life in particular. Such a re-conceptualized social protection is one instrument contributing to systemic change. It combines social justice and climate justice. This proposal has already been supported by about one hundred personalities in Europe and the rest of the world. An alliance with the Social Forum on Health and Social Security is in the making. The Peoples' Summit is an opportunity to broaden these alliances and to focus on the importance of so-

cial protection in the new world that is emerging.

By Francine  
**Mestrum** –  
“Global Social  
Justice”



<http://www.globalsocialjustice.com>

**Distribution and ecology have definitely become interlinked:**

## Implementing in Concrete Terms “Common But Differentiated Responsibility”

The problems since 1992 have not changed fundamentally. But there is essential news: regarding climate change there are clear DEADlines for solutions. For about twenty years there has been significant and increasing concordance in science about this, and for the last twenty years the probability of dramatic consequences of a business-as-usual path has been increased.

Until now, distributional conflicts have often been solved also at the cost of the environment or at the costs of future generations, but environmental debts have somehow been redeemable (or seemed to be so). In the next years and decades matters will be changing: not considering future damage will hurt mid-term and sometimes even short-term assets.

Environmental issues are substantially (also) distributional regional, class, gender and other conflicts with strong weight on the vertical time axis (in relation to future generations).

**Stable solutions for fundamental resource and emission problems will probably become possible only by “fair” distribution (on global and other levels) and**



solidarity. And “simultaneous” solutions to many problems – resources, emissions, distribution and development – are necessary and possible. The distributional question and the environmental question have definitely become interlinked.

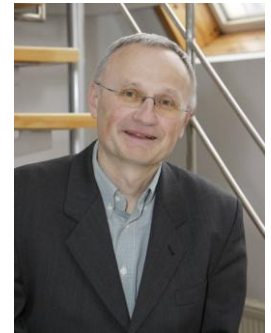
“**Common but differentiated responsibility**” was for the first time agreed upon by the international community in Rio 1992 and will perhaps be agreed upon again at the Rio Conference of 2012, but the interpretation of this principle is very different. A

“grandfathering” strategy on the basis of differentiated reduction rates in the Kyoto mechanism hardly recognizes development issues and historic realities. The “Brazil proposal” and similar models consider the historical emissions per capita and take account of justice in a much more comprehensive way.

The actual implementation of “common but differentiated responsibility” within and beyond Europe still requires much work of awareness-raising. Anyway, concrete proposals integrating

justice and fairness on many levels will be necessary for transition to regional and global sustainability.

By  
**Josef Baum**  
*transform! europe*  
and *University of Vienna*



[www.josefbaum.at](http://www.josefbaum.at)

*transform!europe* proposes two workshops:

**The Struggle for the European Contribution to the Implementation of  
“Common but Differentiated Responsibility” –  
Justice and Fairness as Prerequisites for Transition to Regional and Global  
Sustainability**

Morning of 19 June – probably at 10 a.m

**Introductory inputs** on the perspectives of movements in Europe integrating fundamental social and ecological targets based on global solidarity especially in the climate change issues

**Josef Baum** (transform! Europe), **Francine Mestrum** (Global Social Justice), **Hermann Dworak** (Austrian and European Social Forum), **Speakers of other regions** will be still invited.

**Social Justice and Climate justice:  
the Common Good of Humanity and the Illegality of Poverty**

09.00-11.00 am

Tenda 2 - Ademir fredericci o 'Dema'

Code nr' of the activity: 405

**François Houtart, Riccardo Petrella, Armando de Negri, Francine Mestrum, Sarah Cook UNRISD and CUT.**