

Newsletter Nr. 4 (August 2011)

I. Introduction:

This newsletter is available in German, English and French. It informs about the activities of the transnational network Afrique-Europe Interact. Afrique-Europe Interact is a network of grassroots activists from Mali, Burkina Faso, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. More information about the aims and members of our network can be found on our website in three languages:

www.afrique-europe-interact.net

New activists are always welcome! Anyone interested, can subscribe to our transnational mailing list "Afrique-Euro" (Mail to nolagerbremen@yahoo.de). The next meeting of the European wing of Afrique-Europe Interact will be held on 17-18th of September in Bremen, Germany (Contact: nolagerbremen@yahoo.de).

II. Follow-up of the Bamako-Dakar caravan:

The evaluation and documentation of the Bamako-Dakar caravan is not yet complete. But we would like to draw your attention specifically to three main projects:

a) As most of you probably know the first movie about the "Bamako-Dakar caravan for freedom of movement and fair development" was completed in early May. It is available with German, French and English subtitles; a version with Spanish subtitles will be available end of September (or a little bit later).

The title of the movie is "... parce que nous le même vivons air" (... because we live by the same air). It was produced by Andrea Plöger and Sabine Weber, two filmmakers from Berlin, who filmed many times at World Social Forums. The film can be ordered from nolagerbremen@yahoo.de for 0 to 20 € (according to your financial resources). Additional information can be found on our webpage. For example the booklet can be viewed as a pdf-file. It is 65 pages long and covers some of those themes only briefly mentioned in the movie (unfortunately it is only available in german and french):

http://afrique-europe-interact.net/index.php?article_id=454&clang=1

The movie was already shown at more than 45 events in Germany and Austria, and 500 copies were sent to Mali. (One goal is that as many people as possible hear about the grassroots experience of the caravan – not only in Mali, but in (West) Africa as a whole).

b) A 150-page booklet on the caravan (bilingual German / French) – including numerous pictures will be released in September 2011. The articles and statements were written by both African and European activists. Once the booklet is ready, it can be ordered or downloaded as pdf on our website (more detailed information will be send separately).

c) A second movie about the caravan will be ready most likely in January 2012. It will cover issues that were not or only briefly focused on in the first movie.

III. Communication:

The distribution and circulation of necessary information among all activists was an issue before

and during the Bamako-Dakar caravan. On this background we have had a lot of discussions about our internal communication structures in the past few months. Therefore an internal mailing list only in French was set up. Additionally five African and five European delegates were chosen, who are supposed to call each other regularly to share the latest news on the African and on the European side of our network.

IV. Political activities since the caravan:

Three themes were central to our network after the caravan: (1) the war in Libya, (2) the tens of thousand refugees, mostly from sub-Saharan countries, who stranded in Tunisia, and (3) the civil war in Ivory Coast. Many of the Mali groups of our network were mainly engaged with the support of returnees from Libya and the Ivory Coast (and therefore have sent two delegates to the Libyan-Egyptian and Libyan-Tunisian border at the beginning of the Libya-conflict). The European wing of Afrique-Europe Interact primarily focused on public relations. The declaration, "Freedom, not Frontex" and the appeal "Voices from Choucha" were published and multiple video clips and a booklet on the situation of Libya refugees in Tunisian refugee camp Choucha were released after the travel of a delegation to Tunisia. More information can be found on our website (Unfortunately the clips and the booklet are partly only available in German):

http://afrique-europe-interact.net/?article_id=486&clang=1

V. Ships of solidarity:

Afrique-Europe Interact will participate at the transnational project "Ships of Solidarity" in October. Several Ships will cruise back and forth between Italy, Libya and Tunisia. The goal is on the one hand to complicate the war of the EU towards refugees and migrants in the Mediterranean sea by public observation for at least some weeks, on the other hand to bring back the fate of the Libya refugees to the public awareness. They mainly originated from sub-Saharan countries and ended in Tunisian desert camps – many of them seeing no other choice but to undertake the highly dangerous boat passage to Europe. More information can be found on our website:

http://afrique-europe-interact.net/index.php?article_id=521&clang=1

VI. Delegation travels to Europe and Africa

An event tour through Germany, Austria and the Netherlands with three Malian activists is planned in November 2011. In February 2012 a major European delegation will visit Mali. One of the aims is to discuss the idea of ??another caravan more in detail in a bigger circle. One first idea is to focus on social struggles against privatization (mostly dictated by the IMF, World Bank & Co.) and the sale of fertile soil in Mali to globally operating investment funds, banks and corporations ("landgrabbing").

VII. Redistribution tackled practically: Fundraising campaign for grassroots initiatives in Mali

The social situation for the majority of the Mali grassroots activists is extremely precarious. Herewith the political work is complicated – either because necessary resources are missing, or because the activists have to deal with their own survival. Therefore Afrique-Europe Interact has decided to help 11 of the Mali groups in our network once with 1.000 Euros through a fundraising campaign. The receiving groups were solely determined by the African side. Moreover small political activities in Mali will be supported by the network. The entire call for campaign donations and a brief presentation of the 11 grass-roots initiatives can be found on our website:

http://afrique-europe-interact.net/index.php?article_id=495&clang=1

We would be very pleased if the fundraising campaign would be distributed as widely as possible. Campaign flyer can be ordered from nolagerbremen@yahoo.de.