

NO ONE SACRIFICED FOR EUROPEAN ECONOMY



A brief description of the dynamic

Capitalism needs the sacrifice of the many in order to maintaining its mirage of success. Around Europe, in many industrial cities human lives are daily sacrificed for the "greater wellbeing". In the name of economic success, the European Union and its members close their eyes and allow to die thousands of people. To add insults to injury, these deaths are ignored by the media, as institutions do everything possible to make these catastrophes invisible.

The damage has three main axes: environmental, economic and social.

These industries are first of all environmental hazards. Do not follow the safety rules, releasing toxic products that pollute the air, the ground and the water. This pollution impacts not only nature but also, of course, human health. The working-class is the first impacted, but everyone within a range of a hundred kilometers is affected and risk to have health issues, notably cancer.

This environmental impact affects also the economic system of the area around these factories: the polluted area is unable to be properly cultivated, and the environmental situation makes the region touristically dead. The local economics become therefore intrinsically linked to the factory which caused this situation, creating a loop.

The last axis, the social axis, is defined by how this economic and environmental hazard creates a local social struggle, where lower, middle and upper classes continue dying for EU's and national economic development, and the enemy is the employer and the institutions who let it be because intervene would cost more than human lives.

A clarification is needed: talking about "sacrificed industrial cities" we are not talking about big polluted cities constantly attacked for their pollution, but about normal cities with a higher cancer and pollution rate that are normally ignored and tend to not appear in statistics.

This dynamic is present with some variations in different parts of Europe, for example in Taranto, Italy, where its steel mill has exposed its residents to increased risks to human and ecological health, and in the IJmond area in the Netherlands, where Tata Steel has similarly exposed residents of Beverwijk, Velsen en Heemskerk to such risks. These dynamics are also often present and intertwined with environmental and systemic racism, for example with regards to the Roma communities forced to live at Pata Rât, an illegal landfill on the outskirts of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, due to forced evictions, gentrification, and spatial segregation, exposing them to pollution and health dangers; the 'green' extractivist projects in indigenous Sámi and Inuit lands that threaten or actively destroy their lands, livelihoods, communities, and wellbeing; in metropolitan France, where hazardous sites like incinerators and waste management facilities are more likely to be located near towns with higher immigrant populations, and racialised suburbs or districts of larger cities are often closer to large ring roads and intersections known as échangeurs – thus disproportionately exposing racialised communities to higher pollution and risks of health hazards; and in Martinique and Guadeloupe, where the use of the toxic pesticide chlordecone was permitted by the French government in the 70s to 90s despite evidence of health risks, and led to the carcinogen still being detected in more than 90% of the population today and much higher prostate cancer incidence rates. (ENAR 2022 Report)

With this resolution we demand local, regional, and national governments throughout Europe, and the European Union to:

- Acknowledge the existence of such cities, and take the steps necessary to put an end to industries or practices that harm the socio-ecological well-being of its communities.
- Compensate all those residents negatively affected by such industries and practices, including the generations of victims and the descendants of victims who have passed as a result of such consequences. Such compensation must include financial compensation, such as environmental and corrective reparations, and where necessary services such as healthcare treatments and area cleanups.
- Where these industries are totally necessary to the existence of the local economy (and not for that of the national or European economy) because of the dependence resulting from the jobs created, prioritise with utmost urgency a just transition of such communities guided by principles of circularity and eco-social wellbeing.

In any future initiative or project that is located in the proximity of or would affect local communities, involve said communities in the deliberation, decision, and planning processes, and make eco-social wellbeing and anti-discrimination and empowerment of marginalised communities the highest priority in these processes.



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