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Brussels authorities help silence opposition to the 'Great Transatlantic Market'

Saturday 17 May 2014, by [Alliance D19-20](#) (Date first published: 16 May 2014).

Alliance D19-20

Evaluation assembly : 19 may at 7pm, Pletinckx street, 19, 1000 Brussels

Brussels authorities help silence opposition to the 'Great Transatlantic Market' (TTIP)

16 May 2014 - Brussels - for immediate release

This Thursday morning over a thousand people were in the streets of Brussels, attempting to peacefully protest against austerity and the proposed great transatlantic market (TTIP) which were being discussed in the absence of citizens at the European Business Summit.

In an unprovoked move 281 people were violently arrested, including Belgian and European parliamentarians and candidates, senior trade union officials, farmers and many elderly citizens. Brussels Mayor, Yvan Mayeur, must publicly answer why such violent and disproportionate actions were taken.

Emilie Paumard of CADTM said, "We came into the streets because our political leaders are not listening. It seems they've only got ears for big business and their representatives who co-organised the European Business Summit. And to be treated so brutally, as if we were violent criminals - when our actions were entirely peaceful. A Europe of police violence, of politico-big business-police collusion, is the complete opposite to the Europe that the D19-20 Alliance, Alter Summit and our European allies are fighting for."

"The police provocation and the brutal repression are inexcusable. An investigation into the how such events occurred is the least we expect from those responsible, especially after the cabinet of Yvan Mayeur explicitly promised our delegation that those arrested would be promptly released. The blame lies with either the Bourgmester or his police commissioner Vandersmissen. 10 days before an election, citizens have the right to know who makes the laws in Mayeur-City, and which parties are OK with such brutalities. We are preparing an official complaint and expect a strong political reaction." Said Felipe Van Keirsbilck, Secretary General of Belgian trade union CNE.

Luc Hollands from the Milk Producers Group, MIG, added, "How peaceful protestors have been treated is atrocious, but it must not detract from the reason we were in the streets in the first place. The continuation of the austerity that will come from the proposed EU-US free trade deal is only going to make European citizens and producers poorer, unhealthier, more precarious and further from the sort of future we were on the streets fighting for. It's not policing attitudes that must change, it's the entire political system. But despite what we've witnessed from the police, today's actions have underlined the diversity and the unity of our alliance and strengthens our will to build democracy from below."

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* <http://www.d19-20.be/en/>