Strategy for the EU to contribute to ending hunger in the world

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PLAN

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I - First, restore the truth about the EU's food trade with developing countries (DCs), as it is the EU that receives a structural food aid from them

The European Commission (EC) publishes data on *agri-food* trade, flattering itself that it has a growing surplus, whereas it corresponds only to *agricultural* trade as defined by Annex 1 of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), forgetting that fish and preparations are an essential *food* product, whose growing trade deficit – €20.4 billion (bn) in 2018 after €20.3 bn in 2017 and €9.9 bn in 2000 – has always exceeded the trade surplus on agricultural products. Incidentally, it is not enough to encourage a reduction in the consumption of meat and dairy products, as the consumption of fish and preparations should be reduced even more, as the loss of fish resources is increasing faster than the loss of land food resources.

The EC states that the EU is more than ever committed to feeding the world, echoing the recurrent discourse of the conservative agricultural unions (COPA-COGECA in Brussels and FNSEA in France). So much so that the EC President Jean-Claude Juncker said on 6 December 2016, at the conference on the EU's agricultural prospects: "*We must remember – but who remembers? – that until 1964 Europe was not yet self-sufficient in terms of food... A country, a continent which cannot feed itself, from a geostrategic point of view, is a country, even a continent, in perdition because it depends on the will of others. I do not want a Europe that depends on the will of others... With the entry into force of the common agricultural policy in 1962, Europe has given itself the means to acquire its autonomy in terms of food production. And we can actually be proud of the journey made since*"[1].

He echoed the EU Commissioner on agriculture Phil Hogan's speech on 4 June 2015 at the Milan World Expo: "*I know you are all very familiar with the key data on present and future challenges, with some 795 million people worldwide still suffering from chronic hunger. And*

[1] http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-16-4285_fr.htm

with global population growth continuing rapidly, the world will have to produce 60% more food by 2050… Today I wish to deliver the clear and decisive message that the European Union recognises its global responsibilities and is ready to act"[2].

The European Court of Auditors itself has shared this assertion by stating in March 2018 that "*The EU produces more food than it consumes, and has become a net food exporter*"[3].

While the EU's *agricultural* surplus reached a peak of €20.1 bn in 2018, after €18.9 bn in 2017, it remained in deficit in its *food* trade, at €4.4 bn in 2018 after €5.7 bn in 2017, but €17.6 bn in 2005. But, since the EU has a structural food surplus over developed countries – defined as the 9 developed countries of the OECD plus Russia – of €19.4 bn in 2018, its food deficit with developing countries was €23.8 bn. And, if we deduct trade in beverages – which are not basic food products and for which the EU had a surplus of €24.6 bn with all countries in 2018, of which €9.5 bn with developing countries – the EU's structural food deficit with DCs was of €33.3 bn in 2018, a level that has not changed much since 2005 (€30.2 bn). Admittedly, the EU remains in deficit of €2.9 bn in 2018 in its food trade with West Africa (WA) but, if we deduct WA large surplus of €4.7 bn in coffee and cocoa - which are also not basic food products - WA had a deficit of €1.8 bn in its basic food trade with the EU.

II - Stop the massive dumping of agricultural exports to Africa

The EU's dumping arrangements have changed significantly over the years, relying mainly on export subsidies (so-called *refunds*) until the 1992 CAP reform (Common Agricultural Policy) and then their gradual decline – with disappearance since 2011, except for poultry meat, which continued until 2013 – has been largely offset by the gradual increase in coupled and decoupled[4] domestic subsidies linked to successive CAP reforms since 1992.

Cumulative export refunds on only 5 products – dairy, cereal, sugar, beef and poultry products – amounted to €113.8 bn extra-EU28, of which €31.9 bn to Africa, €19 bn to North Africa (NAF), €11.8 bn to Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and €6.2 bn to WA. These are poisoned gifts, and they have not really changed since the refunds were replaced by domestic subsidies, coupled and decoupled, to the extra-EU28 exports that I am currently analysing.

Domestic subsidies include both product-specific and non-product-specific subsidies, particularly those so-called decoupled since the 2003 CAP reform. Overall, without isolating those going to exported products, these cumulative aids from 1988 to 2017 were colossal: €1,440 bn, of which €459 bn for product-specific and €981 bn for non-product-specific measures, of which €411 bn notified in the WTO Green Box from 1995-96 to 2016-17 excluding decoupled direct aids, €314 bn for decoupled aid (SPS-BPS) to the EU15 from 2005 to 2017, 73 bn for tax-exemptions on agricultural fuels and 57 bn for decoupled direct aid (SAPS) to the new EU Member States from 2004 to 2016. To avoid possible duplication with the aid notified in the WTO green box, agricultural State aids are not taken into account.

As I have not finished attributing these subsidies to agricultural exports to developing countries, I have so far only made limited studies. Thus, the EU exported 3.4 million tonnes (Mt) of cereals to WA in 2016 thanks to domestic subsidies of €203.7 million, at a dumping rate on exported

[2] http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/commissioner-speeches/pdf/hogan-expo-milan-04-06-2015_en.pdf
[3] https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/Briefing_paper_CAP/Briefing_paper_CAP_EN.pdf
[4] Subsidies are *coupled* when linked to the level of prices or production or to inputs and *decoupled* when farmers are not obliged to produce to get them (paragraph 6 of Annex 2 of the WTO AoA).

raw cereals of 36.6%. The EU exported 2.5 Mt of milk products to WA in milk equivalent thanks to €168.6 million in subsidies at an average dumping rate of 20.8%. In 2016, the EU28 agricultural export subsidies to Côte d'Ivoire (CI) amounted to €99.9 million, of which €42 million for cereals (dumping rate of 30.2%), €34.9 million for beef, €11.7 million for dairy products (dumping rate of 16.4%) and €11.3 million for pig meat. The EU exported annually, from 2013 to 2018, an average of 1.1 Mt of cereal products to Tunisia with subsidies of €66 million or €64.2 per tonne. Similarly, in 2018 the EU exported 5.9 Mt of cereals to Algeria for €1.3 bn, i.e. at a FOB price of €218/t, with a subsidy of €391 million or €60.4/t, representing a dumping rate of 35.8%.

III - Stop imposing Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) on ACP countries[5]

- The argument that it was impossible to maintain the non-reciprocal trade preferences of the Lomé agreements between the EU and ACP countries does not hold

DG Trade claimed that the non-reciprocal trade preferences to ACPs (Africa-Caribbean-Pacific countries) were no longer compatible with WTO rules, after the EU had been condemned twice for violating the GATT principle of non-discrimination, following complaints from the nine Latin American banana exporting countries, which had to pay customs duties (CDs) to the EU while the ACPs were exempt. However, if discrimination is prohibited by the GATT and the WTO according to a geographical criterion, it is possible according to the level of development. This is the basis of the EU's "Generalised System of Preferences" (GSP) since 1971 for developing countries and the exemption of CDs and quota for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) since the 2001 Everything But Arms (EBA) decision. Indeed, the GDP per capita of the nine Latin American countries was 2.3 times higher in 1995 than that of the three African banana exporting countries – Cameroon, Ivory Coast (IC) and Ghana – and was 3.9 times higher in 2016. And the GDP per capita of the EU28 ($31,785) was 20.8 times higher in 2017 than that of WA ($1,527).

- The EU has reversed its Everything But Arms' decision and contradicted the WTO's position on LDCs

By requiring all Member States (MS) of each regional EPA to remove their CDs on about 80% of EU exports, this cancelled the preferences of its 2001 EBA decision. This has been done under the pretext of promoting regional integration of each regional EPA that would not work with different tariff regimes since the free movement of products would oblige LDCs to tax imports from non LDCs (called developing countries in EPA jargon) to avoid being invaded by products they would import duty-free from the EU.

- DG Trade refused to publish the last three impact studies of the WAO EPA it had commissioned because their conclusions were negative for the WA EPA, but they were leaked[6].

[5] Jacques Berthelot, *Did you say FREE trade? The Economic Partnership Agreement European Union-West Africa*, L'Harmattan, September 2016.
[6] http://www.bilaterals.org/?four-impact-studies-of-the-west&lang=en. In fact, the fourth study, from the University of Ibadan, was not financed by DG Trade but it also refused to mention it.

- The untruths of EU development aid to the WA EPA

DG Trade has repeatedly stated that the EPA Assistance Programme (PAPED) will provide €6.5 bn to WA from 2015 to 2020, while DG Development and Cooperation (DEVCO) stressed in June 2015 that this is a simple reorientation of aid already programmed by the EDF (European Development Fund), EIB (European Investment Bank) and ordinary European development cooperation funds, so there are no EPA-specific funds.

- The pseudo-scientific evaluation of DG Trade on the impact of the WA EPA

DG Trade carried out its own assessment study published in March 2016, hiring the same IFPRI expert, David Laborde, who had already participated in the three previous studies that DG Trade did not release. Indeed, the use of a computable general equilibrium model to validate politically determined results is considered essential by DG Trade to provide irrefutable scientific truth in the eyes of political authorities in all its Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). A specialist in models applied to agricultural policy analysis and former president of the French Academy of Agriculture, Jean-Marc Boussard, has long since demystified their assumptions and conclusions. Sparing you the detailed criticism of DG Trade's study, my own research shows that WA EPA would result in a loss of CDs of €3.4 bn in 2035 and a cumulative loss of €28.4 bn between 2020 and 2035 on the 76% liberalized imports from the EU28-UK.

- The EU has hidden to West Africa the strong erosion of its trade preferences.

DG Trade points out that, without EPAs, processed cocoa exports from the three non-LDC countries would be subject to the GSP tariff of 6.1% for cocoa paste, 4.2% for cocoa butter and 2.8% for cocoa powder. But DG Trade hides the fact that the FTAs concluded with 9 Latin American countries in 2012 (2015 for Ecuador) allow them to export all these products duty-free to the EU. The political scandal is that the reduced or zero tariff on imports from countries having signed FTAs implies that the EU does not care about their compliance with the fundamental international conventions on human rights, social rights, the environment and good governance, that the EU requires from ACP countries to grant them GSP+ status[7].

- Both the West African EPA and the interim EPAs of IC and Ghana have planned to reduce CDs on imports of cereals and milk powder from the EU to 0, whereas these tariffs are already extremely low (5%), which will aggravate the loss of competitiveness of local cereals and tubers and any possibility of developing local dairy production, already hampered by the massive import of milk powder enriched with vegetable fat (palm oil).

Conclusion: the EU shoots itself in the foot by imposing EPAs

These effects will occur at two levels: they will increase the influx of illegal migrants, that the EU is unwilling to host, as they are deprived of a future in their countries as a result of the EU's African policy and will fuel terrorist movements in both WA and the EU; and they will reduce the huge medium- and long-term potential exports to WA of high value-added European goods and services if EPAs were abolished. Fortunately, Nigeria, which represents 72% of the GDP of the AO and 52% of its population, continues to refuse to sign the WA EPA. Incidentally the European Commission has unveiled on 28 August 2019 that the European Development Fund

[7] The EU GSP+ status exempts of CDs most exports to the EU of DCs which comply with criteria of economic vulnerability and implement 27 international conventions on human and social rights, environmental protection and good governance. Only bananas, aluminum and hides) have to pay MFN (most favoured nation) tariffs.

has granted €562 million to Nigeria for the 7 years 2014-20 but it did not say that, during the 7 years from 2012 to 2018 its domestic subsidies to its exports to Nigeria of dairy products have reached €471 million and those to cereals products €316 million[8].
But the two interim EPAs of Ivory Coast (IC) and Ghana have been implemented since late 2016 and are breaking up the long process of WA regional integration since the creation of ECOWAS by the 1975 Lagos Treaty.

IV - The EU seems to be ignoring the enormous challenges facing the development of WA

While EPAs have not yet had an impact on WA, it already faces enormous challenges in all sectors of activity. In addition to the macroeconomic challenges, WA will mainly be confronted with the 3 major challenges of demographic explosion, climate change and food deficit, while 60% of its population depends on agriculture.

Macroeconomic challenge: decline in growth over the past 3 years due to the collapse of oil prices and 43% of the population is below the poverty line. The GDP per capita of WA was 21 times lower than that of the EU in 2017.

Demographic challenge: the WA population would increase by 2.2 from 2017 to 2050 (from 372 to 810 million). As the population of the EU28 would fall from 509 to 503 million, the WA population would exceed it by 2030. A fortiori Brexit will reduce the EU27 population to 427 million in 2050. This will inevitably change the geopolitical balance of power between WA and the EU. Although the urban population will explode, Bruno Dorin of CIRAD anticipates an increase of 167 million agricultural people in SSA from 2006 to 2050, the only sub-continent where they will increase.

Climate challenge: according to the UN, a two-degree warming would reduce the total agricultural yield of SSA by 10% by 2050 and a more likely higher warming would reduce it by 15 to 20%. UNEP says that an increase from 1.2 to 1.9 degrees would be enough to increase the number of undernourished Africans, already estimated at 240 million, by 25% in Central Africa, 50% in East Africa and 95% in WA. But UNEP also points out that a rapid conversion of SSA agriculture to agro-ecological practices would reduce these threats and increase yields. Many other analyses, of which those of Olivier De Schutter and Marc Dufumier, have called into question the so-called "modern" agribusiness production systems, which are highly capital intensive, particularly in chemical inputs, for their negative impact on the environment and agricultural employment in SSA, especially when they are accompanied by land grabbing of traditional farmers. But most official African institutions such as the African Development Bank and international agribusiness, including of the EU, are holding back this conversion and advocating conventional intensification based on subsidies for chemical fertilizers and motorization.

Food deficit challenge: excluding trade in coffee and cocoa - which are not basic food products and are mainly exported - the food deficit of WA vis-à-vis all countries increased by a factor of 11 from 2005 to 2016 (to €7.9 billion).

[8] https://www.commodafrica.com/29-08-2019-lue-alloue-eu-50-millions-supplementaires-au-nord-est-du-nigeria

V - Stop supporting the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

The EU strongly supported the creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) at the African Union Heads of State Summit of 21 March 2018 in Kigali and pledged to significantly increase its financial support for its implementation. But this agreement is absurd and even criminal because one of its first objectives is to reduce customs duties (CDs) by 90% between the 55 African States in 10 years, which will greatly benefit EU multinationals already well established in Africa, and the sharp reduction in intra-African CDs will inevitably lead to an even greater drop in their customs revenues than those programmed by the EPAs, but also to a reduction in CDs applied to imports from the rest of the world.

Paradoxically this is considered beneficial by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and UNCTAD, which both pushed for the creation of the AfCFTA! Their reasoning is based on the idea that, by importing inputs and capital goods at low CDs, Africa will increase its market share and become more competitive than the rest of the world in industrial products and services. Actually the reality has been the opposite: "*The share of industry in Africa's GDP has decreased from 15% in 1990 to 10% in 2008*" (UNCTAD and UNIDO, 2011). The largest decrease was observed in West Africa, where it fell from 13% to 5% over the same period. By forgetting the multiple constraints that will long hinder it: deficiencies in infrastructure, particularly transport infrastructure; access to electricity and water; technical skills; functioning of administrations, particularly customs administrations; access to credit at reasonable rates and wide disparities in monetary policies and exchange rates; huge divergences in CDs, living standards, political regimes, etc. For example, transporting industrial products from China to Lagos is cheaper than transporting them from Northern to Southern Nigeria and the same for maize from the United States to Lagos as compared from Northern Nigeria. As long as these constraints are not removed, the AfCFTA would foster an increased loss of customs revenue and competitiveness and consequently of jobs. The emphasis must be placed on strengthening regional economic communities (RECs) such as ECOWAS in WA, including at the political level, by setting up cohesion funds to enable the least competitive States to catch up, as the EU has done with the Structural and Cohesion Funds.

Unfortunately, Nigeria finally gave in to the pressure to sign the AfCFTA on 7 July 2019 in Niamey. However, an important report by the University of Ibadan in August 2019 has just shown the huge increases expected from the liberalization of intra-African imports, notably by 91% for food imports. Let us hope that this will lead President Buhari to do three things: 1) dismiss his Minister of Trade who lobbied to sign the AfCFTA; 2) denounce his signature before implementation does any damage; 3) convene a meeting of ECOWAS Heads of State to refocus trade policies on strengthening regional integration.

VI - Denounce the report of the Task Force Rural Africa (TFRA)

The report of the Task Force Rural Africa (TFRA) essentially invites Africa to copy the EU's experience in agricultural policy as if it had promoted a sustainable rural development, forgetting its huge shortcomings that could not and should not be followed by Africa.

2.1 - Lessons that African countries could learn from the CAP experience cannot be based on the current CAP

The lessons that African countries could learn from the CAP's experience in agriculture, agri-food industries and rural development cannot be based on the idea that it is the modalities and components of the current CAP that would correspond to the current needs of Africa, and in particular of SSA, for the following reasons:

- The employment issue: while the number of agricultural jobs in AWUs (agricultural work units) decreased by 3.42% per year on average from 1993 to 2014 in the EU28 (from 19.4 million to 9.3 million) and DG Agri forecasts a further decrease of 2.3% per year between 2015-17 and 2030, the SSA must significantly increase its agricultural jobs as its population is expected to more than double between 2017 and 2050, growing by 2.3% per year. The UN predicts that the SSA rural population will increase by 47% (1% per year) from 2011 to 2050.

- The main source of income for farmers: another obvious impossibility is to replicate the EU farm income model in SSA given the huge share of subsidies in the EU. For Alan Matthews, "*Over the whole period 2004-2013, direct payments represented 47% of net agricultural income, other public transfers 15% and market income the remaining 38%*".

- Dependence on public transfers to finance agricultural production: it is illusory to rely on large public transfers from rich countries because total ODA (Official Development Assistance) per capita in SSA has decreased from \$66.8 in 2010 to \$56.9 in 2016 and that to agriculture from \$1.94 to \$1.45, agriculture's share of total ODA to SSA having declined from 6.7% to 5.7%.

- The use of PPPs (public-private partnerships) for agricultural investments is not appropriate when it comes to promoting large farms with modern technologies harmful to employment and the environment, which would require tax exemptions, and generally to export to international markets rather than to local markets.

2.2 - The experience of the CAP that should inspire the SSA is that of 1962 to 1992

The CAP that should inspire the SSA countries is the one implemented from 1962 to 1992, while eliminating its main disadvantages – lack of protection of livestock feed imports, high export refunds and lack of supply management – for the following reasons:

- The first priority of SSA's agricultural policies is to reduce its food deficit rather than to increase exports of non-essential agricultural products by participating in global value chains where SSA farmers and agro-industries have been confined to the lowest level of unprocessed products.

- To strengthen SSA's trade policies, its RECs should become full members of the WTO, as the EU did – and the EEC acceded to the GATT in 1960 before finalizing its common external tariff and CAP rules – to avail of bound duties[9] because their CETs (Common External Tariffs) have only applied duties, even if their MS have bound duties at the WTO, but cannot use them without abandoning their regional integration objective. RECs could then influence WTO rules to give priority to local food markets over global value chains.

- SSA farmers must have stable and remunerative prices to self-finance the necessary increase in food production, in the current context of very high international price volatility - amplified by exchange rate volatility and low agricultural tariffs in SSA, and the inability of governments to subsidize their so many farmers to a significant level. Although public funds will be needed

[9] Bound duties are the maximum level that can be reached by the applied duties, which gives WTO member States considerable flexibility to vary their level depending on market conditions.

to finance upstream and downstream investments, including transport, energy and irrigation infrastructure.

- These stable and remunerative prices for farmers in SSA would result from variable import levies, as the CAP did very effectively until 1992 on cereals, sugar, milk powder, meat and eggs, and still uses them on some cereals and fresh fruit and vegetables, although the WTO has banned them since 1995. FAO and the EU (in the Argentina-Chile case on the Chilean price bands system) argued that variable levies should be allowed at the WTO as long as they do not exceed the bound duties. In addition, all countries still use actual variable levies hidden under several masks, as explained in the book "*How to regulate agricultural prices*"[10].

- Set up massive domestic food aid targeted at the most disadvantaged populations – which could exceed half of the African population as in India – by means of vouchers for the purchase of local food products, first of all storeable cereals (millet, sorghum, maize, rice, fonio). This would certainly be very expensive and would only be possible through massive very long-term loans, in particular from the IDA (International Development Association), a subsidiary of the World Bank, at very low interest rates (0.75%) and deferred reimbursement. Comparing with the cost of India's massive food aid, such a programme would be in the order of €15 bn per year for the whole of SSA, of which about €4 bn for WA, a wet finger estimate to be refined. But it is worth it if it leads to a strong increase in food production and the creation of tens of millions of jobs, allowing a real economic and social take-off in Africa that would largely make this investment profitable.

VII - Modify in depth the CAP by stopping all dumping and the import of products that destroy the environment and human rights in exporting countries

The Platform for Another CAP recommended that EU agricultural exports that have received subsidies should repay them before exporting, with the immediate effect of reducing agricultural production by at least 10%[11]. However, in accordance with the definition of dumping by the WTO Appellate Body in the December 2001 and December 2002 "*Dairy Products of Canada*" case, exports will remain possible when they are made at a price at least equal to the total national average cost of production without subsidies. On the other hand, the commitment by progressive EU forces to stop importing agricultural products that destroy the environment and human rights into exporting countries – of which soybeans from the Americas and palm oil from Malaysia and Indonesia – will increase production costs in the EU, particularly for animal feed. This will inevitably have an impact on food prices despite the promotion of short circuits and local consumption. Moreover, a minimum increase in food prices, particularly for animal products (meat, dairy products, eggs and fish), is essential to reduce consumption for the benefit of health and the environment and to reduce food waste.

Above all, it is almost certain that the European Commission will lose the panel set up on 24 June 2919 at the WTO if it follows its course (the 3 judges have not yet been appointed) to challenge the anti-dumping and countervailing duties imposed since July 2018 by the United States on its imports of Spanish table olives, in which case the entire CAP will collapse if decoupled direct aid – of €35 bn in 2018 – is prohibited.

[10] Jacques Berthelot, *How to regulate agricultural prices*, may be downloaded at https://www.sol-asso.fr/articles-de-2013/

[11] https://cdn.greenpeace.fr/site/uploads/2018/06/12-priorit%C3%A9s-PACpost2020.pdf?_ga=2.126906125.180925079.1529313343-2069723271.1524238463

Deprived of the essential source of their income, EU farmers, all unions combined, will demand that the CAP be recast on remunerative prices, as was the case before the 1992 CAP reform, but this time with radical changes not only with the abolition of subsidies to exported products but also with a fair distribution of production rights among farmers, especially since the aid would no longer be based on the hectares exploited but on the active farmers actually occupied.

The €35 bn saved on decoupled direct aid could then be largely redeployed to the benefit of disadvantaged consumers to enable them to sustain the increase in local food products, to further subsidize organic farming, particularly in canteens, and ultimately to set up vouchers for the purchase of local food products from agro-ecological agriculture, a little like the United States' domestic food aid but on a more limited scale.

VIII - Impose on the WTO, particularly the Agreement on Agriculture, a hierarchy of norms, where trade rules should comply with human and environmental rights, and similarly for all bilateral free trade agreements

In order for official international commitments on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDOs) by 2030 and those of Paris on climate change to be more than just wind, it is necessary to make fundamental changes to the WTO rules, and even of the World Bank and IMF, by subjecting their trade and financial decisions to a hierarchy of norms, with priority given to comply with human, social and environmental rights. In practice, this means that, in all WTO proceedings, and in particular those involving the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), one of the three judges sitting at panel level as well as on appeal, should be a specialist in human, social and environmental rights[12]. This proposal, already presented to the French Academy of Agriculture in March 2019, is supported by Olivier De Schutter and two environmental law professors from Quebec City (Geneviève Parent) and Berne (Elizabeth Bürgi-Bonami).

[12] Jacques Berthelot, *Rebuilding the WTO for a sustainable global development*, SOL, 9 January 2019, https://www.sol-asso.fr/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Rebuilding-the-WTO-for-a-sustainable-global-development-9-January-2019.pdf; *Agreement on agriculture and food*, 22 January 2019, https://www.sol-asso.fr/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Agreement-on-Agriculture-and-Food-AoAF-SOLs-proposal-of-22-January-2019.pdf