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Food, energy, water security and agricultural development are currently high on the agenda of international development agencies and national governments. With a growing world population, increasing demand for food and (renewable) energy, and competition for land and water, international land acquisitions have increased substantially within the last years and all over the world. The Worldwatch Institute estimated that 70 million hectares of land have been sold or rented to private parties, in the last 10 years, with a peak in 2009. These acquisitions involve land use changes to commercial uses and are pursued by private and public investors with different aims, the most relevant of which are food production, agrofuels production, forestry, tourism, conservation, renewable energy production.

The EU is involved in large scale land acquisitions both as an investor and as a target territory.

The aim of this project is to analyze the role of the EU and its member states in land acquisitions all over the world, especially with a focus on developing countries. The project will develop an integrated approach that recognizes the critical nexus between land use changes, water, energy, and food and the complex interactions between ecosystems and human activity. The EU involvement in the global rush for land will be also investigated by analyzing the EU energy and agricultural policies and imperatives in order to understand what drives these investments.

The project kick-off meeting took place in Rome at Enel Foundation's on January 30th 2014. Participants involved were academics, international organisations and national research centers.

The **working paper** "The rush for agricultural land and water resources: the role of the European Union" is now available for download (pdf file - 2, 86 Mb).

Seminar series - October 2014-January 2015

"Water, energy and food security towards Expo 2015. The challenge of large-scale land acquisitio

A series of seminars aims to explore the main drivers and implications of land transactions around the w