

Time for the final push: Say “No” to ACTA - again

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In February, tens of thousands of people in Europe turned out to protest and express their disapproval of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) - the international agreement that threatens civil liberties and is against the interest of global public health. Tomorrow, people are again expected to take to the streets against ACTA on an International day of action. Pieced together in an undemocratic and opaque process which excluded stakeholders from the table, ACTA proposes aggressive intellectual property (IP) enforcement measures that predominantly protect private rights over those of EU citizens. If enacted, ACTA will hinder generic competition, which is crucial for access to affordable medicines in Europe and developing countries. ACTA increases the likelihood that wrongful searches, seizures and legal actions against legitimate suppliers of generic medicines will be carried out. Similar provisions to those contained in ACTA have in the past led to confusion over what constitutes counterfeit goods, and the seizure of generic medicines in transit through Europe, denying their timely delivery to developing countries. The collective voice of EU citizens is critical to reject ACTA: since last February's protests, four out of five European Parliament Committees have voted against ACTA, and last week the Dutch Parliament prohibited its government to sign or ratify ACTA. Tomorrow, EU citizens can give the final push against ACTA by taking to the street: Take a stand to protect civil liberties and public health and demand that your elected representatives reject ACTA once and for all in the final vote at the European Parliament, scheduled for early July