

Europe cannot drill its way to a low-carbon economy, say climate justice groups

by Scrap the EU-ETS
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The European Union (EU) and their national governments are set to discuss increased shale gas extraction in Europe which will increase environmental and social harm as well as dangerous climate change

Brussels, May 21, 2013. - EU leaders will meet tomorrow (May 22nd) to discuss how to lower energy prices and this way "improve" European industrial competitiveness (1). However, the undersigned organisations warn that under the rhetoric of boosting growth, productivity and employment, lays the intention of furthering fossil fuel extraction including shale gas. Climate justice groups urge the EU and the national governments to implement energy transition policies towards post-fossil and post-nuclear economies. As Maxime Combes from ATTAC France says, "EU governments and institutions are not considering the growing resistance of communities in Europe against new explorations of fossil fuels, and in particular of unconventional sources such as shale gas and of techniques such as hydro-fracking. France and Bulgaria have already put up a ban that prohibits such exploration and practices in their territories."

Groups also denounce efforts by BusinessEurope and other powerful corporate lobby groups, to pressure the Commission to radically shift the EU's energy policy away from climate change mitigation towards polluting industry-friendly cost-competitiveness and supply security (2).

As Tom Kucharz from Ecologistas en Acción, Spain says, "by focusing to "secure" more energy technologies like hydro-fracking, these policies would obscure increasing inequalities linked to fossil fuel extraction, divert attention from the real need to slow global warming and further dead end policies linked to the carbon market".

The hype surrounding shale gas in Europe follows the US shale gas boom. However, a closer look reveals its shaky foundations that side-line health and the environment, and is reliant on unsustainably low prices driven by speculation and industry overestimates (3).

"A hard look at the historical production from shale gas wells in the US shows that unconventional gas cannot provide a long-lasting "never mind environmentally sustainable" answer to European low-carbon energy needs", says Geert De Cock from Food & Water Watch Europe. "Europe cannot drill its way to decarbonisation by 2050".

If Europe and its member states are serious about addressing energy issues, they should move away from further extractivism and from market fixes that only increase the climate and energy crises as well as social conflicts - in Europe and beyond its borders - where severe environmental and human rights violations are taking place.

In this regard, the "Time to Scrap the ETS" declaration (4), signed by over 140 organizations and groups around the world also calls for policies and action to transform the EU's energy infrastructure and an end to the industrial use of fossil fuels. The EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) has been an obstacle for this transition as it allows and subsidizes dirty energy.

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Notes:

(1) http://static.euractiv.com/sites/all/euractiv/files/Council_Conclusions_Energy.pdf

(2) <http://www.euractiv.com/priorities/business-tells-barroso-balance-e-news-519506>

(3) <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/pressreleases/wishful-thinking-debunking-the-myths-of-the-shale-gas-boom>

(4) <http://scrap-the-euets.makenoise.org/english/>. Groups, networks, NGOs and collectives that want to sign to the Scrap the ETS declaration, please send an email to scrap.the.ets@gmail.com

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Organizations:

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Aliança RECOs – Redes de Cooperação Comunitária Sem Fronteiras, Brazil

ATTAC, France

Carbon Trade Watch

Centre for Civil Society, Durban, South Africa

Centro de Referência do Movimento da Cidadania pelas Águas florestas e Montanhas Iguassu ITEREI, Brazil

Ciel Voil©, France

Corner House, UK

Corporate Europe Observatory

Earth Peoples

Ecologistas en Acción, Spain

EcoNexus, UK

FERN

Food and Water Watch Europe

Green Cross Society, Ukraine

Indian Social Action Forum, India

Indigenous Environmental Network

ITEREI- Refúgio Particular de Animais Nativos, Brazil

JAIJustiça Ambiental (Friends of the Earth), Mozambique

Jubilee South - Asia/Pacific Movement on Debt and Development (JSAPMDD)

Les Amis de la Terre (Friends of the Earth), France

Movimento Mulheres pela P@Z!, Brazil

Observatori del Deute en la Globalització³ (ODG)

Ongd AFRICANDO, Spain

Philippine Movement for Climate Justice, Phillipines

Philippine Network on Climate Change, Phillipines

Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo

Re: Common, Italy

Sanlakas Phillipines

School of Democratic Economics

Taller Ecologista, Argentina

Terr! Organizaçãõ da Sociedade Civil, Brazil

Timberwatch Coalition, South Africa

Transnational Institute

VZW CLIMAXI, Belgium

Woodland League, Ireland

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