



Conflict Minerals: Almost 42.000 Europeans demand a mandatory regulation

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Brussels –

On April 5th EU Parliament and Commission will meet in Brussels with the Dutch Council Presidency for their second triologue negotiation over a conflict mineral regulation. Before the meeting the Stop Mad Mining network will hand over the petition "Tackling the trade in conflict minerals!" signed by almost 42 thousand people, who demand an EU regulation with mandatory due diligence, which meets the OECD standards as a minimum.

"Whenever we buy a phone, a computer or a car, we run the risk of fuelling a conflict in the Global South. We cannot know whether they contain conflict minerals or not", explains Michael Reckordt from the NGO PowerShift. Reckordt adds: "Europe still lacks a mandatory and comprehensive law that tackles this deadly trade."

Armed groups in high risk areas like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Colombia and Myanmar are financed by selling the minerals: Gold, tantalum, tin and tungsten (3TG) make their way into phones, laptops and cars that EU citizens buy every day.

"It is a shame for Europe to not have any law on that issue, while the deadly trade with minerals continues fuelling conflicts worldwide", says Anna Backmann from the German NGO Christliche Initiative Romero (CIR). According to Backmann "the OECD has proposed a methodology for due diligence that was recently implemented by China." The USA have a comparable law in Section 1502 of the Dodd-Frank Act that focuses on the DRC and neighbouring countries. In their recent field study the US, American NGO 'Enough Project' proved positive effects of the US-law.

Lala Hakuma Dadci from the French NGO Aitec claims: "We and 42.000 people call upon EU Member States to match Parliament's commitment to break the link between conflict financing and metal sourcing, by supporting binding due diligence requirements." According to Hakuma Dadci "that could have a real and positive impact on the trade in minerals and on the violence and harm associated with mining in some of the world's poorest areas."

The 'Stop Mad Mining' network argues that this is precisely why a strong, mandatory due diligence regulation is required to ensure all companies importing ores, metals and products containing these materials into Europe check their supply chains. For the handover Stop Mad Mining will be supported by 'CIDSE', based in Brussels, who have just launched their own petition on conflict minerals.

Background:

In a huge step forward, the European Parliament voted on 20th May 2015 for a strong and binding regulation. It would require companies bringing 3TG products into the EU — in any form — to source them more responsible.

The final legislation will be decided in the currently ongoing 'trialogue meetings'. These are negotiations between the European Parliament, the EU Commission, and representatives of Member States. In the forefront European Member States together had to agree on a common Council position. Then the three EU organs entered into the negotiations in order to reach an agreement between the Commission's business-friendly draft and the human rights-based parliamentary draft.

Stop Mad Mining represented by CIR and PowerShift from Germany and AITEC from France will hand over the petition during the second Triologue meeting on 5th April to political decision-makers.

CIDSE, based in Brussels, have just launched their own petition on conflict minerals here:
<http://www.justicepaix.be/conflict-minerals/>

In May 2015 almost 300 thousand people signed Walkfree's petition on conflict minerals
<https://www.walkfree.org/tackle-conflict-minerals-trade/>

The EU imports 16% of the global supply of tin, tungsten, tantalum and gold, which is linked to the production of technology products. In addition EU companies import these metals indirectly in consumer and industrial products, such as laptops and smartphones.





PRESS RELEASE

The study of the US-American NGO 'Enough Project' proves positive effects of the US law
http://www.enoughproject.org/files/DRC_PointofOrigin_022016.pdf.

For more details, with petition text, see: <http://stop-mad-mining.org>

For more information on the conflict minerals issue in general see:
<https://www.globalwitness.org/campaigns/conflict-minerals/>

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