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Joint Public Statement

European Parliament's Development Committee sends strong signal on conflict minerals

Monday night the European Parliament's Development Committee (DEVE) sent a powerful message. It voted, with a significant majority, for mandatory conflict minerals regulation in the EU. It called for a binding regulation that will require companies trading in key resources to source their minerals responsibly, and publicly report on what they have done to avoid financing conflict or human rights abuses.

We welcome this strong political signal. It is an important step towards breaking the links between the trade in minerals, and conflict and human rights abuses.

DEVE's vote was responding to a [weak legislative proposal](#) from the European Commission last March. This proposal gives a small number of importers of tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold (3TG) the **option** of sourcing responsibly. This voluntary scheme would be available to only a tiny fraction—0.05%—of companies using and trading the minerals in the EU, and would have virtually no impact on companies' sourcing behaviour. It also ignores companies that import products containing these minerals into the EU, such as in cars and laptops. [Business leaders](#), [investors](#), [religious leaders](#), [civil society](#) and consumers have all criticised the Commission's approach.

Last night, with support from a broad spectrum of political groups, the DEVE Committee rejected the Commission's proposal for a voluntary, narrow scheme by 23 to 2 votes.

The DEVE Committee has instead demanded a mandatory scheme that extends to companies importing products containing tin, tantalum, tungsten, and gold into the EU. Companies at different points in the supply chain are asked to work together to identify and assess risks in their supply chain—a process known as supply chain due diligence—in line with an internationally recognised standard. DEVE has also called for a mechanism that will allow the regulation to be extended in the future to cover other natural resources that fuel conflict and human rights abuses. It has also called for the EU to complement the regulation with development projects aimed at enhancing responsible sourcing and addressing development needs linked to the exploitation of minerals in conflict-affected and high-risk areas.

The International Trade Committee (INTA) is leading the Parliament's work on the conflict minerals issue. It will vote on the Commission's proposal in mid-April. The INTA Committee's approach to this issue will be critical to shaping the Parliament's response to the trade in conflict minerals.



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Yet a draft report presented by the INTA rapporteur, Iuliu Winkler, last month is [concerning](#). It suggests the Trade Committee is considering a significant step backwards. The draft report fails to address the weaknesses in the Commission's proposal, and instead weakens it further.

Civil society is calling on the Trade Committee to listen to what Parliamentarians from across Europe's political spectrum stated so clearly in the Development Committee last night.

If the Parliament supports the Commission's voluntary and narrow approach, Europe will not only fail to live up to its human rights obligations, it also risks creating a fragmented market and uneven playing field to the detriment of EU companies. Like the Development Committee, the Trade Committee must show leadership and push for strong regulation that requires EU companies to source their minerals responsibly. It is time for Europe to be part of the solution, not the problem.

For more information, visit: www.globalwitness.org/conflictminerals/