

18 May 2015

Open Letter to Members of the European Parliament on the EU Conflict Minerals Regulation

The European Union is the world's largest economy, the world's largest trading block, and home to 500 million consumers. Every year, millions of euro worth of minerals flow into the EU from some of the poorest places on earth. No questions are asked about how they are extracted, or whether their trade fuels conflict in local communities. The EU has no legislation in place to ensure companies source their minerals responsibly. Now is the time for change.

The trade in resources – such as gold, diamonds, tantalum, tin, copper and coal – continues to perpetuate a cycle of conflict and human rights abuses in many fragile areas of the world. These resources enter global supply chains and end up in products that we use every day, such as aeroplanes, cars, mobile phones and laptops. These goods connect us to the hundreds of thousands who have been displaced by conflict in the Central African Republic and Colombia. They connect us also to the thousands who have endured years of violence and abuse in parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and to the unknown victims of shadowy intelligence organisations in Zimbabwe.

In March 2014, the European Commission put forward a draft regulation to address the trade in conflict minerals that, if passed, would fail to have a meaningful impact. It covers just four minerals: tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold. It is entirely voluntary, giving 300-400 importers of those minerals the *option* of sourcing responsibly and reporting publicly on their efforts to do so, through a process known as “supply chain due diligence”. The law would only cover a tiny proportion of EU companies involved in the trade, and leaves out the tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold that enter the EU in products that we use every day.

The European Parliament's International Trade Committee has since proposed some mandatory requirements – but these also apply to just a small fraction of the industry. The vast majority of companies involved – including some of those importing directly from conflict-affected and high-risk areas – would have no obligation to source responsibly. Companies importing products containing these minerals would be left entirely off the hook.

This is a landmark opportunity for progress. But the weak proposals on the table would leave Europe lagging behind global efforts, including mandatory requirements endorsed by the US and by twelve African countries.

You, as a Member of the Parliament, can make a difference. We are calling on you to vote on 20 May for a law that:

* Requires all companies bringing minerals into the EU – whether in their raw form or contained in products – to carry out supply chain due diligence and publicly report in line with international standards.

* Is flexible enough to cover, in the future, other resources that may be linked to conflict, human rights abuses and corruption.

Tackling the highly lucrative trade in conflict minerals will not, on its own, put an end to conflict, corruption or abuse. However, it is critical to securing long-term peace and stability in some of the most fragile and resource-rich areas of the world. As long as an illicit industry can flourish unchecked, the trade in conflict minerals will supply funds and motivation to violent and abusive actors. Those bearing the cost of our weak efforts to regulate this trade will be some of the poorest and most vulnerable citizens of the world. For them, inaction and irresponsible business comes at a serious cost.

Yours sincerely

1. Amnesty International
2. Global Witness
3. ABColombia
4. Ação Franciscana de Ecologia e Solidariede (AFES)
5. Access Info Europe
6. ACIDH, Action Contre l'Impunité pour les Droits Humains (Action Against Impunity for Human Rights)
7. Acidi Congo
8. ActionAid
9. AEDH
10. AEFJN (Africa Europe Faith & Justice Network)
11. African Resources Watch (AFREWATCH)
12. AK Rohstoffe, Germany
13. ALBOAN Foundation
14. Alburnus Maior (The Save Rosia Montana Campaign)
15. Alternative Information and Development Centre (AIDC)
16. Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), Thailand
17. Asociación Puente de Paz
18. Associació Solidaritat Castelldefels – Kasando
19. Atlantic Regional Solidarity Network
20. Ayar West Development Organization
21. Berne Declaration
22. BirdLife Europe
23. La Bretxa Àfrica
24. Broederlijk Delen
25. Business & Human Rights Resource Centre
26. CATAPA
27. CCFD-Terre Solidaire
28. CEDIB (Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia)
29. Centre for Civil Society, Durban, South Africa
30. Centro de Investigación y Estudios sobre Comercio y Desarrollo (CIECODE)
31. Chiama l'Africa
32. Chin Green Network
33. Chinland Natural Resources Watch Group
34. Christian Aid
35. CIDSE
36. CIR (Christliche Initiative Romero)
37. CNCD-11.11.11 (Belgium)
38. Coalition of the Flemish North-South Movement - 11.11.11
39. Comité des Observateurs des Droits de l'Homme (CODHO)
40. Commission Justice et Paix Belgique francophone
41. Community Management Education Center
42. Congo Calling
43. Cordaid
44. Cordillera Disaster Response and Development Services (CorDis RDS)
45. CORE
46. Diakonia
47. DKA Austria – Hilfswerk der Katholischen Jungschar
48. Earthworks
49. Ecumenical Network Central Africa / Ökumenisches Netz Zentralafrika
50. Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (Rt Revd Michael Doe, Chair)
51. Enough Project
52. Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF)
53. Ethical Consumer Research Association
54. European Coalition for Corporate Justice (ECCJ)
55. European Network for Central Africa (EurAc)

56. FASTENOPFER/ Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund
57. FDCL (Center for Research and Documentation Chile-Latin America)
58. FIFF e.V.
59. FIDH
60. Focus on the Global South
61. FOCSIV (a federation of 70 Italian Catholic NGOs)
62. Forum Syd, Sweden
63. Foundation Max van der Stoel
64. Franciscan's OFM JPIC Office, Rome
65. Friends of the Earth Europe
66. Friends of the Earth Spain
67. Fundación Jubileo - Bolivia
68. The Gaia Foundation (UK)
69. GATT-RN
70. German NGO Forum on Environment and Development / Forum Umwelt und Entwicklung
71. Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
72. Global Policy Forum
73. Green Network Sustainable Environment Group
74. "Grupo Pro Africa" Network
75. Habi Center for Environmental Rights, Cairo
76. Hands of Unity Group
77. IBIS
78. Info Birmanie
79. Indigenous Peoples Link (PIPLinks)
80. Informationsstelle Peru (Germany)
81. INKOTA-netzwerk e.V.
82. Integrate: Business and Human Rights
83. International Indian Treaty Council
84. International-Lawyers.Org (INTLawyers)
85. Investors Against Genocide
86. Jamaa Resource Initiatives, Kenya
87. Jesuit European Social Centre (JESC)
88. Jesuit Missions
89. Jesuitenmission Deutschland
90. Jubilee Australia
91. Just Minerals Campaign
92. Justícia i Pau
93. Khan Kaneej Aur ADHIKAR (Mines minerals & RIGHTS)
94. kolko - Menschenrechte für Kolumbien e.V. (kolko - human rights for Colombia)
95. Koordinierungsstelle der Österreichischen Bischofskonferenz für internationale Entwicklung und Mission (KOO)
96. London Mining Network
97. Magway EITI Watch Group
98. Magway Youth Forum
99. Marinduque Council for Environmental Concerns (MaCEC)
100. Medicus Mundi Alava
101. Milieudéfensie / Friends of the Earth Netherlands
102. Mineral Policy Institute
103. mines, minerals & PEOPLE (MMP)
104. MiningWatch Canada
105. Mining Watch Romania Network
106. Misereor
107. Mundubat
108. Mwetaung Area Development Group
109. Myaing Youth Development Organization
110. The Natural Resource Women Platform
111. NITLAPAN-UCA, Nicaragua
112. Observatorio de Responsabilidad Social Corporativa

113. Oidhaco (a European network of 36 NGOs)
114. ONGAWA Ingeniería para el Desarrollo Humano
115. Organic Agro and Farmer Affair Development Group
116. Oxfam France
117. Partnership Africa Canada
118. PAX for Peace
119. Pax Christi, Deutsche Sektion
120. People for People
121. Polish Institute for Human Rights and Business
122. Pon and Ponnya Hill Resources Watch Group
123. PowerShift e.V. (Germany)
124. PREMICONGO (Protection des écorégions de miombo au Congo)
125. Publish What You Pay International
126. PWYP – Liberia
127. PWYP UK
128. REDES (a network of 54 NGOs)
129. Research Group "Human rights and globalization"
130. Réseau Belge Ressources Naturelles-Belgisch Netwerk Natuurlijke Rijkdommen
131. Rete Pace per il Congo
132. RODHECIC
133. Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF)
134. Servicio Agropecuario para la Investigación y Promoción Económica (SAIPE)
135. Shwe Gas Movement (SGM)
136. Sherpa
137. SJ Around the Bay
138. Slovak Centre for Communication and Development
139. Social Care Volunteer Group
140. Social Program Aid for Civil Education (SPACE)
141. SOLdePaz.Pachakuti
142. Solidarietà e Cooperazione CIPSI
143. SOMO
144. Stop Mad Mining
145. Südwind, Austria
146. SÜDWIND e.V., Germany
147. Swedwatch
148. Swiss Working Group on Colombia / Grupo de Trabajo Suiza Colombia
149. Synergies des Femmes pour les victimes des Violences Sexuelles (SFVS)
150. Torang Trust
151. Wacam
152. Walk Free
153. Wan Lark Rural Development Foundation Rakhaine (Arakan)
154. Welthaus Diözese Graz-Seckau
155. Welthaus of the Diocese of Linz
156. Zomi Student Association (Universities Myanmar)
157. 88 Rakhine Generation Social Development Organization