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First Debriefing

Green Group Delegation to Belo Monte

Debriefing on the Green Group Delegation to Belo Monte (Brasilia, Belem and Altamira), July 8-13, 2013

Brussels, July 17th, 2013

Son Excellence l'Ambassadeur
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Excellency, We went to Brasilia, Belem and Altamira with the aim to listen to all sides, to see with our own eyes what is happening and to discuss opinions with all stakeholders. We met many of them - Itamaraty ambassadors, prosecutors (Ministerio Publico Federal) and judges, academics, human rights organization, Movimento Xingu Vivo, villagers, fisherman and -women, indigenous representatives, Bishop Dom Erwin - and we are content that after 2 many attempts from our side to meet with Norte Energia in Altamira and to visit the site we in the end at least in Brasilia we have had the occasion to speak to a representative from Norte Energia, thanks to the effort of the Austrian ambassador Marianne Feldmann. We also had a very good meeting with the Head of the EU Delegation, Ana Paula Zacarias, and Mario Queiro from the EU delegation accompanied us during the visit. We see our delegation not as an attempt to interfere in questions of national sovereignty, as some allege, but as a visit out of concern for values shared between Brazilians and Europeans. And apart from that, in a globalized world, where companies and business every day 'interfere' across borders, we see it is the task of parliamentarians to see to it that universally defined standards are applied everywhere and that companies based in EU member states also live up to these standards wherever they act -Corporate Social Responsibility is a must for any modern company. Our visit, after an attempt for a visit by the Development Committee of the European Parliament at the end of last year, which unfortunately had to be cancelled because of time constraints, we saw and see our visit as an act of solidarity with those in Brazil who share the view that rule of law, participation, consultation and transparency have to be guaranteed. We are convinced that the current Brazilian government shares these

values. First result: we left Brazil more worried than when we arrived. We are not convinced by the arguments given by the promoters of the Belo Monte dam, we see it as an example of a development model that has been proven faulty and not fulfilling expectations (even by its promotors) in other parts of the world. **1.** We question the need to construct the dam - there are studies f.ex. by WWF Brazil that show that Brazil's energy needs can be covered with investing in energy efficiency and in diversification: renewables (solar, wind, biomass, also small size hydroelectric power plants) - and maybe even less costly than the Belo Monte plant. The problem of the grid not being up to the need of transporting the electricity which is to be produced also came up as a grave concern. The prospect of 11.000 MW will only be met in the rainy season, in the dry or drier seasons the plant will not be able to produce much more than 4.000MW (equivalent to 1.000 windmills) - therefore experts fear that further dams are in preparation. **2.** We are worried concerning the conformity of licences with the rule of law and with international conventions (mainly ILO 169) Brazil has signed and rulings Brazil is bound to. A project as big as Belo Monte cannot be constructed on a provisional legal basis and by the logic of „fait accompli“. The Supreme Court is currently shutting up judicial rulings on the basis of a law stemming from dictatorial times („suspensão de segurança“). **3.** We are worried concerning the destructive effects of the site. The modification of original construction plans (incl. reduction of flooded area) has changed the form of the destruction, not the destruction itself. Indigenous people's livelihood is being threatened, they are in danger of being exterminated - even if their demarcated territories are not touched directly, as the Itamaraty ambassadors told us. FUNAI seems to have too little staff and resources to be as effective as it should be in defending indigenous peoples' rights according to the Brazilian constitution. Apart from that there is strong pressure from the agro industry, f.ex. in Congress, to reduce indigenous peoples' rights. This has an effect on the indigenous and other poor people in the region: They have the impression they are perceived to be second-class citizens. Environmental damage will be (or is already) irreversible, as we heard from several experts. **4.** We question the real objective of the dam: It could a) become a self-service for big companies in search of benefits; and b) serve the aim of facilitate access to mineral (gold, aluminum, etc.) resources. **5.** We question whether it will work, as some of the effects have not at all been object of studies accepted by the licensing authorities (so called indirect effects on indigenous and 4 other people who live along the river, flora and fauna, water level dimensions in the Volta Grande after flooding and in the flooded area itself, deforestation and its effect on groundwater and river water levels etc. **6.** 40 conditionalities that Norte Energia has to implement before the next licensing step is granted are not being fulfilled in the time span demanded. Apart from that Norte Energia has a huge communication problem: Citizens in the region simply feel totally overrun, not informed, not consulted. As possible remedies we consider necessary: **1.** To reinstall the rule of law. Belo Monte must be a legal project, and not a project based on 'fait accompli' before all legal matters have been clarified: The Supreme Court needs to rule on whether proper consultation of indigenous communities has taken place before the first licensing. No matter what the outcome is, it has to be respected, in order to guarantee conformity with the Brazilian Constitution and international commitments . Juridical actions must not be stopped by an outdated law (suspensão de segurança). Workers’ rights have to be guaranteed on the site. Opponents must not be threatened and criminalized. **2.** To provide basic services to the region. Access to health, education, proper housing, security and transport are currently privatised and transformed into services which have to be provided by Norte Energia. Business cannot replace basic public responsibilities of the state and its authorities. **3.** The government should not let allow itself to be taken hostage by company and big (agro) industry interests. The danger is particularly high in the construction, agroindustry and mining sectors. **4.** To engage into a serious discussion on what a sustainable and economic way of energy production in the 21st century should look like. **5.** We were very surprised that we had a white car with a man following us in Altamira, taking pictures of us and the people who transported us (taxi driver, boat pilot). We do not think that that is an adequate way of acting with a delegation of parliamentarians. Finally: We went to Brazil in a crucial moment, where people out in the streets question access to rights and consultative processes. We know it is a difficult moment for the Brazilian government. But the cards are on the table. We found many convincing arguments that Brazil can do without Belo Monte. We want to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Brazilian government, with Norte Energia and with the European companies involved. MEP Ulrike Lunacek (Austria)

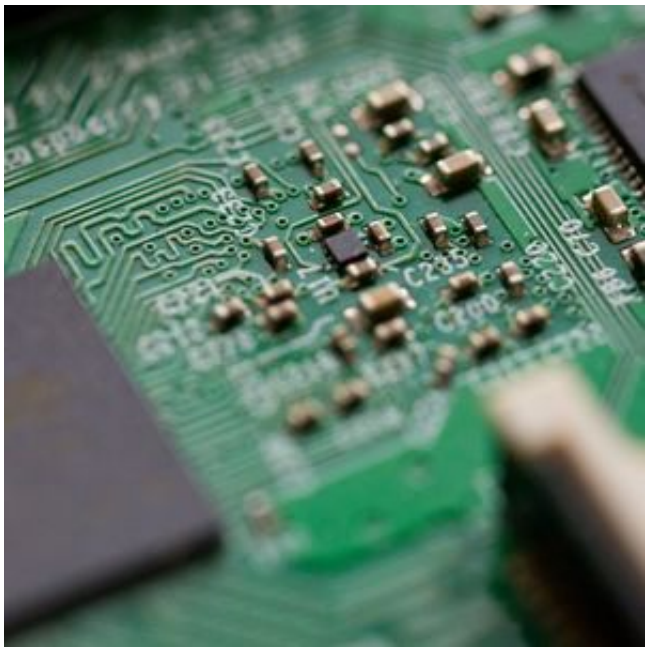
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