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Shale Gas

EP Committees fight back

As a [report](#) in the Environment committee on the environmental impacts of shale gas makes it way through the European Parliament, two other committees, Development and Legal Affairs, voted on their own opinions on the report today. In both cases, Green MEPs drafted the opinions and negotiated them through choppy political waters before they were carried by majorities in the committees this afternoon. They represent the first defection against the European Parliament's thus far one-sided pro-fracking view and will help apply political pressure to the report, in a similar way to [committee opinions on ACTA](#). In the legal affairs committee, Eva Lichtenberger's [opinion](#) called for environmental laws to be obeyed when it comes to fracking and shale gas. There must be no exemption from these requirements as it is precisely concerns over the environment and ground water that make fracking so controversial. In the Development committee, Catherine Grèze's [opinion](#) focused on the issue of the responsibility of the European Union to developing countries and the need for a legally binding framework. Current EU legislation does not provide sufficient guarantees and will not help to avoid the worst consequences of fracking and must be strengthened. The enormous quantities of water required and the chemicals used could undermine access to this resource in countries where its lack is already sorely felt. In addition, acquisitions of land for the mining of oil and gas are a key driver of land-grabbing worldwide and seriously threaten indigenous communities, farmers and the poorest in terms of access to water, fertile soil and food. We have already seen too many examples of the disastrous consequences of oil exploitation in developing countries and emerging economies. Shale gas is high on the Parliament's agenda and pro-fracking lobbying is at fever pitch. These opinions are part of the push back and the campaigning and unprecedented mobilisation of citizens across Europe must continue.

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