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Shale Gas Petitions at EP

Bulgarians appeal against fracking

Green MEPs met with three petitioners from Bulgaria today to discuss their petition against the exploration and extraction of shale gas in their country ahead of its presentation to the petitions committee. Bulgaria depends almost entirely on Russian gas supplies via Ukriane and is understandably seeking to diversify its energy sources. Fracking for shale gas however is not the fix-all it is portrayed to be, and the petitioners and Bulgarian public are greatly concerned that approval was given for an extraction project without assessing its environmental impact.

In May 2011, the U.S. company Chevron won a tender for the exploration of a shale gas field in north-eastern Bulgaria, "Block 1 Novi Pazar". EU member states are required to ensure that any exploration or exploitation of energy sources, including shale gas, complies with provisions on the protection of the environment and human health and an environmental impact assessment (EIA) is mandatory for a project of this type. The petitioners argue that in the case of "Block 1 Novi Pazar", Chevron Exploration carried out no EIA, and that the Bulgarian authorities denied the neccessity for one.

The three petitioners, Mr. Vesko Dimov, ex-deputy mayor of Novi Pazar Mrs Daniela Mironova, and former Bulgarian MEP Mrs Dushana Zdravkova presented their petition which was joined by another anti-fracking petition from Poland, where similar pressures to diversify the energy supply exist. In January 2012 in Bulgaria, after public outcry and large protests throughout the country, the government declared a moratorium on the exploitation of shale gas by fracking. The licence granted to Chevron was canceled. However, plans are underway to continue the fracking process in neighbouring Romania and Poland, and public pressure on Bulgaria cannot yet be relieved.

Fracking has become a European issue. Despite what is often said, shale gas is clearly not a solution to our ever growing energy needs and its development will even create more problems with dramatic consequences for the environment, health and safety and the climate. That is why the petitioners today, and the very many that are expected to come forward on this issue over the coming months, need the support of the European Parlaiment. The Greens/EFA group will continue to support these initiatives and fight the well funded propaganda campaigns that support fracking across Europe.

Find out more on our Stop Climate Change Blog

- View photos (Flickr)
- View photos (facebook)
- Read the Bulgarian petition
- Read the Polish petition

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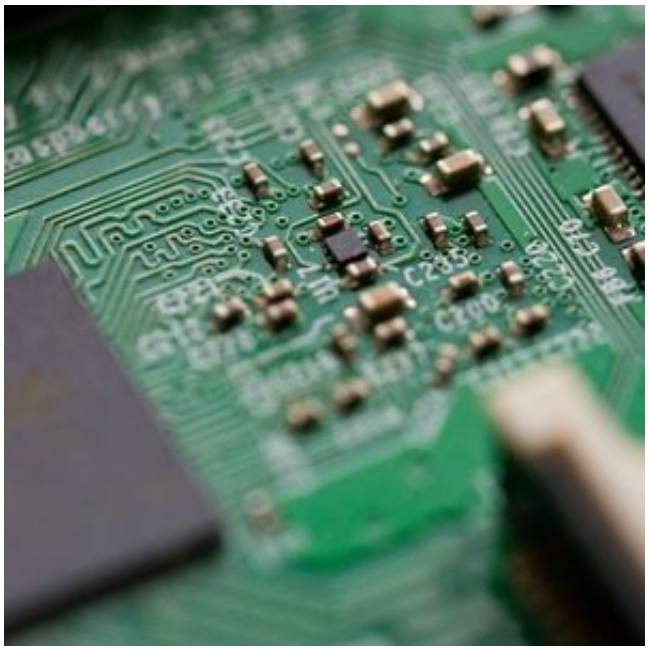


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