Press release | 16.06.2016

Conflict minerals

Binding rules agreed, as EU takes problem seriously

The European Parliament and Council today reached a political agreement on a new EU regulation aimed at tackling the problem of conflict minerals by introducing transparency provisions. Commenting on the outcome, Green development spokesperson **Judith Sargentini** said:

"This deal is a breakthrough in terms of dealing with the problem of conflict minerals and shows the EU is belatedly taking the problem seriously, 6 years after the US adopted the Dodd-Frank Act. Under the agreement, we will have binding obligations on firms involved in the extraction and trade of minerals for the first time in Europe. Importers of resources like gold and tin will have to check and address whether their supply chain is linked with armed conflicts and human rights abuses. Given the Commission and Council were originally content to introduce only a voluntary option for companies to self-certify as a 'responsible importer', this is clearly a major step forward and we welcome the support of the EU Parliament in helping to push for this (1).

"However, this agreement is only a partial response, as the vast majority of 'downstream firms', which process the minerals and produce the end consumer products, will not be subject to binding due diligence provisions.

"To this end, we welcome the inclusion of a commitment by the European Commission to propose additional steps to cover the whole supply chain in case voluntary initiatives show insufficient progress. The devil will very much be in the detail and we will be continue to follow the process closely.

"It essential that EU rules apply not just to a limited number of firms that import raw materials but also target other companies in the supply chain, so that final consumers goods like tablets and mobile phones are also covered. Only through full supply chain transparency can we ensure Europe plays a proactive role in ending the link between minerals trade and conflict, and ensuring the extraction of minerals and resources in developing countries leads to development and improvement of the lives of their societies at large."

(1) In 2014, the European Parliament adopted an initiative support by Judith Sargentini on conflict minerals with a large majority, which called for binding transparency rules for all firms in the mineral supply chain. In May 2015, the European Parliament adopted its position on the draft regulation in which it voted in favour of mandatory supply chain transparency.

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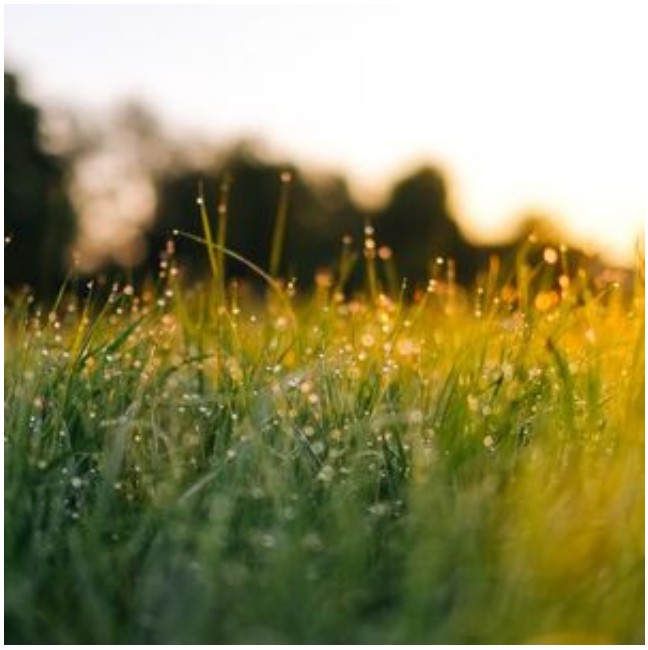
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Judith Sargentini

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