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EU needs to stop conflicts of interest from undermining climate policy

Revolving doors

As the UN Climate Change Conference takes off this week, the Greens/EFA Group has presented today in Bonn a study on **"Revolving doors and the fossil fuels industry"** and is calling for the adoption of a strong conflicts of interest policy that would avoid the disproportionate influence of the fossil fuels sector on the international climate change negotiations.

The demand to tackle conflicts of interest within the UNFCCC has been raised by governments representing over 70% of the world's population and civil society organisations from across the globe and is supported by the European Parliament. However, to date progress has been slow, notably because the European Commission had been siding with Canada and the USA to block any discussions on conflicts of interest from appearing on the UNFCCC agenda.

The report, presented today, gathers case studies of revolving doors between the fossil fuel industry and high level politicians, Ministers, regulators and advisors, and questions whether the EU and European governments' lack of appetite to deal with this issue is a result of the cosy relationships built up with the fossil fuel sector over the years.

The EU now has a unique opportunity to take a leadership role by engaging constructively in the upcoming negotiations on the need to introduce a conflict of interests policy for the UNFCCC. The talks in Bonn will run from 30 April to 10 May 2018, and negotiators will need to develop a clear negotiation text to build consensus for common, robust and flexible rules for finalisation at COP24.

Max Andersson, Member of the European Parliament attending the UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn today, comments:

"There is a revolving door between politics and the fossil fuel lobby all across Europe. It's not just a handful of cases – it is systematic. The fossil industry has an enormous economic interest in delaying climate action and the revolving door between politics and the fossil lobby is a serious cause for alarm.

"If we are to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement and keep global warming down to as close to 1.5 degrees as possible, we need to clamp down on conflicts of interest to stop coal, gas and oil from leaving their dirty

fingerprints over our climate policy.

"European governments need to support the call for a common sense conflict of interest policy so that the next COP can deliver an outcome that will put the world on the road towards a climate in balance."

Background on the Greens/EFA report

The report, which focuses on Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, can be found here: https://www.greens-efa.eu/files/doc/docs/3d2ec57d6d6aa101bab92f4396c12198.pdf

The report concludes that:

- The revolving door phenomenon is systemic and widespread, with our research in 13 countries, focusing specifically on the fossil fuel sector, revealing at least 88 cases of revolving doors between Ministers, advisors, regulators and politicians.
- There is a lack of adequate legislation to ensure that climate policy-making is not unduly influenced by vested interests, and where legislation exists, it is not properly applied.
- There is a need to adopt conflicts of interest policies at UN, EU and national level to safeguard public interest policy-making from the disproportionate influence of vested interest, which is particularly urgent when it comes to climate negotiations.

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