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Offshore oil and gas exploration

Commission misses opportunity to sufficiently tighten EU rules

The European Commission today presented its proposals to update EU rules dealing with offshore oil and gas exploration following the Deepwater Horizon tragedy and other recent oil spills. The Greens expressed regret that the proposals fail to provide certainty on financial liability in the case of accidents and fail to provide for sufficient independent oversight. Commenting on the proposals, Green MEP **Bart Staes** said:

"Today's proposals represent a missed opportunity to sufficiently tighten up EU rules on offshore exploration. Despite initially talking tough after the Deepwater Horizon accident, the Commission has failed to follow through with ambitious proposals to tackle the gaps in EU legislation on financial liability in the case of accidents, as well as on independent oversight."

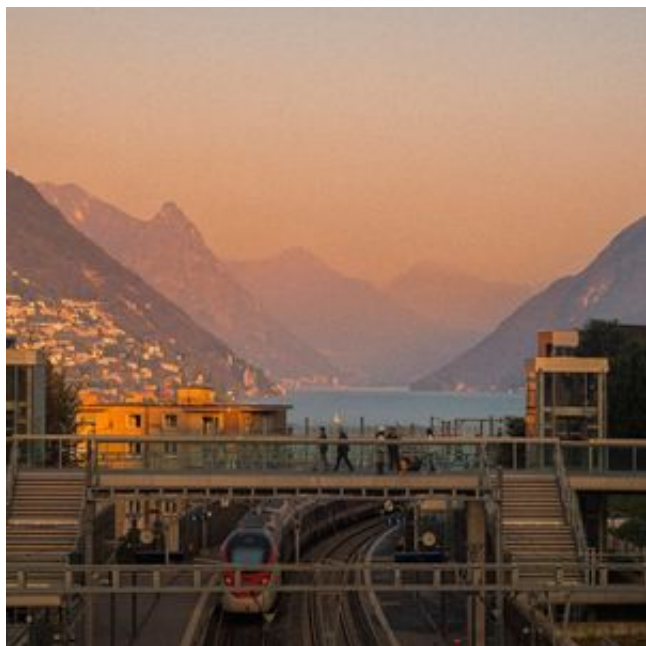
"The Commission's proposals would fail to ensure the full financial liability of firms in the case of accidents, despite the fact that financial guarantees have consistently been called for by the European Parliament. It is wrong that petroleum firms should be able to amass profits from offshore extraction and expect public coffers to pick up the tab in the case of accidents. The proposals also do not go far enough in terms of strengthening the powers of the European Maritime Safety Agency as regards third party verification, ensuring a poacher-turned-gamekeeper approach to oversight. The Greens also regret the failure to insist on prior testing of prevention and remediation techniques and for a ban on any activities in environmentally-sensitive areas.

Green MEP and environment spokesperson **Bas Eickhout** added:

"Recent oil platform spills in the US and the North Sea have underlined the need for the EU to update the piecemeal regulations governing offshore oil and gas exploration. Ever deeper drilling poses ever greater risks and we regret that the Commission has lacked the courage to come forward with sufficiently ambitious proposals."

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Bas Eickhout

Co-President



Bart Staes

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