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Press release | 19.09.2012

Shale gas and fracking

EP vote underlines concerns, urging tough regulation and mooting rethink

The European Parliament's environment today adopted a report setting out its opinion on shale gas (1), notably as regards the health and environment concerns and need for EU regulation. The Greens welcomed the outcome of the vote, which called for caution, notably a ban in sensitive areas, and underlined the need for tougher regulation and proper application of existing EU rules. Commenting after the vote, Green environment spokesperson **Carl Schlyter** (MEP, Sweden) stated:

"The EP's environment committee has today cast serious doubt on the future of shale gas in the EU. MEPs have called for caution to be exercised while the real health and environmental impacts of shale gas extraction and their implications for EU regulations are assessed, as well as explicitly calling for a ban in sensitive areas. This implies that member states should think twice before allowing any projects of this controversial technology to go ahead.

"The growing body of evidence about the environmental and health risks associated with shale gas extraction, notably through fracking, cannot be ignored (2). The potentially disastrous impact of the use of toxic chemicals in the fracking process has been well documented, particularly on the water table. The European Commission itself has raised doubts over the compatibility of fracking with EU legislation on water quality (the Water Framework Directive) (3). There are also doubts as to whether some of the substances used in the fracking process are compatible with EU chemicals rules. This is not to mention the negative climate impact resulting from the intensive extraction process and subsequent combustion of this fossil fuel.

"While the Greens believe we already have sufficient evidence to ban this risky technology, clearly, existing EU legislation must be vigorously enforced at the very least. MEPs have today underlined this point as well as calling for EU liability rules to be revised to ensure that those involved in shale gas extraction are fully liable for all damages and are required to provide financial guarantees to cover the potential risks."

(1) Sonik report on the environmental impacts of shale gas and oil extraction activities.

(2) See new campaign material from the Greens on shale gas:
http://www.stopclimatechange.net/index.php?id=shalegas

(3) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/energy/unconventional_en.htm

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