

**Question for written answer E-005645/2016  
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**

Rule 130

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Subject: VP/HR - Oil exploration in the occupied territories of Western Sahara

According to the UN Charter, the exploitation of resources in non-self-governing territories must benefit the peoples that inhabit them, contrary to the current situation in the occupied territories of Western Sahara where the Kingdom of Morocco subjects the Sahrawi people to illegal occupation.

The Court of Justice of the European Union reaffirmed this principle on 10 December 2015 by ruling that the EU-Morocco free trade agreement on agricultural and other primary products was illegal as it included the occupied territories of Western Sahara in its scope. The suspension of similar trade agreements is expected to follow in the coming months.

Oil exploration in occupied Western Sahara was the subject of a specific UN Legal Opinion (2002/161), which reaffirmed its illegality. However, the search for oil and gas continues with the active involvement of European companies.

Is the Commission aware of the involvement of European companies, such as PGNiG, TOTAL, San Leon Energy, Cairn Energy, New Age (African Global Energy) and Teredo Oils, in oil and gas exploration in the occupied Western Sahara?

What measures will it take to ensure that this activity ceases in accordance with international law?