

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3582/03
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to the Commission

Subject: Role of multinational corporations in conflict regions in Africa

The UN Security Council's endorsement of the report by the UN Expert Panel on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire) and the publication in the French press of extracts from this report underline the urgent need for greater transparency when investigating the links between the responsibilities of multinational corporations and the pursuit of war in certain countries, particularly on the African continent.

In the light of the European Parliament's adoption of the Howitt report in 1998 on EU standards for European enterprises operating in developing countries: towards a European Code of Conduct and monitoring platform (A4-0508/1998) and the repeated calls for the Commission to impose strict controls on multinational corporations obliging them to treat human beings with respect, to maintain human dignity and proper working conditions and to respect democratic principles and the values of peace, can the Commission state what progress has been made in this area?

More specifically, has the Commission had access to the full text of the UN report? If so, can it state whether or not European private or public companies are implicated in illegal activity in relation to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo? If so, will action be taken (setting up a committee of inquiry, sanctions) to ensure that no European subsidy is linked to this conflict?