

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0020/04

pursuant to Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure

by Monica Frassoni, Claude Turmes, Paul Lannoye, Didier Rod, Pierre Jonckheer, Alain Lipietz, Nelly Maes, Nuala Ahern, Patricia McKenna, Hiltrud Breyer, Caroline Lucas, Alexander de Roo and Marie Isler Béguin, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group  
to the Council

Subject: World Bank commissioned report on extractive industries

On 15 January, the final report of the Extractive Industries Review was published. The aim of the independent review was to produce a set of recommendations that will guide involvement of the World Bank Group in the oil, gas and mining sectors. Although the Extractive Industries Review focused on World Bank Group investments, the report also has application for the EBRD and the EIB because many operations are jointly financed by the international financing cooperations and the European banks. It also implies consequences for the export credit agencies of the Member States.

On 15 April the World Bank Group will make recommendations regarding the future of the World Bank Group's involvement in these sectors, and internal processes. For this purpose, all European Union governments have to formulate their position on the conclusions of the report by the middle of April 2004.

The report concludes that there is a role for the World Bank Group in the oil, mining and gas sectors, but only when the right conditions are in place to promote poverty reduction and sustainable development.

The EIR final report makes key recommendations such as:

- guarantee the right of indigenous peoples and project-affected communities to give their free, prior and informed consent to World Bank-financed projects;
- align the institution's energy sector priorities with its environmental and social mandate by phasing out investments in oil production by 2008, focusing on gas as a transitional fuel, and continuing to avoid new coal mining development;
- increase by 20 percent annually its investments in renewable energy projects that can meet the energy needs of the world's poor.

The European Union Member States hold over 40% of the vote on the boards of the World Bank and the IMF and would represent an important factor in the World Bank decision-making process if a concerted EU approach was achieved.

Does the Council plan to debate the important findings and recommendations of the EIR report in one of its next meetings?

Does the Irish Presidency intend to coordinate the position of the Member States with a view to achieving a concerted attitude by the Member States in support of the entirety of the report?

Tabled: 03.03.2004

Forwarded: 04.03.2004

Deadline for reply: 25.03.2004