

To: European Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete
Cc: European Commission Vice-President for Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič
Cc: European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker

Dear Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete

Subject: EU must support tackling vested interests at UN climate talks

For the world to reach the necessary ambition to achieve our climate commitments under the Paris Agreement, which would keep average global temperature rises well below 2°C and even 1.5°C, the EU, led by the European Commission, must start supporting efforts to tackle vested interests within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

We, 93 civil society organisations working in Brussels and in countries affected by EU climate policies, are therefore deeply concerned that the same polluting corporations whose actions largely contribute to climate change - chief among them fossil fuel companies and their lobby groups - are using their involvement in the UNFCCC talks to delay action and hold back the needed ambition.[1] We are also concerned at the frequent privileged access they enjoy.

You have a great deal of responsibility in deciding whether the EU aligns itself with the interests of polluters or all those working for a just transformation of our energy system and economy. We call on you to show leadership and to ensure the integrity of the UNFCCC, one of the only democratic international spaces where climate change can be addressed, by supporting an effective conflict of interest policy at the upcoming UNFCCC negotiations this April-May in Bonn.

For the past two years, countries representing nearly 70 per cent of the world's population have consistently called upon the UNFCCC to address this problem, calling for the adoption of a definition of a conflict of interest as well as the introduction of a rigorous conflict of interest policy framework. They have been joined by numerous civil society organisations in the global South and North representing youth, indigenous people, women, and those on the frontlines of climate change.[2]

All recognise the importance of increasing engagement with 'non-party stakeholders', but an effective conflict of interest policy would do so without undermining strong climate action. Such an approach is commonplace and was also adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (UNFCTC), which the European Commission is a signatory of, in order to protect public health policymaking from the vested interests of the tobacco industry.[3]

The European Parliament passed a resolution in October 2017 calling for "the issue of vested or conflicting interests be addressed" and for "guidelines",[4] but the European Union has continued to block progress, alongside historic polluters like the USA and Australia.

We call on you to listen to the European Parliament, to align yourself with those governments fighting for greater ambition on behalf of populations already feeling the impact, and not with President Trump and the same Big Oil, Gas and Coal corporations who are profiting from destroying the climate.

Yours sincerely,

Pascoe Sabido, Researcher, Corporate Europe Observatory
Jeremy Wates, Secretary General, European Environment Bureau

Nina Renshaw, Secretary General, European Public Health Alliance
Jagoda Munic, Director, Friends of the Earth Europe
Jorgo Riss, Director, Greenpeace European Unit

On behalf of:

#BonnFiji
350 New Orleans
350.org
Abibiman Foundation
ADECAR
Adéquations
Alternative Information Development Centre
Amigos de la Tierra
Amigos del Río San Rodrigo, A.C.
Amis de la Terre France/Friends of the Earth France
Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development
Asociația România Fără Ei
Associació de Micropobles de Catalunya
Athens County (Ohio, U.S.A) Fracking Action Network
Attac France
Austrian Sustainable Mobility
Both ENDS
Carbon Market Watch
CARE International - Climate Change and Resilience Platform (CCRP)
Center for ecology and energy
CERCLE DE RÉFLEXION ET D'ACTION POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DURABLE
Chair Keep Kirdford and Wisborough Green, KKWG
Change Partnership
Clacks Against Unconventional Gas Extraction
Clark Strategic Partners
CliMates
CNCD-11.11.11
Collectif Arcois pour la Planète
Collectif Causse Méjean - Gaz de Schiste NON !
Collectif Stop GHRM 38 France
Concerned Citizens against Climate Change
Coordination Office of the Austrian Bishop's Conference for International Development and Mission (KOO)
Corner House
Corporate Accountability
Debt Observatory in Globalisation - ODG
East Kent Against Fracking (EKAF)
eco-union
Ecologistas en Acción
EKOenergy
Energy Poverty Research initiative
EU-Umweltbüro

European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA)
FIAN Sweden
Fís Nua
FOCSIV
Food & Water Europe
Food & Water Watch
Frack Free Harrogate District
Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland
Friends of the Earth International
Friends of the Earth US
FUNDACION MADARIAGA
Green Liberty
HEIDENROSLEIN
ISENER
Jamaa Resource Initiatives
Jordens Vänner/Friends of the Earth Sweden
Keep Ireland Fracking Free
Leave it in the Ground Initiative (LINGO)
Limity jsme my
Nature Friends Greece
Naturfreunde Internationale
NOAH - Friends of the Earth Denmark
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment(NACCE)
Notre affaire à tous
Oil Change International
Ökosoziales Studierendenforum Österreich
Pacific Survival Pacific
People for a Healthy Environment
RIPESS EU - Solidarity Economy Europe
Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund
SEE Change Net Foundation
Siluh Records
Südwind, Austria
Swiss Youth for Climate
System Change, not Climate Change! Austria
The Climate Justice Project (USA)
The Gastivists
Third World Network
Transition Edinburgh
Transnational Institute
UK Youth Climate Coalition
Umwelt Management Austria/Forum Wissenschaft & Umwelt
urgewald
White Rabbit Grove RDNA
Xarxa per la sobirania energètica
Xun Biosphere Project
ZERO - Associação Sistema Terrestre Sustentável

[1] For concrete examples, please see

https://www.corporateaccountability.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/PollutingParis_COP23Report_2017.pdf

[2] Please see the UNFCCC portal for different countries' and stakeholders' submissions, such as the African Group of Negotiators:

http://www4.unfccc.int/sites/SubmissionPortal/Documents/201802041816---AGN%20draft%20Submission%20on%20SBI_Engagement%20of%20Non-Party%20Stakeholders.pdf

[3] For more information on the UNFCTC and its conflict of interest policy, please see:

<http://www.ftc.org/media-and-publications/media-releases-blog-list-view-of-all-313/industry-interference/718-article-53-framework-convention-on-tobacco-control-tobacco-industry-interference>

[4] Please see the European Parliament's resolution here:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2017-0380+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>