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Exploitation of natural resources in DRC

In 2000 the United Nations established a Panel of Experts to examine the link between the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the ongoing exploitation of its natural resources. In the following three years the Panel released a number of reports which indicated that the countries involved in the war, as well as specific multinational companies and individuals with links to these companies, were benefiting from Congo's war economy through the illegal mining and export of Congo's mineral resources. This war economy, thought to be among the main drivers behind the war, was indirectly supported by some Member States of the Europe Union, the United States, Canada and countries in the Far East through the importation and purchasing of illegally exploited minerals.

Since then, there have also been independent investigations by the Belgian Senate and the Lutundula Commission in the DRC. Nevertheless there has been little or no action taken against companies involved in the war economy by national governments or national contact points of the OECD, who have been handed the mission of investigating these transactions and the question of their legality.

These cases highlight a weak regulatory framework for the monitoring and enforcement of accepted legal practices for European companies operating in war zones outside the EU.

In the light of this:

1. Does the Council intend to conduct a separate investigation into and/or take action against European companies involved in the exploitation of natural resources in the DRC during the war?
2. Does the Council intend to review its stance on corporate social responsibility in terms of regulatory versus voluntary requirements in specific instances of conflict in the light of these revelations?
3. Will the Council explain its position on the need for extraterritorial jurisdiction for European multinationals with regard to human rights offences and economic crimes committed abroad?

Answer:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2007-6215&language=EN>